

St. Mary's Church, Dalmahoy

Minutes of the Vestry Meeting

6th July 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

Rona Finlayson

Margaret King

Douglas Walker

2. Apologies for Absence:

Lord Morton

Margaret Chill

Ella Henderson

3. Opening Prayer and Welcome

Christine said a prayer and welcomed people to the meeting.

4. Minutes of June 1st Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on June 1st were approved with no amendments. These will be displayed in the hall and on the website.

5. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

St Mary's now has permission to open the church for Individual Prayer under the Scottish Government Phase 2 regulations. Christine reported that one family had attended for prayer so far. An email from the Province on the Phase 3 guidelines and processes had been received just before the meeting. Denis said he would forward this to vestry members after the meeting. A meeting to discuss St Mary's plan for moving to Phase 3, which will allow for church services to be held, will be scheduled.

6. Other Matters from Christine

Christine informed the meeting that as well as St Mary's being open for Individual Prayer a number of congregation members were making use of the church grounds to walk around.

Margaret King asked if it was allowed currently to administer Home Communion. Under Phase 2 this is not allowed. This may change in Phase 3. Christine said that she would be willing to carry out Home Communion when allowed. These would have to be strictly in line with the guidelines as there is the worry with the people receiving the communion being in the vulnerable groups. At this time she would not want any of the pastoral team administering communion.

The new Website is nearly complete. Christine will send out a link to it for vestry members to see what it looks like. If all looks fine it will then be made available to everyone.

Rona asked who is currently administering the magazine list which details who delivers In Touch to which congregation members. Claire used to do this. It was agreed that we need to look for someone to take on this role.

Rona also said that she felt that St Mary's needed to put a focus on people. The vestry have been working hard and made good progress on issues such as fabric but she felt that there now needs to be more focus on the needs of the congregation. She felt that they needed to be made more aware of who's who on the vestry and that they are approachable and willing to listen on any issues that are raised. The meeting agreed with Rona's points and to take steps to address them. This will include having a meeting where congregation members can raise concerns and ideas.

Christine is considering plans for a 'Welcome Back to the Building' event to take place once restrictions are lifted to an appropriate level.

7. Treasurer's Report

Gavin distributed his report which showed that the 30th of June balance in the General Account was £32,939.

There was £2,023 held in restricted funds, leaving £30,916 in unrestricted funds.

The St Mary's Trust Account stood at £5,290.

The value of the SEC Unit Trust Pool on May 31st was £44,598. The June end figure was unavailable at this time.

(Update : The June end figure became available after the meeting . Gavin passed on the information that the holding was valued at £47,406 on June 30th).

A donation had been received from the family of Lesley Forbes. Gavin has already sent thanks by email but Denis will send a more formal letter of thanks.

The Rectory Cottage needs a Legionella Risk Assessment. Dove Davies will be asked to arrange for this to be carried out. Cost is £54.

Although St Mary's investment in the SEC Unit Trust Pool is performing well it was noted that the markets are very volatile at present. Therefore, we need to continually review St Mary's holding in this Trust Pool to ensure our reserves are protected.

8. Fabric Report

Carole reported that :

- She continues to investigate options for replacing the church heating system. A number have already been rejected. This is primarily because the cost, upheaval and efficiency of those particular systems would not necessarily provide the required heat in a readily controllable and cost effective manner. There are other options which she is currently researching along with the possibility of grant funding.
- One of the potential areas of funding is Historic Environment Scotland who award grants for buildings such as the church for major and relatively minor maintenance work. However they require any grant applications to be supported by a professional report from a Conservation Approved Surveyor or Architect. This would be expensive and probably too high to commit to. The actual cost would depend on what detailed plans are available for the structure of the church. These will be located, and a quote sought from a surveyor before any decision is made on whether this is worth progressing.
- Still on the heating. In April a report was received and distributed to vestry from Zero Waste Scotland. Carole has discovered that it is possible to have a follow up review done and is in the process of organising that at the moment. The second report will hopefully make it clearer about the best way to proceed.
- The full report from the Accessibility Audit which was commissioned and conducted before lockdown had been distributed to vestry. This was a lengthy document which made a lot of recommendations to improve access to both the interior and exterior of the Douglas Hall. It was agreed that the vestry will need to have a face to face meeting, once allowed, to fully discuss to the report and decide what aspects of it is possible to implement. It was also agreed that the invoice for the production of the report should be requested and paid.
- The suitability of the pathway between the car park and the church had been brought up. Some suggestions for improvements were discussed but these were not thought feasible. Further consideration on the best way forward is required.
- Work on the rectory is due to start at the end of July.
- There is a constitutional requirement for St Mary's to appoint a Property Convener and 2 other congregation members to form a Fabric Committee along with the People's Warden. An advert will be put into the next In Touch asking for volunteers.

Christine reported that there had recently been another issue with rats at the rectory. That has now been brought under control. Discussions with various parties including The Estate, Ratho Park, Sepa, Edinburgh Council and Ben are ongoing and a plan to eradicate the problem has been created.

9. Hall Committee Report:

Rona reported that Margaret Chill has volunteered to join the Hall Committee.

A First Aid group who do Covid-19 training are going to rent the hall to run some of their courses.

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

- It was agreed by vestry that a further £200 would be donated to St Salvador's Food Bank. This will help them over the school summer holiday period during which demand may be higher.
- Christine will talk with Pippa on the process of producing the Sunday Sheet once it is permissible for it to be used at services .
- Rona raised her concerns regarding the lack of a 'Sunday Circle' type group for young people at St Mary's. She was aware of some young people who may attend if there was an offering for them. Also with all of the new housing being built close by there would be the opportunity to attract families to St Mary's. It was agreed that we need to try and address this. It was felt that there was probably a need to get someone from outside of St Mary's to set this up and run it. Christine is going to talk to Claire Benton-Evans (the Diocesan Youth Convener) for advice on how this could be progressed. There will be a cost to this but the meeting felt that it is a necessary step to try and attract young people and families to St Mary's. Once a solution is agreed on and in place a leaflet drop to the new houses will be arranged.

13. Date of Next Meeting: The next vestry meeting will be held at **7.00pm on August 3rd**. At present this will be, again, a 'virtual' meeting.