

Risen Christ Parish
Safeguarding Committee
25 May 2024

Minutes

1. Present: Catherine Bressanutti, Nika Cseh, Lorraine Furtado Mark Kulkens, Fr Michael Sierakowski, Anne Williams and Peter Williams

2. Apologies:

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted.

4. Committee Membership

Nika Cseh was introduced and welcomed as the newest member of the Safeguarding Committee.

5. Safeguarding Self-Assessment Tool

Peter advised that a new Safeguarding Self-Assessment Tool has been released for 2024. Copies of documentation relating to the tool, including the printed Guide to the Safeguarding Self-Assessment Tool, were tabled. It was noted that the new tool has merged a number of indicators that are duplicated throughout the 11 Victorian Standards. Whilst this should simplify the number of responses required, it will necessitate the parish response, to each Standard and their Indicators, to be rewritten.

6. Review of Blessing Ceremony and Spiritual Cleansing of OLHC Presbytery Site

Anne spoke on the outcomes of the blessing ceremony and spiritual cleansing of OLHC Presbytery Site. This appeared to be helpful to those parish members who attended, especially those still struggling with the abuse that occurred here in the past or in their own lives.

Due to insufficient time available between the meeting and commencement of earthworks, it was not possible to arrange for a First Nations Smoking Ceremony to take place. (In any event the day of the ceremony was declared a total Fire Ban Day.)

Given the limitations placed on this event, due to the lack of available time, it was agreed an appropriate ceremony be held when the units, on the old Presbytery site, have been completed.

Anne proposed that consideration be given to the establishment of an Atonement Candle. The concept of the candle was discussed, with issues of its potential location in each church and how it would be introduced considered. It was agreed to review this proposal in 12 months.

7. Parish Compliance Issues

- **Current status of compliance**

Peter advised that currently all volunteers at OLHC are fully compliant with the Safeguarding requirements. There are currently 6 volunteers at SFX who need to resign the Parish Code of Conduct. They have all been contacted by email accordingly. As the last round of Codes of Conduct have reached their 3-year expiry date, there will be a need to continue to chase up other volunteers over the coming months.

8. Engaging with Parish Schools

Work continues on establishing more formal Safeguarding relationships with our parish primary schools, through ongoing engagement with the principals of each parish school.

The initial video, that welcomes everyone to each Mass, has been completed and is currently being used at the beginning of every weekend mass. This video features students from SFX primary school. Some feedback has been received from parishioners, which has been mostly positive.

Further filming of additional welcoming videos is to take place on 6 June. These videos will feature students from OLHC and HT primary Schools. It is anticipated they will be used at weekend masses by mid-June. This will allow us to alternate versions of the video as we progress through Ordinary Time.

9. Parish Response to Standard 1.

This is a standing item.

Mark tabled a document that considered how best we could move forward on this item by potentially looking to engage with the local Aboriginal community. Within discussion, Mark suggested a number of steps that could, and perhaps should be taken, before we engage directly with the local aboriginal community.

Fr Michael mentioned that OLHC hosts an annual meeting of the local indigenous community. He will endeavor to ascertain a contact person for these meetings.

Arising from discussion, it was suggested that future Safeguarding meetings should commence with: an Acknowledge of Country and a suitable prayer.

10. Other Business

- **National Police Checks**

Fr Michael raised concerns that he was unable to attach his annual police check to his electronic Services Victoria App. Peter spoke on the reason for this and a problem that has arisen with only a limited number of agencies that will now facilitate a Police Check. Victoria Police and Australia Post no longer provide this service. He undertook to approach the Safeguarding Unit to help clarify the best way forward with arranging Police Checks in the future.

Post meeting: It was noted that the National Police Check can be processed through the Service Victoria Site. This may resolve the issue. Peter will report back on this matter at the next meeting.

- **St Vincent De Paul**

There was discussion regarding concerns with St Vincent De Paul's approach to Safeguarding. It was agreed this matter should be listed on the next meeting agenda. Fr Michael undertook to open discussions with the SVDP leadership and report back at the next meeting.

11. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to be held on Saturday 24 August 2024.