

St. Mary's Church, Dalmahoy

Minutes of the Vestry Meeting

3rd August 2020

It should be noted that due to the lockdown situation this meeting was a 'virtual' meeting via Zoom. The attendees were in agreement that it was acceptable to regard it as a vestry meeting and minute it as such.

1. On the Zoom Meeting:

Rev. Christine Downey

Gavin Craig

Denis King

Jonathan Gibbs

Carole MacBride

Ella Henderson

Margaret King

Douglas Walker

2. Apologies for Absence:

Lord Morton

Margaret Chill

3. Opening Prayer and Welcome

Christine said a prayer and welcomed people to the meeting.

4. Minutes of July 6th Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on July 6th were approved with no amendments. These will be displayed in the hall and on the website.

5. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

The person that Christine has asked to create the new Website is now back working on it. She had been delayed through family illnesses. It is hoped that the site will be available soon.

The magazine list is still to be checked out for accuracy and to ensure that all hand deliverable magazines have someone allocated to deliver them. Denis will try and progress this with the aim that the list is correct by the time that the September issue is produced.

6. Other Matters from Christine

Christine reported that she had visited Margaret Chill prior to the meeting as Margaret had a number of ideas on what we could be doing better at St Mary's. Her ideas included :

- Sustainability. As the current generation we need to take steps to ensure that a healthy church is handed on to the next generation.
- Financial planning, There is a requirement to create a financial plan which projects St Mary's finances into the future and gives a clearer picture of what monies are available to be spent on projects.
- Youth Ministry. Possible 'Messy Church'. This is a subject that will be discussed in a vestry meeting with Claire Benton-Evans within the next two months.
- When allowed more informal get together activities such as a 'knit and natter' group.
- A further Vestry Day (on church premises) to follow up on the Away Day that was held in February and to plan for how the concerns of the congregation can be addressed. This needs to be face-to-face, however under the current rules we could not do this as a full vestry. Christine is to contact Bishop John to see if there is any way that this could be allowed.

An email had also been received from a congregation member expressing their concerns about the way that St Mary's was running. The meeting felt it a positive to see these concerns in writing and it accepted that it was a much needed catalyst displaying that work needed to be done to allay these worries. Christine will contact the sender to discuss their concerns.

The ensuing discussion centred around what steps could be taken short term. It was agreed that there was a need to make St Mary's more visible in the local area. This would involve leafleting drops to the new houses that are being built and possible advertising in local publications. It was also considered that it would be a good idea to build closer contacts with the other local congregations in East Calder, Kirknewton, and Ratho. Christine will contact them to discuss.

It was noted that the current demographic of St Mary's congregation meant that more tasks were falling on less people. With this in mind an appeal for 'Talents' to people with a connection to St Mary's is going to be made. It is felt that even if people are not regular attendees at services they may have skills that they would be able to offer which would be beneficial to St Mary's.

Likewise, even without special projects, St Mary's monthly expenditure is greater than its income. There is a requirement to try and balance that. An appeal for 'Funds' will also be made. This appeal will not be for large one off donations for a specific purpose but, as well as the wider congregation, would target people like wedding couples who may be consider to committing to a small monthly donation to help keep St Mary's financially viable.

Christine asked that thoughts on the wording of these appeals be sent to her by the end of August.

7. Treasurer's Report

Gavin distributed his report which showed that the 31st July balance in the General Account was £31,592.

There was £2,023 held in restricted funds, leaving £29,569 in unrestricted funds.

The St Mary's Trust Account stood at £1,931.

The value of the SEC Unit Trust Pool on June 30th was £44,406. The July end figure was unavailable at this time.

A payment of £3,560 from the St Mary's Trust Account had been made to the Stonemason who is working on the Rectory. The Provincial Grant Fund had reimbursed £1,780 (50%) in line with their commitment to this work. This money went into the General Account.

An offer of a donation to be used for Graveyard Maintenance had been received. The donation is to be lodged in a Restricted Fund for this purpose. Vestry were very grateful for this offer.

Gavin had started to look for someone to carry out the Independent Examination of St Mary's accounts at year end. Carole said that she had contacted someone who might be willing to do this. She was waiting for an answer.

Gavin gave details of all the Charitable Donations that St Mary's had made in the current financial year. This came to £1,400 directly from church funds. He asked for suggestions on other charities that we may wish to donate to. It was mentioned that due to Covid-19 a lot of small local charities would be grateful for donations. The congregation will be asked to nominate charities for vestry to consider for donations.

8. Fabric Report

Carole reported that :

- The rectory central heating boiler is causing problems and may have to be replaced. The cost of this would be around £2,300.
- There are also problems with electricity in the rectory kitchen. Although work may need to be done Carole felt that the cost would not be significant.
- Killian Steele has been contacted regarding the sound system in the church which was causing some issues before lockdown. He has agreed to investigate and will attend before the church is used for Sunday worship again.
- Carole said that she had been trying to find a way of using renewable technologies from the point of lowering our carbon footprint and reducing the total annual energy costs for the church and accessing some grants known as RHIs (Renewable Heat Incentives). Although there was one possible installer that she was still in contact with for a quote she had been unsuccessful to date despite having had free advice from Zero Waste Scotland. Therefore Replacement of the current wiring and more energy efficient heaters may be the only possible solution. This would not reduce running costs but would hopefully provide an improved level of warmth for those using the church especially during the colder months of the year. It was noted that whatever decision is made on heating that there is a duty to be very aware of the cost of the required work in relation to the funds that St Mary's currently has available.

9. Hall Committee Report:

Nothing to report

10. Lay Rep Report:

Nothing to report

11.PVG Report

All rules and guidelines from the Government, Province, and Diocese regarding the Covid-19 crisis are being followed.

As lockdown is eased it continues to be the vestry's responsibility to ensure that the necessary hygiene and distancing measures are put in place and to ensure that they are being adhered to.

12. AOB

- Concern had been raised regarding the communication of events, especially deaths, to the congregation. Christine explained that it was necessary to get permission from the family of the deceased before an email could be sent to the congregational list. However, it was recognised that this is an area that needs improvement.
- Ella raised the question of whether or not a Choir Festival could be held this year. Christine and Ella will meet to discuss what the options are.
- As the numbers on the Fairtrade Group have been dropping there is a requirement to review how it runs in the future. As time did not allow for a proper discussion at this meeting it will be an agenda item at the next meeting.
- Jonathan proposed a vote of thanks to the people who had set up the hall for the Sunday Service on August 2nd. He felt that it had been a positive experience. The meeting agreed with this. There were some things that didn't work quite as planned but these will be addressed as we get more experience of worshipping under Covid-19 regulations, whether in the hall or church.

13. Date of Next Meeting: The next vestry meeting will be held at **7.00pm on September 7th**. At present this will be, again, a 'virtual' meeting.