**Parish of Bentworth, Lasham & Shalden**

**POLICY FOR RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC ABUSE**

This statement was agreed at the Parochial Church Meeting (PCC) held on 8th May 2024 and is applicable to St Mary’s Church Bentworth, St Mary’s Church Lasham & St Peter and St Paul Church Shalden

**All forms of domestic abuse are wrong and must stop. We are committed to promoting and supporting environments which:**

• ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse;

• protect those vulnerable to domestic abuse from actual or potential harm;

• recognise equality amongst people and within relationships;

• enable and encourage concerns to be raised and responded to appropriately and consistently.

**We recognise that:**

• all forms of domestic abuse cause damage to the survivor and express an imbalance of power in the relationship;

• all survivors (regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity) have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;

• domestic abuse can occur in all communities;

• domestic abuse may be a single incident, but is usually a systematic, repeated pattern which escalates in severity and frequency;

• domestic abuse, if witnessed or overheard by a child, is a form of abuse by the perpetrator of the abusive behaviour;

• working in partnership with children, adults and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of any child or adult suffering abuse.

**We will endeavour to respond to domestic abuse by:**

**In all our activities –**

• valuing, listening to and respecting both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

**In our publicity –**

• raising awareness about other agencies, support services, resources and expertise, through providing information in public and women-only areas of relevance to survivors, children and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

**When concerns are raised –**

• ensuring that those who have experienced abuse can find safety and informed help;

• working with the appropriate statutory bodies during an investigation into domestic abuse, including when allegations are made against a member of the church community.

**In our care –**

• ensuring that informed and appropriate pastoral care is offered to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse;

• identifying and outlining the appropriate relationship of those with pastoral care responsibilities with both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

**If you have any concerns or need to talk to any one please contact T**he Parish Safeguarding Officer, or to the Vicar or Diocesan Safeguarding Manager.

Agreed at the PCC Meeting of September 2024

