

SACRED HEART PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING
Thursday 7 November 2024 in the LOUNGE
MINUTES

1. Welcome, opening prayer and apologies

Rachel opened the meeting in prayer at 8pm. Present were Ruth Naylor (Chair), Rachel Purvis, Jude Mariadoss, Christopher Woodward (for the Finance Committee), Maria Christopher, Teresa Engley, Julian Burling, David Hurst, Primavera Moretti (taking minutes), Giovanni Peruzzo, Canon David Gibbons, Rob Hitchcock (Faith Minister). Also observing where Nina Beltran and Jose Garibaldi. We were joined by Victoria Wheatley (Safeguarding). Apologies were received from Fr David Hunter, Siobhan Heffron, Max Toone, Sr Dorothy Perrott, Fr Jackson Sebastian.

2. Minutes of last meeting

Status on actions which will not be picked up in agenda items:

- Church Parades for uniformed groups. Canon David had no updates to report.
- Some Definite Service. Rob has made contact with the Diocese. He's in the process of becoming a Deanery Mentor. There's a Deanery Activation Day on Saturday which Rob will be attending.
- PPC mini retreat. The date was agreed as the Saturday 15th February. **Action: David H to book the room from 8.30am-2pm.** Sr Dorothy has coordinated it in the past. **Action: to discuss further at next meeting.**
- Confession Guides have been put in the confessionals.
- Website SEO. Ruth reported that the cleanup has now been done This involved formalising the formatting, but not making any edits to the copy, which is a longer term project. Regarding updating the parish details (such as opening times) on Google, Ruth has discovered that Google allows you to claim a business as your own but thinks this should be done by the parish office as the office should be the official owner of the Google profile. **Action: Parish Office**
- Projector screen. **Action: Chris will contact Wimbledon Art Society who will be asked to share the cost.**

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record and signed by the chair. They will be uploaded to the website shortly.

3. Parish Groups - Safeguarding

We welcomed Victoria Wheatley who explained that she had been volunteering as leader of the children's liturgy and had experience as a casualty nurse which involved a lot of relevant training. Before she started, there was a hiatus of about a year with no formal Safeguarding team. The first job was to check all the volunteers in the parish had appropriate checks. We have 130 who need DBS checks. This is rising as we had fifteen volunteers for the Winter Night Shelter. Most parishes have 2 a month. Victoria has done 85 since January.

Kate Kirkland was also a rep but has since stepped down and Siobahn Heffron, Deputy Head at S H School has a lot of experience but due to her other commitments operates more in an advisory capacity. Jenny Cairns (who used to do it) has also been very helpful.

The team have improved their recording methods.

There are layers in the DBS system

Government - runs the DBS and creates Safeguarding legislation.

CSSA – Catholic Safeguarding Standards Authority – take the government instructions and add a few of their own and pass these on to the Dioceses

The Archdiocese of Southwark – also adds a few more practicalities

Parish Safeguarding Reps are volunteers under the Parish Priest and have to take all these guidelines into account

The Parish Community – Safeguarding belongs to EVERYBODY – anyone can report a concern, everybody is responsible for it even if they don't have a specific role.

The aim of Safeguarding is to do our best to eliminate risk – it's not possible to remove it all together

There are five main tasks for the team:

Ensuring all volunteers:

- are suitable
- have the appropriate checks and certificates
- are safe in the role
- understand the rules and guidelines

And that

matters of concern are passed on and dealt with by appropriate organisation.

New volunteers have to complete a volunteer application form, including two referees. Victoria follows these up. When the references come back, the candidate gets a link to the DBS application system which they have to fill in. Then they go to Victoria who does the ID checks to upload them to the system.

Current/ongoing volunteers have to renew every three years. Victoria follows them up to make sure this is done.

With older volunteers who aren't very IT-oriented Victoria has go through the online forms with them to enable them to keep volunteering. After three reminders, Victoria sends an email asking if they've changed their minds and this becomes a bit of an ultimatum that really prompts people. It can be a challenge to walk alongside people in remembering to do this.

Training

The CSSA brought out a training video to watch at home. Kate emailed every single volunteer and asked them to do it. It's very specific to a parish/community setting. Primi has done this and confirmed that it was useful and interesting.

Everyone has to sign the Safeguarding Code of Conduct, which is being sent to longstanding volunteers as they renew.

Victoria has been reaching out to group leaders so they know what they should be doing and have a named person to contact.

Matters of concern. Anyone can come to the Parish Team with any matter of Safeguarding concern. They don't investigate but they get as much information as they can and pass it up to the professionals at Southwark. There's a team of four. They are very supportive.

Quarterly meetings for PSRs online and Annual in-person meetings.

Victoria will look for new members for the team. after Christmas. We'll need to think of suitable people as it's not a job we can advertise.

Primavera asked why the Parish didn't use the DBS automatic update service. Victoria explained that it has to go through Southwark because they are the counter-signatory on all applications. People can sign up for the update service within a month of getting their certificates but they still need to do the ID check.

You can use the certificates elsewhere if it's at the right level – there are child workforce ones and adult workforce ones and ones that include both.

Which volunteers need a DBS? Anyone that is in a regular activity with children and/or vulnerable adults.

Someone worried about a neighbour or someone in a care home could come to Victoria. It would be good to have an article in Edgeways explaining this. There is a very good leaflet that Southwark CSSA produced which would be good to have them in the church. There are also posters up in the church. Action: David H and Victoria

Chris commented that the Merton Trading Standards officers gave a really good presentation about scams etc to the Friendship Group. They're prepared to give it to the wider parish group. Agreed that it would be a good thing to do after Christmas. **Action: Chris look for a date.**

David said that Anthony Lee who does the counselling has asked us to advertise his services in the run-up to Christmas as this can be a particularly difficult time for people.

4. Encouraging volunteering and PPC membership

We discussed the "Volunteer drive" a few weeks ago. Ruth offered a vote of thanks to everyone who helped on that occasion. Ruth believes there was some good take-up for the Night Shelter. 15 have responded – all men who can sleep overnight. David is going to put an updated version of the sheet showing which group needs volunteers in Edgeways. In such a big parish people don't always know who to approach if they want to get involved.

Nina and Jose are interested in joining the PPC and are here to observe today.

Ruth's term will come to an end in December. Ruth will meet with Fr David to discuss how to manage the transition. Ruth would be prepared to stay on slightly longer if there was a Deputy Chair that she could hand over to after a while.

Primi pointed out that Ruth had originally said that she would do the job for a year and has now done two. She does a huge amount above and beyond chairing the meetings and looking after the PPC email. There's a Job Description for Chair/Deputy Chair which will be circulated

Chris said the success of the 'volunteering drive' was partly because it was clearly targeted. He suggested a volunteering section in the newsletter. He also reported that there were 3 new people interested in the finance committee as a result of the 'drive'.

Jude said that quite a few people came forward to find out more about what was needed.

We need to be clear on what each volunteering role involves e.g. reading is only once a month so it's not a very big commitment.

5. Small groups

The aim had been to launch small groups for Lent. Ann Waldron might be interested in helping to coordinate them. Max had suggested there might be a group at number 9 but he now thinks this is not very likely as they are all so committed elsewhere. Action: Primi to add to agenda to pick up in January.

6. Update from the Finance committee

- a) Praetorium (hall letting company) is now not happening. If we can pick up more lettings we will do so e.g. Tae Kwondo is starting soon.
- b) New Upper Hall screen – see above
- c) Solar Panels project is going ahead and will provide panels on roof of Upper Hall to generate enough electricity for presbytery and charge batteries for the existing church emergency lighting. This will save us having to install a separate emergency lighting system in the church. The company installing them will be doing it from new year and it should be up and running by March/April. David H asked how long payback would be and Chris replied it would be about five years.
- d) Canon David reported that we have received the £25k compensation from Drax for the problems with the electricity earlier this year.

7. Parish Community initiatives

- a) Community Outreach - Merton Citizens. 7.00pm Thursday 14 November: leaders' meeting at Salvation Army Morden – interested observers welcome. At his invitation, we met Paul Kohler before he was elected MP; he invited us to keep in touch. 12.00am – 7.00pm Thursday 5 December South London Citizens 'Day of Action' at Waterloo Station - learn how to take action on Housing and the Living Wage, ask David Hurst for information. Reports available from David re issues: Borough of Sanctuary, Mental Health, Living Wage, Welcome Refugees, Housing.
- b) Centre for Community & Theology. 6.30 – 8.30pm Wednesday 20 November at St Margaret's RC Church, Canning Town E16 4HB. Austen Ivereigh launches 'Synodal Journey report on community organising for parishes' - in association with Citizens UK. Foreword by Cardinal Vincent Nicholls. See flyer for registration information.
- c) Merton Faith & Belief Forum. 7.00m Tuesday 12 November Vestry Hall, 336 London Road, Mitcham CR4 3UD. invite to new 'Conversations with Council Leader: Ross Garrod (Lab) + Deputy Ellie Stringer (Lab)'. book in person: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/conversations-with-the-leader-of-merton-council-in-person-tickets-1056533743869> or register to attend

remotely online: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/conversations-with-the-leader-of-the-council-online-tickets-1067225402909>

- d) Parish Environment Group. 11.00am Sunday 17 November: JP de Quay and David will host a meeting to re-launch the parish Environment Group. Poster in church + newsletter notice + web site (Paul Davis). Wimbledon Green Churches Group and Sustainable Merton are already active. Paul Williams art: leading Ursuline High School application for CAFOD Live Simply award – as awarded to SHP 2019. It was pointed out that for the launch of environment group in the youth Room they will need to put up some signs / offer some directions in the newsletter as people often get lost. **Action: David**
- e) Edgeways. Two year 11 students interviewed Eion Kelly for November then Polly Harrison on 'Enrichment' for December. Possible interview with the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendia or his secretary, Fr Andrew Coyne.
- f) Sacred Heart Primary School. Church visits will be made this term: dates TBC. Mission Week report in November Edgeways.

8. Parish Social Life

- (a) Christmas Lunch. Thelma has this all in hand. There is a need for volunteers, especially people who can help in the run-up and doing preparation. There is a volunteering form on the website and at the back of the church. **Action: Giovanni has a meeting with Thelma tomorrow – will try to find out exactly which kind of volunteers she needs and put more information in the newsletter.**
- (b) Christmas leaflet distribution (note issues last year where several streets in the parish did not receive them) – **Action: David will take this on and check that we are getting what we pay for. They go out early-mid-December. Better to give them the list of streets, not the postcodes. Also check that Thelma**
- (c) New parishioners' welcome tea – 9th March – **Action: Ruth to email Thelma about booking the lounge.**
- (d) Hall users / social committee – JP was interested in looking at a vision for this and Ruth has – Halls Committee needs to include Thelma and George and could also include some users and finance committee member. Ideally the parish would have a social committee separate from the PPC. Most of them seem to fall on the PPC these days. **Action: Canon David will take this on from here.**
- (e) Week of guided prayer 24th-30th November – there will be an announcement at this weekend's masses.
- (f) It was noted that it would be good to have a party for thanking volunteers – in the past this was a ceilidh or pancake party. Action: Primi to add to next agenda.

9. AOB

- (a) Dates for 2025 – all first Thursdays seem to be fine
- (b) James Bush teacher at Primary School to come on 5th December. **Action: David**
- (c) Rachel Marshall to come in January. **Action: Primi to follow up with Giles/Rachel – check that date works**
- (d) Someone pretending to be Fr David tried to scam Victoria at her Safeguarding address, which confirms it would be useful to have the talk by the local Trading Standards team (see above).

- (e) Jubilee 2025 – what are we as a parish going to do about it? **Action: Primi add to the agenda.**
- (f) David said he wanted feedback on Edgeways. Primi suggested sending a Survey Monkey email to all recipients. **Action: David**
- (g) Pope's Sacred Heart letter. Primi has turned this into an EPUB and can email it to anyone who wants it. Matteo wants to set up a small group to discuss this.
- (h) There were comments about the that people were enjoying the refreshed look of the newsletter. Although Teresa commented that the font is harder to read. Fr David said it is a little smaller. **Action: Fr David to speak to Matteo about whether the font can be changed for something bolder.**

10. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 2nd January in the Lounge

The meeting ended in prayer at 9.40pm