

Risen Christ Parish
Safeguarding Committee
9 November 2024

Minutes

Present: Lorraine Furtado, Fr Michael Sierakowski, John Ramsdale, Frances Sullivan, Mark Kulkens, Nika Cseh, Anne Williams and Peter Williams

1. Apologies:

Nil

2. Prayer and Acknowledgment of Country

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted.

4. Committee Membership

- **Welcome to Newest Committee Member**

Frances Sullivan was introduced and welcomed as the newest member of the Safeguarding Committee. General introduction with each member sharing their stories.

- **Contact Information**

The Committee contact list will be amended to include contact details for Frances.

5. Passionist Family Groups

Peter recapped the purpose of this agenda item and latest status of compliance of Passionist Family Group Leaders/Coordinators.

Discussion followed on the status of the Passionist Family Groups operating within the parish. Peter noted that this issue only came to the Committees attention following an approach by leaders of the Montmorency Family Groups. It appears that a recent instruction from the Passionist Family Group Movement Head Office, requires all Leaders/Coordinators to be compliant with their local parish Safeguarding requirements. In particular the need to undertake risk assessments, for each group activity. This seems to have been the catalyst for a lot of concern within the groups.

Frances commented on a meeting that was held between the Archdiocese Safeguarding Unit and representatives of the Passionist Family Group Movement in this region. It seems that this meeting was not productive in seeing a way forward. A major sticking point was regarding the need to complete annual Risk Assessments for all group activities.

Peter advised that in recent discussions with the Safeguarding Unit he had been advised that the archdiocese are reviewing their approach to this matter. A decision is expected sometime next month.

In any event Peter undertook to send Frances a copy of the Risk Assessment Format that is used for Risen Christ Parish.

6. Parish Compliance Issues

- **Current status of compliance**

Peter advised that setting aside the Passionist Family Group issue, currently all volunteers in the parish are fully compliant with the Safeguarding requirements.

7. 2024 Self-Assessment

Peter spoke to the 2024 Self-Assessment document, that had been circulated to the Committee members prior to the meeting. Following discussion, it was agreed that the 2024 Self-Assessment should be forwarded to the Safeguarding Unit.

8. Parish Response to Standard 1.

Within discussion on strengthen our response to Standard 1, Mark spoke to possible approaches that parish could undertaken in this area, including:

- Due to the lack of First Nations people in the Eltham and Montmorency area that we could look at the issue more broadly, by working with neighboring parishes.
- Making a statement actively supporting a Treaty in Victoria.
- Greater use of the Bulletin to support and promote First Nations issues.

Discussion followed on the need to recognize and support the diverse cultural backgrounds of all parishioners. This may include the need for documentation to be translated into other languages.

Peter advised the archdiocese are currently completing the 2024 Parish Census, this information may assist the Committee in understanding more fully the parish demographics.

The report entitled “The Aboriginal Heritage of the Shire of Eltham” was discussed. It was agreed to approach the Shire of Nillumbik to seek permission to make this document available on the parish website, etc.

9. Advent 2024

It was agreed that once again, we take advantage of Advent as a time to focus on the birth of the Christ child to reflect on Safeguarding of our Children, Young People and the Vulnerable. It was agreed that over the first 3 weekends of Advent the focus would be:

- 1 December – Introduction of the Safeguarding Committee members. This will include publishing their photos in the Bulletin and on the Notice Boards in the Church Foyers. (Fr Michael and Peter to arrange)
- 8 December – Use of a 4-minute (approx.) video at Masses featuring Robert Fitzgerald. This will be supported by a Bulletin Item. (Fr Michael and Peter to arrange)
- 15 December – Mark to speak at Weekend Masses on cultural diversity and the importance of an approach that considers and supports the word “AND”. (Mark and Fr Michael to arrange.)

10. Other Business

- **Christmas Masses 2024**

Brief discussion followed on the viability of the Christmas Eve Children's Mass at Holy Trinity Primary School, this year. It was noted that participation has been declining over the past years that combined with the logistics involved and uncertainty of the weather, have raised concerns about its future.

Whilst the Mass may go ahead this year, it was considered likely that this would be the last time. Future Masses could be held in SFX church.

A final decision on this will be made in early December.

- **Report of Historical Abuse**

Fr Michael advised that following a recent Funeral he officiated at, in another parish, he was advised by a family member of the deceased that a retired priest, who was concelebrating the Mass had sexually abused her, when she was a child.

Fr Michael advised he has reported the matter to both Pathways and the Vicar General.

11. Next Meeting

The 2025 meeting scheduled to be:

Saturday 22 February

Saturday 24 May,

Saturday 23 August, and

Saturday 8 November.