**JESUITS IN BRITAIN**

 **TRUSTEES FOR ROMAN CATHOLIC PURPOSES**

**TRUSTEES’ MEETING SATURDAY 7th December 2024.**

**Summary Report: Trustees’ Safeguarding Committee 26th Nov 2024**

**1. Introductions**: In attendance in person were Mrs Fiona Bateman, Mr James Reilly (Chair), Mr Jim Gallagher, Mrs Julie Ashby-Ellis, Fr Paul O’Reilly SJ, Fr David Smolira SJ, Fr Provincial and Mrs Nadra Gadeed. Mrs Fiona Robb supported taking the minutes of the non-confidential items. Approval was given to minutes of September 17th, and the action log reviewed with future actions recorded.

**2. Work with Victim/Survivors and Safety Management Plans:**  Nadra Gadeed reported on her work with 6 victim/survivors five of which are historical where the perpetrator is deceased. One is a concern still under investigation and yet to be determined as a safeguarding matter.

In relation to safeguarding management plans: There are no Jesuits subject to safety management plans. However, JAE outlined two concerns where this maybe relevant. The committee noted the work of a panel reviewing a request to lift restrictions on ministry and supported the conclusion of the panel to refuse that request. In regard to the second matter:- on the basis of information received via RLSS and absence of contact with the complainant at their request the TSC noted it is contested and is a misconduct not safeguarding matter. The committee concluded that a protocol or MOU with RLSS is required to clarify the exceptional circumstances in which they would undertake any investigations or case work relating to Jesuits.

Investigations are continuing into complaints at Mount St Mary’s College which remains under the leadership of interim head, Karen Keeton. It is understood the school governors have enacted the independent review recommendation and appointed an independent complaints investigator to review complaints from parents many of which were notified to the Province’s safeguarding coordinator.

**3. Review of Jesuit Schools & Province Statement of Collaboration.**

**FOR DECISION:** In the light of the recent appointment of new Province Delegate for Education and given significant safeguarding events in three different schools over the past three years, TSC are recommending that Trustees commission a formal review of this undertaking. It is recommended that this is done jointly with all school heads and chairs of governors and that it is facilitated by a jointly appointed independent person with established credentials. This should encompass safeguarding matters improving upon undertakings in the current Statement but it should go further as leadership and culture driven by governors and headteachers are critical to safeguarding but also to Jesuit values, ethos and spirituality. To secure the integrity of the Jesuit name the Province needs that assurances regarding aspects of governance and leadership in a schools using the Jesuit name are robust and resilient. Therefore, it is recommended that the scope of this joint review encompasses all these aspects and not just safeguarding.

With Trustees’ support the next step would be a meeting with the education delegate, safeguarding Trustee, chair of TSC and Safeguarding coordinator to prepare a proposal to seek agreement from Jesuit schools for such a review independently facilitated.

**In addition, it is recommended** that Fr Provincial and Trustees obtain from legal advisors a definitive position on the legal obligations and powers that pertain to Fr Provincial and Trustees in relation to all the relevant legal arrangements pertaining to the governance of the schools. In responding to each of the three situations over the past three years this has been a relevant consideration and lack of clarity has impeded decisions and judgements at times leaving gaps or potential gaps in accountability with risks to reputation and liabilities. This legal advice should be obtained in time to inform the joint review outlined above.

In the course of deliberating on this matter a useful distinction was arrived at to assist Trustees in framing a constructive relationship with Jesuit Schools and that is between: a) legitimate ***expectations*** of schools as “apostolic works” of the Province, and b) mandatory ***obligations***  placed upon the Provincial and/or Trustees outlined in legal undertakings. The desired future joint and agreed statement needs to be clear on both.

**4. Recent Reports: Marmion (Irish Province) & Cross of the Moment (Durham) & First Annual Safeguarding Report of the Pontifical Commission:**

The meeting/seminar planned for November with our Irish counterparts was postponed at their request as it coincided with the publication of a seperate national report into abuse in schools run by religious in Ireland. The Irish Province is naming a number of province members identified the reports investigations. The province and relevant dioceses in the UK have been informed of a number of Jesuits who undertook supply commitments in the 1960’s and 1970’s and checks are being undertaken. It is hoped that this seminar will go ahead in February 2025 and incorporate any further learning points from this latest report.

There was no time in our November meeting to consider the Cross of the Moment report or Pontifical Commission Annual Safeguarding Report and time will be secured in a future meeting of the TSC to do so.

**5. Bishop’s conference Proposals: Religious Parish Safeguarding.**

TSC noted that there are still issues under consideration with RLSS and Orders who run parishes before an acceptable agreement can be signed upto.

**6. Coordinator’s Updates:**

JAE updated TSC on the proceedings of the recent Jesuit European Safeguarding delegates meeting in Barcelona and the Scottish CSSA safeguarding conference in Glasgow. It received a presentation on the Cross in the Moment report eliciting an insightful discussion on cultures supporting safeguarding and constructive victim/survivor engagement. Training was delivered to the Glasgow community and individuals and communities have received support and mentoring in regard to safeguarding. No issues with DBS or PVG checks or electronic records.

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**6. Coordinator’s update:** Julie Ashby-Ellis briefed the committee on the ongoing work to update the structures, policies and procedures of the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA - England & Wales). Consultations are proceeding with RLSS to ensure that future arrangements work in relation to both Dioceses and Religious Life Groups.

JAE has completed updated training with those working at St Bueno’s Retreat Centre and the London Spirituality Centre.

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