

St. Mary's Church, Dalmahoy

Minutes of the Vestry Meeting 7th June 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

Gavin Craig

Carole MacBride

Margaret King

Ann Donoghue

2. Apologies for Absence:

Margaret Chill

Wilma Brown

Jonathan Gibbs

Lord Morton

Ella Henderson

3. Opening Prayer and Welcome

Christine said a prayer and welcomed the attendees to the meeting.

4. Minutes of May 10th Meeting

There were no amendments to the minutes of the meeting held on May 10th. The minutes were approved by the meeting and will now be filed and displayed as normal.

5. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

- Final work on the new website is being completed. The generic login addresses have been set up on the new system. Some work on allowing the online Sunday Services to be viewable via the website is being carried out. It should then be ready to go live.
- Gavin had not heard anything from the agent regarding registering St Mary's as a possible film location. He has emailed them for an update.

- The Recovery and Renewal questionnaire that was discussed at the May meeting had been completed and sent off.

6. Other Matters from Christine

- It is hoped that restrictions will soon allow St Mary's to have the capacity to hold Sunday Services in the church again. When this happens, the intention is that the services will still be broadcast live. Christine is going to set up a vestry get together at the church to discuss how best the equipment to carry out these broadcasts can be set up. This will encompass both the quality of the broadcasts and ensuring that the set up has as little effect on the worship as possible.
- The current aim is to restart Sunday Service in the church as soon as possible after the 2m distancing restrictions are lifted.

Christine handed over to Margaret King, who had some thoughts about how St Mary's was currently carrying out its Sunday worship. Margaret felt that during the Covid crisis, through no one's fault, we had lost some of the inclusivity that was in place beforehand. While it was great that we had readers and intercessors each Sunday and were thankful for it, she felt that there was a requirement for a wider range of the congregation to be asked to carry out these duties at the services. Different voices and approaches would give more variety to the people hearing the service and show St Mary's as being an inclusive place of worship.

Margaret also felt that once communal singing was allowed again, we should explore the possibility of having a soloist leading us into the opening or closing hymn by singing the first verse. Again, this would be something that people could volunteer to do.

Finally, she suggested that where possible the closing hymn should be an upbeat one which would have the effect of the congregation leaving the church with a spring in their step.

Christine agreed to write an email asking the congregation to put their names forward if they were willing to be readers, intercessors, or singers. These names would then be forwarded to the stewards and Alan for use when organising the Sunday services.

7. Community Engagement Team (CET)

This is the name that the Community and Growth Team will proceed under. A meeting of the CET was held in May. The questionnaire mentioned in the May minutes is being prepared and is aimed to be ready for the time of the next edition of In Touch. The next meeting of the team is scheduled for June 16th. Margaret King is going to produce Notes and Objectives for the meetings as they proceed. This will ensure that things stay on track.

8. Treasurer's Report

Gavin had distributed his report which showed that the 28th May balance in the General Account was £24,225.

There was £3,709 held in restricted funds or for other specific purposes, leaving £20,516 in unrestricted funds.

During the month, the half yearly HMRC Gift Aid return of £4,926.50 had been received as was the quarterly £1,500 grant from the Douglas Trust. Payments from Easyfundraising of £21.34 and £5 from Amazon Smile were also received.

An invoice for £144 was paid to Henry Willis for the call out which was required to repair the organ in the church. This was to do with the church being closed during lockdown and the dehumidifier not being on. It was agreed at the meeting, that as this was a repair rather than regular maintenance it would be paid from the Organ Fund.

The St Mary's Trust Account stood at £1,831

The value of the SEC Unit Trust Pool on May 31st was £47,966.

Charitable Giving was discussed. Gavin had produced figures which showed that in the current financial year £700 had so far been allocated to charities by vestry and a further £493 via congregational donations for specific charities. Gavin said that he had received some feedback after the AGM questioning whether vestry were allocating too much to charities, especially as St Mary's finances are not as strong as previously. He suggested that we cut the allocation for at least this year.

For a number of years St Mary's has had a policy of donating around 10% of congregational giving to charities. This would have equated to around £3,500 in this financial year. After discussion, given the uncertainty over current

finances due to Covid, it was agreed that this be limited to £2,000 at present for this year. Should matters improve this could be increased at a later date. The meeting also agreed to donate £750 of the £2,000 to the India Covid Appeal via the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC).

9. Fabric Report

Carole reported that :

- The Quinquennial Review, completed in April has not had a report issued as yet.
- Following a lot of major disturbance of the bait boxes around the Rectory, a night sight camera has been bought and is in operation. Foxes rather than rats may have been the culprits.
- She had met with a representative of the Scottish Energy Saving company (SES Scot). She had mentioned this company previously as providers and installers of infrared heating panels. They are based in Rosyth, have worked with HES (Historic Environment Scotland) and have been doing a lot of work in churches recently. He took a note of the internal dimensions of the church and the vestry and will come back to her in due course with a quotation.
- External painting of the two wooden sheds in the church grounds is needing to be undertaken. The wood treatment paint is available but volunteers are required.
- The grass in the church grounds is now growing at a rapid rate and requires weekly mowing to keep it easily maintained. It takes roughly 3.5 - 4 hours to do the whole area including the graveyard. This does not include edging.
- The paths around the church would benefit from additional attention. There are quite a lot of weedy areas. Carole would appreciate help from anyone with some time to spare and they should feel free to tackle any area in whatever way that they prefer.

10. Hall Committee Report:

Nothing to report. It is hoped that as restrictions ease further there will be the possibility to begin running events again.

11. Lay Rep Report:

Nothing to report.

12 .PVG Report

Nothing to report.

13. AOB

- There have been a number of queries from groups, who previously used the Douglas Hall for their activities, asking when they could resume again. It was agreed that this would be when the Edinburgh area moved to Level 1 of the Covid restrictions. Any group using the hall will be expected to conform with government regulations and to comply with the guidelines for the use of the hall which St Mary's has created.
- With the hope that St Mary's can start worshipping in the church on Sundays again plans for a celebration event will be discussed at the July vestry meeting.
- It was agreed that now restrictions are easing the next edition of In Touch would be printed and delivered in the previous manner as well as being emailed out. The distribution list will be updated make sure it is as accurate as possible. A number of the meeting attendees said that they were happy just to have it delivered by email, which would save both effort and printing costs. An exercise will be carried out to ask people whether their preference is to receive a paper copy.

Date of Next Meeting: The next vestry meeting will be held at **7.00pm on Monday July 5th**. At present this will be, again, a 'virtual' meeting.