

# THE PARISH OF ELLESMERE PORT AND HOOTON

St Saviour and St Mary of the Angels | Our Lady Star of the Sea and St Bernard

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## HEALTH AND SAFETY PARISH UPDATE 2022

In January, Julie Tinsley, the diocesan Health and Safety Officer, visited Our Lady Star and Sea and reviewed present practice. At the same time, I have taken the opportunity to review the 2019 health and safety reports from St Saviour and St Mary of the Angels. My thanks to Brian Callister, Andy Wells, Rob Smith, and Vin Brennan who are the named and designated health and safety representatives for all they do to ensure compliance across the buildings and churches of the parish. Going forward, quarterly (January, April, September, December) all buildings will be reviewed according to the diocesan policy and document: How Safe Is Your Parish. Records will be retained by the parish office.

Helpfully, Julie Tinsley has offered to return in Spring 2022 to follow up on these important initial steps I am taking to implement all the guidance, advice, and critique following the January 2022 review at Our Lady Star of the Sea and the 2019 reviews of St Saviour and St Mary of the Angels. From my review, some points of improvement, development, and co-responsibility I want to share with you, that we must action.

*Father Edmund*

## **FIRE SAFETY**

We need named and designated fire marshals across the three churches of the parish. The responsibility would be to raise the alarm, be familiar with the fire evacuation policy and procedure, to contact the emergency services, to ensure fire exits are clear and unlocked before Masses and other services, to direct the congregation towards the fire evacuation point. Ideally, all parishioners would be confident in following the fire evacuation plan, but designated individuals – as many as possible – would be a huge assistance to us in ensuring we meet our legal responsibility. Please contact the parish office to simply allow us to put your name down as a ‘fire marshal’ – full policy and procedure will be shared with the parish in any event but having named individuals is a huge help! It does not entail any day-to-day responsibility or legal duty!

We also need to ensure a fire drill takes place at each church annually. I will designate a particular Sunday for this in due course, to meet our legal responsibilities. I have ordered additional signage and fire extinguishers where these were required by the recent inspection. Fire evacuation points will be identified and labelled at each church and hall. The external doors at the Parish Centre and Our Lady Star of the Sea require Fire Exit Keep Clear signs for the Whitby Road side of the doors, so that others do not block or obstruct this important exit. These signs have been ordered.

## **ACCIDENT BOOK AND NEAR MISS REPORTING**

There ought to be accident books available at each of the churches and halls and this is being reviewed. If any accident takes place, please take responsibility for reporting and recording what happened and what action was taken, eg use of First Aid kits or contacting the emergency services. This includes accidents that might have happened, so that hazards can be identified and any actions followed up and recorded that they have been remedied.

## **AD HOC RISK ASSESSMENTS**

When particular services or special Masses are held, or concerts, or performances, etc ad hoc risk assessments are required. Many of these are pro forma from the diocese, for example for Holy Week, Easter, Christmas, etc. If you are planning a particular event at Stanley Hall, St Saviour, or Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish Centre, a risk assessment is required. Copies available from the parish office.

## **FOOD HYGIENE**

Food Hygiene certification is necessary at all three churches for the provision of tea and coffee after Mass and other social occasions. Again, it would be very helpful that those involved complete an online course in food hygiene, which the parish can cover the cost of, in order to meet current regulations. Likewise, the kitchens at Our Lady Star of the Sea, Stanley Hall, and St Saviour need to be up to present standards of fixtures, fittings, food storage, etc.

## **CHURCH CLEANING**

Storage of cleaning products and materials have to follow guidance regarding safe storage of hazardous materials, in designated cupboards with proper signage. Again, this for the whole parish buildings and site. I have ordered additional signage for hazardous materials and cleaning processes.

## **MANUAL HANDLING**

Current guidance requires risk assessments and signage for manual handling for the moving of, for example, tables and chairs. This is required across the parish. Signage will be displayed. If you are involved in setting up tables and chairs, etc or asked to move furniture, etc please be sure to familiarise yourself with the proper postures and routines, and if a particular task requires several people or a large item, this will need a proper risk assessment for each task.

## **LADDER SAFETY AND WORKING AT HEIGHT**

Should ladders be used anywhere on site, a Ladder Safety Checklist must be followed prior to use of ladders or working at height. Risk assessments available via the office and the checklist will be kept at each location where ladders are stored.

## **CONTRACTORS**

Contractors engaged to carry out works must be approved via the parish office, subject to the contractor signing a Contractors Safety Information sheet, providing their own risk assessments, insurance, etc to guarantee that liabilities are covered. No works may be undertaken in the parish without risk assessments being completed and filed for record in the parish office, otherwise we will not be covered by our insurance and we are required to follow diocesan policies and procedures. Please check with the parish office before any works are instructed or workers engaged. Contractors cannot be instructed or engaged without these policies and procedures being followed. This policy is effective immediately across the parish.

## **OFFICE HEALTH AND SAFETY**

We have reviewed Lone Worker policies and procedures and occupational health issues relating to the parish office, including risk assessments and signage.

## **SHUT OFF POINTS**

This is an important aspect of site safety: where does one turn off gas, water, electricity if necessary. Again, this needs to have as many people as possible to know where these are and adequate signage in each building in the event of a leak or emergency. This is being reviewed, more to come.

## **ELECTRICS, GAS, WATER**

Fixed electrics test, PAT testing, gas safety checks are all required and are being reviewed to ensure current certification is up to date.

## **REPORTING OF ANY AREAS OF CONCERN OR SAFETY/FIRE ISSUES**

You are the eyes and ears of the parish in regards to many of these areas of safety and concern: if you notice anything that ought to be improved, or any concerns, or notice damage, disrepair, leaks, or any hazards that may not have been identified, please report them to the parish office for our attention and follow up.

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[My thanks to all who presently serve the parish community in this area and I'm glad to take this opportunity to collate and consolidate policies and procedures across the whole parish at this time. Fr Edmund]