

Parish Safeguarding Audit Completed

17th Sunday of Ordinary Time

28th July 2019

Dear Parishioners,

I just wanted to inform you all that the Parish Safeguarding Audit that Janice Haynes, External Consultant, has been carrying out since September 2018 has now been completed and will be on the Parish website and available to read in the next few weeks.

I wanted to take this opportunity to refresh your memories of the background, reasons and context of the Audit. So that when you do read the Audit, you will be equipped with all of the necessary background information and knowledge. I also wanted you to know that since the beginning of the Audit we have begun implementing all that the Auditor has been identifying as the necessary improvements needed to ensure children and adults at risk are safe and that our Parish Safeguarding practices and policies stand the test of robustness. This has been happening as a result of Janice's observations and feedback.

In order to evaluate and assess the robustness of Ealing Abbey Parish Safeguarding practices and policies, it was decided that it would be a very good idea to ask an external Consultant to carry out this task. This decision by the Parish Team was made in consultation with our former Abbot, Abbot Martin Shipperlee. We were also very aware of the impending IICSA hearings into Ealing Abbey & St Benedict's School in February this year, We wanted to make sure that we were following good practice and doing everything we can to support those in the Parish with positions of responsibility both paid and voluntary, and to make sure that we are doing everything we can to keep children and adults at risk safe and have the appropriate policies in place to maintain constant vigilance and awareness.

When I met Janice in June 2018 and discussed this with her, she put forward the following Terms of Reference for the Safeguarding Audit that she would carry out on Safeguarding:

- To Review the Safeguarding records;
- Meet with the Parish Safeguarding Representatives to discuss the role and agreed procedures that are followed;
- To Look at how the safeguarding practices within the Parish Church environment relate to the safeguarding practices within the Diocese;
- To explore how the safeguarding work of the Parish is monitored within the Diocese and what support is offered.
- To Review recruitment processes with regard to the numbers of volunteers involved in supporting the work of the Parish, ensuring that DBS checks are up to date, and references taken up, are in order at the point of allowing volunteers to commence their voluntary work.
- To Review which roles require DBS checks and references and whether there is any discrepancy with regard to how these rules are applied. To ensure consistency in practice.
- To Review the training that is offered to volunteers and paid staff employed and working within the Parish setting.
- To Review how records of safeguarding training undertaken are kept and who oversees this process.
- To observe the group activities involving children including: First Holy Communion & Confirmation sessions; 9am Mass Children's Liturgy; and the 10.15am Mass with Families in the Parish Hall.
- To Hold two focus groups; one with children and one with volunteers.
- To Raise the profile of safeguarding within the parish community, so that all parishioners are aware of the processes to follow if they have a concern.

In carrying out this Audit, we became more aware of all the positive and amazing things so many volunteers are doing to make Ealing Abbey the thriving parish it is.

This was certainly witnessed and commented on by Janice Haynes the Auditor. The process of this Safeguarding Audit has already impacted and opened our eyes further to improving what we do and how we do it!

Throughout the process of the Audit, Jim Welsh, our Parish Safeguarding Representative, since October, and I met with Janice frequently. In these meetings Janice sought clarification on what she had observed and thought. She was given answers to the issues and concerns she raised. She then gave her recommendations as to those things that she regarded as needing tightening up and greater vigilance.

From these meetings we began making the improvements and necessary changes to the practices and the policies of the parish that she was requesting and recommending. So right from the very start, we have been using the Audit as an opportunity to improve our practices and put in place the necessary changes required. For those matters where other outside bodies are involved and require greater planning and more time to implement fully, we have developed an ongoing strategic plan to ensure that our safeguarding practices and policies are at the level and standard that Janice as the Auditor would expect them to be. Therefore, when we publish the Safeguarding Audit, it is as a 'Working Live Document' which has and is constantly being implemented since September 2018.

Finally, I would like to thank all our volunteers and Catechists who have taken part in this Audit process. During her observations Janice spoke to many of you to gain an understanding where you see Safeguarding in the Parish and the roles you carry out. I am very grateful especially to the coordinators and volunteer Catechist Leaders of the 9am Mass Children's Liturgy in particular for your dedication and loyalty over so many years that has enabled such a great and extremely fruitful and beneficial programme of catechesis on Sunday mornings for our very young parishioners.

I want to assure you all that we are working in partnership together to continue the important and amazing ministry you carry out and also to ensure that all our children are safe and in good hands.

The period over which the Audit has taken place has been a very difficult time for Ealing Abbey and in many ways it was good to have an Safeguarding Audit happening over this period because it meant that if you as parishioners had any concerns you could also have made contact with Janice Haynes, the Auditor, and raised those concerns with her too.

Thank you all for the role you play in making Ealing Abbey the parish it is and also raising any concerns you have about Safeguarding in the parish. Please continue to do so and work with us, the Parish Team and monastic community, to keep all children and adults at risk safe and cared for.

May God bless you all and keep you safe wherever you might be over this holiday period.

Fr Ambrose McCambridge OSB
Parish Priest, Ealing Abbey

Jim Welsh, and Susanne Nunn [May 2019], our Parish Safeguarding Representatives, can be contacted by email at ealingsg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk or contact the parish Office on 020 88622160.

Checked 9.33pm Wed 24/7/19