

Risen Christ Parish
Safeguarding Committee
22 February 2025

Minutes

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

1. Apologies:

Lorraine Furtado and Nika Cseh.

2. Prayer and Acknowledgment of Country- Anne and Frances

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted.

4. Parish Passionist Family Groups

Peter advised that information has recently been received from the Vicar General that states: “In accordance with the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ (Passionists, Holy Spirit Province) Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy, the Passionist Family Group Movement falls under the scope of the Passionists of Holy Spirit Province. Compliance for the Passionist Family Group Movement with the Victorian Child Safe Standards is the responsibility of the Passionists of Holy Spirit Province.”

“Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne requirements will occur if any Passionist Family Group Movement program, activities or events are using parish facilities and as such would require a contractual agreement with the relevant parish. We encourage all parishes to clearly identify the Passionist Family Group Movement as a separate entity to your congregation and Safeguarding Committees.”

Discussion followed on the implications of this advice. Frances advised that unfortunately one of the St Francis Xavier's (SFX) Family Groups has withdrawn from the movement. Frances noted that work is being undertaken by the Passionist Family Group Movement to simplify the Risk Management requirements for the Family Groups. Peter once again offered to support the SFX Family Groups in completing the Risk Assessments.

Regarding the introduction of ‘the need to enter into contractual arrangements’ with Passionist Family Groups, should they wish to utilise parish facilities Peter undertook to develop an appropriate contractual instrument for this purpose. Individual Risk Assessments would need to be completed for each group function /activity within parish facilities.

It was noted that several other external groups currently use parish facilities (e.g. Book Club, Knitting Group, etc.). They would also need to be included within these requirements.

5. Parish Compliance Issues

- **Current status of compliance**

Peter advised that currently only one volunteer in the parish is not fully compliant with the Safeguarding requirements. This person has been contacted by email and will be followed up, within the next week, by phone or text.

6. 2024 Self-Assessment

The completed 2024 Self-Assessment document was forwarded to the Safeguarding Unit in early November 2024. Positive feedback has been received from the Safeguarding Unit, acknowledging the work the Committee has done over the years.

7. Parish Response to Standard 1.

As discussed at the last meeting, an approach was to be made to the Banyule Council, which holds the report “The Aboriginal Heritage of the Shire of Eltham”, with a view to making this document available on the parish website, etc. Peter advised that permission has been obtained to provide a link to the report from the parish website. He also proposed to look at developing a specific section on that website that provided other similar resource material.

Discussion followed on the need to recognize and support the diverse cultural background of all parishioners. Peter advised that hopefully once the 2024 Parish Census data is available it will assist the Committee in understanding more fully the parish demographics.

8. Review of Advent Activities 2024

The meeting discussed the Safeguarding activities over the first 3 weekends of Advent which focused on: An introduction of the Safeguarding Committee members, the use of a 4-minute video at masses featuring Robert Fitzgerald and Mark speaking on cultural diversity and the importance of an approach that considers all in our parish and the wider community.

The consensus was that these activities were successful and positively received by parishioners.

Christmas Eve Children’s Mass at Hoy Trinity Primary School was attended by approximately 640 people. The continuing focus and involvement of children and young people was well received. Other than a suggested relocation of the Christmas Trees and Crib to the other side of the oval, all other arrangements should be put in place again this Christmas.

9. Other Business

- **Correspondence Received**

A letter was tabled that had been received from a parishioner regarding concerns about feeling safe within the parish. Specific mention was made of the Welcoming video that is played at all weekend masses.

Discussion followed on the contents of the letter and the outcome of a meeting Mark and Peter had with the parishioner.

- **Safeguarding Through the Lens of Catholic Social Teaching- Fr Hans Zollner.**

Anne and Peter attended the seminar and gave a brief overview and the impact it had upon them. The seminar consisted of three parts: an overview of Safeguarding issues in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, Presentation by Fr Zollner and Information of a forth coming audit by the Australian Catholic Safeguarding LTD. (Copies of the PowerPoint presentations were circulated to committee members prior to the meeting.)

- **Welcoming Video 2025**

Peter noted that planning needs to begin for the 2025 versions of the Welcoming videos which will include the new school leaders at the three schools.

Following discussion, it was agreed that committee members would review the current script used in the video, to see if any changes were necessary. Any comments on the script are to be forwarded to Peter. (A copy of the current script is attached.)

- **St Vincent de Paul**

John spoke on the current work of the Montmorency Conference of SVdP. He noted that whilst they have been very busy so far this year, supporting some families in crises, it was heartening that they had received some referrals for assistance from SFX and HT primary schools.

10. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to be **Saturday 24 May**,

- Prayer and Welcome to Country - Mark
- It was noted that Frances will be an apology for that meeting.