

St. Mary's Church, Dalmahoy

Minutes of the Vestry Meeting

7th December 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, Lord Morton, Gavin Craig

Denis King

Carole MacBride

Margaret King

Ella Henderson

Wilma Brown

Ann Donoghue

2. Apologies for Absence:

Jonathan Gibbs

Margaret Chill

3. Opening Prayer and Welcome

Christine said a prayer and welcomed the attendees to the meeting. There was a special welcome to Wilma as Rector's Warden and Ann as Alternate Lay Representative. Christine also reminded the attendees that if they had any concerns or matters that they wished to discuss that they should not hesitate to contact her.

4. Minutes of November 9th Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on November 9th were approved with no amendments. These will be displayed in the hall and on the website.

5. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

- There was no further update on the website.
- Gavin raised the point that the insurance policy for the church, which had just been renewed, contained a new clause in relation to Covid-19. This was that if the church was not being used for regular worship there was still a requirement for someone to attend at least once a week to check that everything was in order. Carole committed to do this.
- The dates and times for the Christmas Services have now been communicated and sign up for these services is underway. The services will also be live streamed. Wilma will compile a seating plan for the services being held in the church. She will also arrange for stewards and readers. As St Mary's will need Bishop John to approve the use of the church for the two services on Christmas Eve, Carole will create a plan of the logistics around how St Mary's will address the social distancing and sanitisation criteria.
- Christine will stream an advent service from the rectory at a date still to be decided.
- The live streaming of the Sunday Service on December 6th had gone well. The sound was clear and allowed all speaking segments to be heard. There were no break ups in the

transmission as the internet problem work around was successful. Thank you to Ben and Ted for all their work in getting this sorted.

6. Other Matters from Christine

- The possibility of a small group of the congregation carrying out carol singing outside the houses of congregation members who are more isolated is being explored. Volunteers to sing are being sought. This would be carried out within the social distancing rules. (Update : A communication from the SEC Advisory Group which arrived after the meeting made it clear that this is not permissible under current regulations).
- Christine is purchasing a new computer as her old one is no longer reliable.
- Christine thanked the vestry for all their support over the past year and for being willing to serve into 2021. This has been and will continue to be a difficult period but she is confident that we will get through it.
- Once the festive season is over and we are into 2021 there is a hope that vestry will be able to meet face to face to review our current goals and set new ones for the coming year. Restrictions may cause this to be difficult but the exercise will be carried out in some shape or form.

7. AGM

The draft minutes from the AGM, which was held on November 22nd, were presented to the meeting. These were accepted with no suggested amendments. They will now be emailed out to the congregation for information. They will still have to be formally approved at the 2021 AGM.

The attendees were asked if they had received any feedback regarding the meeting or had any comments themselves. It was felt that the number participating, 25, had been good and not far from the normal size of attendance. The meeting felt more relaxed and less rushed than it being held immediately after the Sunday Service when people were in a hurry to get home for lunch. The use of Zoom as part of the 2021 AGM will be discussed nearer the time. It was pointed out that no one had thanked Christine.

8. Treasurer's Report

Gavin distributed his report which showed that the 30th November balance in the General Account was £27,665.

There was £2,873 held in restricted funds, leaving £24,792 in unrestricted funds.

The St Mary's Trust Account stood at £2,218.

The value of the SEC Unit Trust Pool on October 31st was £41.808. The November value not available at the date of the meeting.

- Quarterly £1,500 grant from the Douglas Trust received with thanks.
- £100 raised so far from sale of items in lieu of Christmas Fair.
- Expressions of thanks had been received from Edinburgh Food Social and St Salvador's Food Bank for the cash donations given to them from Harvest Sunday retiring collection.
- £343 had been paid for materials purchased for the shed roof repair. The labour kindly donated by John & Janet Manning (Pippa's parents).
- £100 thank you gift card to Graeme MacBride for the excellent work he carries out cutting the grass areas around the church and graveyard.
- £500 paid to Papua New Guinea Partnership as the second instalment of the current 4 year commitment St Mary's has made to sponsor an ordinand.

- A card machine has been acquired which will allow people to make electronic payments and donations while at St Mary's
- The Paypal application is in progress. This is to allow people who view the online services to be able to donate to St Mary's via this method.

The annual communication from the diocese regarding Quota has been received. Due to the Covid-19 crisis the SEC had made the decision to give churches a 10% reduction from what would have been their Quota allocation for 2021. This means that St Mary's Quota has been assessed to be £6,103 where it would have been £6,781. The vestry had been asked by the diocese, along with all other churches, whether they would be willing to forego all or some of this reduction to assist other churches in the area who were struggling financially. After a discussion, where differing viewpoints were raised, it was agreed that due to the current uncertainty regarding finances in the coming year St Mary's would accept the full reduction at present. However we would indicate that if matters improved regarding income as restrictions ease that this would be reviewed and a possible donation made.

9. Fabric Report

Carole reported that :

- There had been problems with the church electrics on both Tuesday 1st December and Sunday 6th December. Beam Electrics had attended and fixed the first problem and the second was fixed by switching off some of the additional heaters. The wiring in the church is quite complicated and this will need to be taken into account in future plans for any upgrading of heating in the church.
- As a result of snow lying on the roof following the snowfall on Thursday, water was discovered dripping through the wooden ceiling boards in one particular location. Fortunately this was spotted by Edward and Gavin when they were in the church to erect and decorate the Christmas Tree. A bucket was placed below the area and a small amount of water was collected. The lying snow was more than likely the issue so whenever snow is forecast, this is likely to happen. A deep plastic tray has been left in position.
- A puddle was noted on the floor in the south porch. This is not a new problem. It has happened on several occasions in the past. The cause has not been ascertained or investigated recently but it will need to be, similarly with the water ingress on the roof.
- Following the appeal for help from those out-with but perhaps associated with members of the congregation, the wooden garage roof has been refurbished completely by John and Janet Manning (Pippa's parents). This was carried out for the cost of most but not all of the materials. It was a bigger job than originally anticipated and additional timber was required. John Manning refused the offer to reimburse him for the additional costs. As there was no charge for the labour John and Janet were asked to nominate a charity that St Mary's would give a donation to. They said Children in Need for use in Scotland OR as John pointed out that St Mary's is a charity and there is no real need as far as they are concerned for a donation to be made elsewhere. The meeting decided to take up this generous offer and keep the money within St Mary's. Denis will send a formal note of thanks to John and Janet to show St Mary's appreciation for their efforts and support.
- Carole's son in law who runs a heating business has offered to arrange to service the boiler in the hall and do the necessary gas safety checks on the boiler and cooker without making any charge for labour. If materials were required, these would be invoiced at the cost which they would be to his company. This offer was accepted with thanks by the meeting.

- There have been issues with the Internet to the main hall dropping out during the live stream services. The investigative work has identified that there is a requirement for some extra wiring to be installed to correct this problem. A donation has been received which will fund this work. This will be progressed.

Carole told the meeting that she had been researching ways to improve the heating of the church for over a year. She had come to the conclusion that the only way to address the many issues which the church building presents is to embark on a major project of external restoration. She recognises that the cost of this would be extremely expensive but feels that it would be possible to get a number of grants that would cover a large proportion of the cost. The chances of getting grants would be more likely than it was for the rectory as, although both are listed buildings, rectories do not attract the same level of grants as churches. Before progressing anything in this area and exploring the grant options a full Quinquennial Review and Structural Engineers report would be required. There would be a cost of between 6-8k to produce these reports. A preliminary discussion took place. It was decided that there was a requirement to set up a Fabric Team which would include Carole and Christine to look at the refurbishment of the fabric of the building. This team would make recommendations on what work was required and create a timeline for how the work could be progressed and funded.

10. Hall Committee Report:

Nothing to report.

11. Lay Rep Report:

Nothing to report.

12 .PVG Report

Caroline Gunn has agreed to remain as PVG Co-ordinator for St Mary's Dalmahoy . There was nothing else to report.

13. AOB

- Gavin had raised the idea of registering St Mary's with an agent with the possibility that St Mary's may be considered for use as a film location. He will explore the pro's and con's of this and report back in January.
- The subject of the hampers that St Mary's provides for the cottages was discussed. Carole suggested that apart from one couple, who would receive a supermarket gift card, a Mary's Meals sponsor a child's meals for a year voucher would be an appropriate gift. It was agreed to progress this. Donations towards the cost will be sought.
- Cards to friends of St Mary's who still contribute to St Mary's but no longer attend on a regular basis are to be sent out. This is to thank them for their continued support. Carole will arrange for this to be done on behalf of the congregation and Christine will sign the cards.

14. Date of Next Meeting: The next vestry meeting will be held at **7.00pm on January 11th** At present this will be, again, a 'virtual' meeting.