

## Keeping us Safe

### Thank you for keeping us Safe

*Many of you will know Heather Bland, who has been our Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for nearly 7 years, has overseen a sea change in the way we approach Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults in this Diocese.*

Helping to pilot a new approach for the Church of England alongside 3 other dioceses, Heather has spearheaded the training of 1000s of ministers, officers, staff and volunteers, aided by colleagues Jonathan Whiter and Adrian Smale.

Innovation has come as standard, with online training beginning from mid-2016, and the role has been so demanding that former Detective Superintendent Head of Crime for Wiltshire Police, Jem Carter, was drafted in.

In Staff Prayers just before Christmas, while Heather was still with us, Bishop Nicholas said:

"Heather joined the DBF in February 2014 as Safeguarding Adviser, having been previously employed by Dorset County Council for a number of years in community care and safeguarding services to disabled adults. Married with 2 grown up children, and a Grandma too now. Bringer to Church House of the most amazing fresh hen eggs in the diocese (from Alton Pancras). Qualified social worker for over 35 years and when not working, volunteer host with her husband for Nightstop, providing emergency temporary accommodation for young people 16-25 who find themselves homeless. An all-round good egg!"

Heather said:

"I just want to say good bye and thank you to all the lovely people I have met in my time working in and for the Diocese of Salisbury. I arrived on a chilly and wet February morning in 2014 towards the end of one of the wettest winters on record and was met with a long list of 'things to be achieved within 6 months'.

"One of those was to increase and improve the training to both ordained and lay people. I was not a natural trainer but I have found the delivery of training and workshops across the diocese to people in churches and on PCCs, to groups of clergy and others (LLM, LPA, LWL, PSO – not an exhaustive list!) to be one of the best parts of this job. I have met so many of you in churches, church halls, village halls and other 'interesting' buildings across the diocese from Chiseldon to Lyme Regis to North Bournemouth and all points in between.

"The Diocese of Salisbury is the 5th largest in area and I have covered pretty much all of it in my time here in all weathers at all times of the day and night. I have driven down roads with grass growing in the middle of them, others that ended abruptly in the churchyard and the A350 and I have become very well acquainted!

"We have some fantastic church communities in the Diocese and this has been so obvious during this past year – the way so many people rallied round to help, particularly in the first lockdown, was inspirational. I feel blessed to have been allowed to work in such a wonderful place and to have done my small bit along with all my colleagues out there in the parishes to make our churches safer places."

Heather has now been succeeded by Suzy Fatcher, and Jem Carter continues in post.

Jem says,

"Heather has been a huge asset to the Diocesan Safeguarding team and her knowledge and expertise will be sorely missed – we wish her well for a long, happy and healthy retirement.

"Linked to Heather's departure, I would also like to take this opportunity to highlight a bit of Safeguarding 'house-keeping' which is now required from all parishes in the Diocese. This concerns your parish Safeguarding policies/ posters and website content.

"I ask you to please refresh these, with Heather's details removed and replaced with mine and Suzy Fatcher's, as the 2 named Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers. I also suggest that, rather than listing mine and Suzy's personal emails, you list our new generic Safeguarding email address, [safeguarding@salisbury.anglican.org](mailto:safeguarding@salisbury.anglican.org). This will ensure emails do not go astray with any subsequent changes to postholders.

"Thank you in advance for your support regarding this."

[Click here](#) to contact the team.