The Bishop of Horsham
The Right Reverend Ruth Bushyager

November 2026

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

On Safeguarding Sunday, I want to write to simply to say thank you for all your work. Across our parishes, chaplaincies, and schools, week by week and usually behind the scenes, you give so generously of your time, commitment, wisdom and care to the ministry of safeguarding. It is difficult to overstate the difference your service makes to the life of the diocese; I am deeply grateful for all that you do.

Safeguarding is not an administrative requirement that sits alongside the Church's mission; it is an essential part of our mission, that permeates every area of our common life. The Gospel calls us to recognise the dignity and worth of every human being, made in the image of God, and created for his good purposes in the world. The Church is called to be a community where people encounter the love of Christ, and grow in knowledge of his saving grace in the context of safety, welcome and belonging. We cannot fulfil that calling unless we are committed to creating environments in which children, young people and adults at risk are protected from harm and treated with utmost care, respect and compassion.

Safeguarding Sunday, as ever, brings us to reflect with humility on our work, and to pray for victims and survivors of abuse, and those whose abuse was not responded to well when it was disclosed to us. We continue to lament and learn from the past, and to serve for a better future with determination and hope. Over many years, our progress has been very significant, and you have been vital partners in that journey. There is now far greater understanding of safeguarding responsibilities, stronger structures and processes, better training, greater accountability, and a much deeper commitment to listening to those who have experienced harm. This work continues, and there is more to do, but we should not overlook how much has already been achieved through the dedication of countless clergy, lay church officers, and safeguarding professionals.

While the diocesan safeguarding team provides invaluable advice and support, it is the Parish Safeguarding Officers who are uniquely placed in each worshipping community to ensure that safeguarding is understood and embedded. You do so much to support the clergy and PCC, respond to concerns, monitor and enable training, and develop best practice. I know it is a demanding role, requiring much sensitivity and responsibility.

Thank you for your ministry. I pray that God will strengthen you by his Spirit to encourage and sustain you as you serve him faithfully.

With every blessing,

+Ruth Horsham

The Right Reverend Ruth Bushyager
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