

**St. Mary's Church, Dalmahoy**

**Minutes of the Vestry Meeting**

**4<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

**1. Present:**

Rev. Christine Downey  
Lord Morton  
Gavin Craig  
Denis King  
Rona Finlayson  
Rosie Mann  
Douglas Walker  
Ted Tracey-Bower  
Margaret Chill  
Jane Russell  
Carole MacBride  
Caroline Gunn (PVG overview only)  
Donald Urquhart (PVG overview only)

**2. Apologies for Absence:**

Ella Henderson

**3. Opening Prayer and Welcome:**

Christine said an opening prayer and welcomed the attendees to the meeting. A special welcome was extended to Donald Urquhart who was attending to give the Vestry a high level overview of St Mary's responsibilities for the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG).

**4. PVG Overview:**

Donald started his overview by saying that his main aim was to answer any questions that Vestry members had on the subject. He did make clear however that the St Mary's legal responsibility for ensuring that the correct PVG procedures and processes were in place lay with the Vestry and not just the PVG co-ordinator (Caroline). Donald also pointed out that PVG is not only for protecting children but also vulnerable adults. This is more common in churches. Some of the points made in answer to questions were:

- Any perceived PVG issue observed should be brought to the notice of the appropriate people to action. First within St Mary's and then, if thought necessary, escalated to Diocesan level.
- The Vestry need to know if an issue has arisen but they do not need to know the details and this therefore ensures confidentiality.
- Donald is readily available to give assistance and advice as required. His contact details are on the Diocesan website. He also handed out some cards with contact details on them.
- A record should be kept regarding any Notifiable Events. This should include, the event itself, how it was dealt with, and who was involved in the resolution
- It is not only issues that happen within St Mary's that are within the remit. Should there be an awareness of a congregation member being in a vulnerable state from issues occurring outside of St Mary's assistance can be offered.
- When visiting a congregation member it is best to take someone with you. This is for your own safety and also to have a person who can report on what the visit entailed should there be any issues afterwards
- If it is not possible to take someone else with you make sure that someone knows where you are going to, have a contact number for them, and check in once you leave.

## **5. Minutes of December 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting:**

The minutes of the meeting held on December 3<sup>rd</sup> were approved. These will now be displayed in the hall and on the website.

## **6. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting:**

The Audio system in the church is still not working in an acceptable manner. Ted reported that he was waiting for 'Sonic Lodge' to respond to his latest email on them coming to look at the system and give advice on what can be done to improve it. He was asked to put some pressure on them as this was an issue that was causing annoyance.

It was mentioned that a congregation member had attended a wedding at St James Goldenacre had commented on how good their sound system was. It was agreed that we contact St James's for information on how their system was set up and by whom.

## **7. Other Matters from Christine:**

Alan Phillips had sent out a note indicating that he, Christine, and some other members of the congregation had expressed a wish that St Mary's update our hymn books to the latest Ancient & Modern edition. This edition contains virtually all the hymns that we sing. This would be quite a costly exercise. However it was announced that an anonymous donation, specifically for the purchase of hymn books, had been made which when Gift Aided would almost cover the cost of purchasing 50 Melody editions, 4 Full Music editions, and an Organ edition of the new hymn books. Given that the cost of these books was covered through the donation the Vestry approved the proposal.

## **8. Treasurer's Report:**

Gavin distributed his report which showed the end of January balance in the General Account as £15,692 (£9,512 of this is in unrestricted funds). The St Mary's Trust Account stood at £16,196. The value of St Mary's investment in the SEC Unit Trust Pool on December 31st was approximately £57,881. So far this accounting year St Mary's outgoings are considerably higher than incomings. Although we are still financially healthy when looking at the overall position there is a requirement to keep a careful eye on the situation. Fund raising initiatives will be considered.

It was agreed that the Organist honorarium for Alan Phillips be increased in line with the new Scottish Federation of Organists scale which gets update every two years.

It was also agreed that Paula's Administrator salary be increased to reflect the new Real Living Wage rate of £9 per hour. It was also agreed that should Christine require Paula to work some extra hours, especially around AGM time, that she would have authority to do so.

It was agreed that St Mary's donate £800 of the Charitable Giving budget to the Friends of Chernobyl Children West Lothian. This charity was proposed by Margaret King.

Douglas explained that the Secretary to the Church's SEC Unit Trust Investment Committee recently sent us a questionnaire to discern our views on a change being proposed concerning the Committee's Investment methodology. The change is to be discussed by Synod before a final decision is made.

The background is as follows: Baillie Gifford manages 2 Unit Trusts that comprise 70% of the SEC U/T fund. The remaining 30% of the fund is a segregated portfolio (not unitised) in which individual stocks and shares are held; Baillie Gifford manages the portfolio but our SEC Investment Committee controls investments on ethical grounds. The committee now proposes to disinvest the entire segregated portfolio and re-invest the monies in one of the unit trusts. Consequently they will lose their ethical control - because the segregated portfolio will no longer exist.

The 1st policy question we are asked is: Are we agreeable to the recommended change?

The 2nd policy question is: Where do we place ourselves on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is "*we want ethical investments at all cost*" OR 10 is "*we want growth investments regardless of ethical constraints*"

Douglas mentioned that Baillie Gifford is signed up to UK and UN ethical treaties so not likely ever to invest in areas the church would be unhappy about.

After discussion, it was agreed that Douglas should reply to the questionnaire and should indicate a "Yes" to 1st question and indicate a "7" to the 2nd question.

### **9. Fabric Report:**

Carole reported that a number of items were being addressed but that they were moving slowly. She is going to try and arrange a meeting with Alex Stewart, who is the Diocesan Buildings Convener, to discuss some of items needing to be progressed and whether St Mary's would be likely to get Grants to help pay for them.

The problem with rats at the Rectory is still prevalent. Harry Lawrie, who carries out rodent control work, is dealing with this.

Initial contact has been made with Jim Lawrie, who farms the land around the rectory on behalf of Willie Crawford, regarding the requirement to replace the rectory fencing and responsibilities for this. Ben is currently trying to schedule a meeting with Jim.

The septic tank cover replacement is still on hold awaiting action from the sub contractor.

### **10. Hall Committee Report:**

Feedback from the Ceilidh indicated that it had been very successful.

### **11. Lay Rep Report:**

There was nothing to report.

### **13. AOB:**

- Feedback on Advent music settings was received and will be taken into account for future music choices.
- Thanks were received from Graeme MacBride for the gift voucher that he has received for his work on the Church grounds.
- Christine gave her thanks for the hamper that she received at Christmas.

### **14. Date of Next Meeting:**

The next vestry meeting will be held at **7.00pm on March 4th** in the Douglas Hall.