

St. Mary's Church, Dalmahoy

Minutes of the Vestry Meeting

11th January 2021

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

Denis King

Carole MacBride

Margaret King

Ella Henderson

Wilma Brown

Ann Donoghue

Jonathan Gibbs

2. Apologies for Absence:

Margaret Chill

Lord Morton

Gavin Craig

3. Opening Prayer and Welcome

Christine said a prayer and welcomed the attendees to the meeting. This included a welcome to 2021 which highlighted that things will continue to be different from the way they were previously. Day to day operations have been required to be changed and communities have by necessity communicated more by online means. There is, however, hopefulness. There is the opportunity to look backwards and using the knowledge from the past create a plan for the future.

4. Minutes of December 7th Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on December 7th were approved with no amendments.

5. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

- Christine will request that the person creating the website make it live by the end of January. A Paypal button will be installed on the website for people who may wish to make a donation to St Mary's in this way.
- An enhancement has been made to the Internet into the main part of the Douglas Hall to address the reliability issues that were being encountered. It is now 100% stable which will be beneficial when St Mary's is allowed to use the Douglas Hall again.
- St Mary's now has its own YouTube channel. It can be accessed by searching for St Mary's Dalmahoy on YouTube. Christine is asking the congregation, if they can, to access it, like it, and subscribe to it.
- As Gavin was unable to attend, the report that he was going to give into the possible registration of St Mary's as a site for a film location was carried over.

6. Other Matters from Christine

- Until communal worship is allowed again and it is felt safe for St Mary's to resume this the Sunday Service will be streamed from the Rectory. This had worked well the 2 previous Sundays.
- The Christmas Services had been 'an adventure'. Although everything had not gone perfectly they had been well received. They had felt special and had been enjoyed by those who had seen them either live or viewed them later. Hearing the organ being played again and the use of soloists was quite uplifting. Thanks were expressed to Ben for all the hard work that he had done in making them available.
- Christine has been in touch with a number of the congregation through phone and email during the past few weeks. She had found that some people were happy to be contacted by email rather than phone due to their circumstances and where their phones were situated and said that this should be taken into account when making pastoral contact with congregation members.

7. Covid-19 Restrictions

As the whole of mainland Scotland is now in Level 4 of the Scottish Government Covid-19 restrictions and communal worship is not allowed at present there was some discussion on this subject. The main points were :

- It is expected that these restrictions will be in place for an extended period.
- Once it is possible for churches to open for communal worship again it may be the case that St Mary's will not open up immediately again. The vestry will take a decision using the guidelines from both the Scottish Government and the Diocesan Advisory Committee as to when to open again. This decision will include a review of how the guidelines for St Mary's worked during the time during the period St Mary's held services in the Douglas Hall and whether they need to be changed or tightened.
- Pippa is not allowed to be in the office during these restrictions. Therefore the work that she can carry out is severely affected. She is able to access emails from home and although she cannot keep to her regular hours will be logging in frequently to view emails and where necessary action them. Pippa is also able to access remotely any messages left on the office voicemail system.
- It is an insurance requirement that the church and hall are inspected for problems at least once a week while not in use. Carole, as People's Warden and being conversant with the heating systems, will continue to do this.
- The Douglas Hall is being used on January 13th for an official Covid support training course. This is by the company that has carried out these training courses in the hall previously and is permitted under current guidelines.
- We want to make sure that congregation members are getting the support they require, even if it is just phone calls or emails. Should anyone know of someone who needs this get in touch with Christine through either phone or email.
- St Mary's is intending to register for the Connect Scotland initiative. This is aimed to help people who are not I.T. technically proficient to get the knowledge which would allow them to use technology in a way that is beneficial to them. This requires St Mary's to have a 'Digital Champion' who would be able to assist by providing coaching. As Ann Donoghue intimated that she was already scheduled to carry out Digital Champion training for another purpose she was asked to take on this role for St Mary's and kindly agreed to do so.

8. Treasurer's Report

Gavin had distributed his report which showed that the 31st December balance in the General Account was £26,669.

There was £2,673 held in restricted funds, leaving £23,996 in unrestricted funds.

The St Mary's Trust Account stood at £2,514.

The value of the SEC Unit Trust Pool on December 31st was £45,792.

- The Christmas sale of items brought in £329. A question was asked as to how much was raised by the Christmas Fair in 2019. The answer being £718.
- St Mary's investment in the Unit Trust Pool continues to perform well and vestry are currently happy to leave the investment as is until funds are required. However there is an awareness that at some time the fund may not perform as well. Therefore this investment is always under review.
- Christine had paid out the final £200 that was in the Rector's Discretionary Fund over the previous month. This went to people who were struggling financially due to the Covid crisis. It was asked how the RDF had been funded previously. The understanding was that one way was through donations specifically given to this fund. The meeting felt it important that there was money in the fund which Christine could distribute to people who required support on a confidential basis. The meeting agreed to move £500 into the RDF.
- The meeting agreed to send a further £200 to St Salvador's Food Bank. There will be a review in a few months time to decide whether to donate more to them. At that stage a decision will be made on the maximum that we wish to donate to this one charity during the financial year as part of St Mary's Charitable Giving allocation.

9. Fabric Report

Carole reported that :

- There have been continued issues with the electrics in the church but they have not caused any serious issues.
- No further water ingress from the roof has been noted during visits to check on the condition of the church, a plastic bucket is still in place to catch any drips.

Carole had made both Heather McGregor and Niall Gunn aware of her ideas for a major project to be undertaken on the fabric of the church. Heather has had recent experience of a much bigger project on behalf of Heriot Watt University regarding the upgrading of a listed building and will possibly be a useful source of information and advice. Niall Gunn, has recommended that the first step should be to have a Quinquennial Review and Report undertaken. He has looked into this on our behalf with fellow colleagues and has suggested a suitably qualified architect who would be able to carry this out, Tina Avery. A copy of the proposal was sent to vestry.

Carole asked for approval to contact Tina Avery to discuss our needs and then arrange for her to conduct the review and prepare the report. This would be purely regarding the church building and immediate surrounding area. It would not be a report on the Douglas Hall, the Rectory or the Rectory cottage. Since both the Rectory and Douglas Hall have had major work carried out recently, the need for them to be reviewed did not seem a priority.

The Rectory Cottage will need to be reviewed prior to work being done to upgrade it once it becomes vacant. This upgrade will entail a significant financial outlay. The review would not be a priority at the moment.

The last Quinquennial Review was done in September 2016. Therefore one would be required to be carried out within the next twelve to eighteen months. Included in the 2016 review were the Rectory, Rectory Cottage and Douglas Hall. It was felt that there was a need to check with the diocese that leaving them out of this proposed review was an acceptable course of action. Carole will contact the relevant people in the diocese to get an answer on this.

Carole will also contact Tina and Niall to arrange a Zoom meeting between the three of them to discuss our needs and produce a proposal on the best way to proceed. She will present this to the next meeting for discussion.

10. Hall Committee Report:

Nothing to report.

11. Lay Rep Report:

Jonathan had received a consultation paper regarding Canon 4, which refers to the process for election of Bishops. He will forward this to vestry for comments.

12 .PVG Report

Nothing to report. .

13. AOB

- Although it is unlikely to affect St Mary's an interest in the Hate Crime Security Fund (Places of Worship) has been registered.
- Birthday greetings are being sent to John Murrie who is 95 this year.
- Wilma mentioned that Morrison's have a simple process in store for donating items to food banks.

14. Date of Next Meeting: The next vestry meeting will be held at **7.00pm on February 1st**. At present this will be, again, a 'virtual' meeting.