

Chairman's Message
February 26th 2022

This week I write with an important message in the lead up to our AGM on Easter Monday.

Not only will we be electing new officers (so please consider standing for office if you have the skills and energy for any of our roles) but we have some serious business to conduct.

The most serious of all is to consider some new rules which will allow us to handle serious safeguarding concerns fairly and properly. These proposals were not circulated last September as would normally be the case because the events that have led to them were still unfolding.

The background to the proposals was discussed by the General Committee at its meeting in November and it was unanimously agreed that the proposed rule changes should be brought before the 2022 AGM for discussion and, hopefully, adoption. The Committee also agreed that, in the interim, what the proposed rules say will be the official General Committee policy in dealing with serious safeguarding concerns.

The first decision to be made at the AGM will be whether the proposals can be heard and discussed at all – because one of our rules requires any proposed alteration to the Rules to be notified in writing by September 1st of the year previous and circulated to Districts. The Committee has not set aside our normal procedures lightly and I want to assure members that we thought seriously about whether the changes could wait an extra year. However, we are clear that to delay would seriously risk damage to the Association's reputation as effective partners with the Church in ensuring the safety of young people and vulnerable adults.

I hope that members will understand the importance of this and accept the Committee's advice that we need to consider, and adopt, the proposals this year.

The proposed rule changes and a briefing paper explaining the background are being put on the website and will be emailed to those members for whom we have email addresses. Please do read these papers carefully but don't speculate about the cases that may or may not have brought all of this in to focus because every safeguarding issue involves a lot of pain for all of those involved.

If you have any queries or concerns about them, I would be very happy to discuss and explain things further.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. J.', with a long diagonal line extending downwards and to the right from the end of the signature.