

**St. Mary's Church, Dalmahoy**

**Minutes of the Vestry Meeting 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

**It should be noted that due to the current situation this meeting was a hybrid meeting with some attendees being on Zoom and others in the Douglas Hall**  
**The attendees were in agreement that it was acceptable to regard it as a vestry meeting and minute it as such.**

**1. Attendees:**

Rev. Christine Downey  
Lord Morton  
Carole MacBride  
Margaret Chill  
Margaret King  
Wilma Brown  
Gavin Craig  
Ella Henderson  
Denis King (Zoom)  
Ann Donoghue (Zoom)

**2. Apologies for Absence:**

None

**3. Opening Prayer and Welcome**

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

**4. Minutes of August 2 Meeting**

There were no amendments to the minutes of the meeting held on August 2<sup>nd</sup>  
The minutes were approved by the meeting and will now be filed and displayed as normal.

**5. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting**

- The new website is available to all. There have been no requests for amendments to content during the past month.
- There has been no movement on the subject of registering St Mary's with an agent as a possible film location. Gavin will progress.

## **6. Other Matters from Christine**

- Christine will be on holiday for two weeks beginning September 13<sup>th</sup>.
- Now that we are back worshipping in the church, Christine had met with the Sunday Stewards to discuss their duties and any necessary amendments to their role. The worship will remain in the current format for now. That is, only one reading, no offertory procession, celebrant bringing the communion wafers to congregants in their pews.
- The plan is to grow the congregation. We need to prepare for this growth by making sure that newcomers are made welcome and feel included as they arrive.
- The St Francis pet blessing service will be held on Sunday October 3<sup>rd</sup>. The meeting decided that it would be held in the church. The pews will be slightly re-arranged to allow more space for larger animals. It will be a shorter service with a different setting to normal. The service will be advertised in Ratho and Kirknewton. Where pets cannot be present or where people wish to remember pets who have passed on, pictures can be brought.
- The Scout group in Ratho has around 120 members and a waiting list of 80 more wishing to join. They do not have the accommodation to function efficiently for these numbers. Their leader is coming to talk with Christine regarding using the Douglas Hall to hold some of their meetings. St Mary's would not charge them for this but the Scouts would carry out some designated tasks around the church and in the surrounding area which would benefit St Mary's and help with their badge work.

## **7. Covid-19**

- Coffee hours are now being held in the Douglas Hall after the Sunday service.
- It is hoped to restart Dalmations on September 29<sup>th</sup>. The first meeting will be an informal get together to get a rough idea of numbers and also to get ideas on how best Dalmations can work in the current situation.

## **8. Community Engagement Team (CET)**

Margaret King reported that :

- Due to the people trialling the Questionnaire coming back with suggestions, some more work is being done on it before it is circulated to the congregation. It is hoped to have the updated version available by the end of September
- The letter which is going to be sent out as part of the Friends of St Mary's initiative is now ready. An information pamphlet is also being created. This scheme will be launched in the next month. People who may be willing to become Friends of St Mary's are being identified. These will initially be wedding couples but it will extend to families who have held baptisms or funerals at St Mary's..
- The question of having a wedding book which would be on display in the church was raised. This would record the names of couples who have been married at St Mary's. This was thought to be a good idea. However, as this book would be on public display, it is acknowledged that permission would be required from the couples before their names could be added to the book.

## **9. Treasurer's Report**

Gavin had distributed his report which showed that the 31<sup>st</sup> August balance in the General Account was £15,273. (£18,830 previous month)

There was £3,529 held in restricted funds or for other specific purposes, leaving £11,744 in unrestricted funds. (£15,300 previous month).

- The £500 for the church ceiling cleaning was paid during the month.
- The payment of £4,800 for the secondary glazing in the sacristy had been made. Donations of £2,000, including GA, had been received towards this. Retrospective authority for this payment was required.
- Fire extinguisher check and replacement £381.
- Gutter cleaning for church and rectory was £440
- The quarterly Douglas Trust grant of £1,500 had been received.

The St Mary's Trust Account stood at £2,424\* (previous month £2,833).

\*A payment of £336 for drain cleaning at the Rectory had been made after month end leaving £2,087 in the account.

The value of the SEC Unit Trust Pool on July 31<sup>st</sup> was £50,242 (June end value £50,106). August end figure not available at time of meeting.

As the General Account balance is quite low the question was asked as to whether St Mary's should sell some of the units held in in SEC Unit Trust Pool at this time. Gavin felt that there was not yet a requirement to do this as this investment is currently performing well. This will be kept under review.

Judy Wightman has agreed to examine the accounts again this year. Permission was granted to give Judy a £50 gift card as a thank you for doing this.

Alan Coupe had informed the vestry that that the annual fire extinguisher service has been carried out. Two of the extinguishers had to be replaced as they had reached their expiry date. The engineer also recommended installing 4 further stands (office, kitchen, sacristy and upstairs boiler room) as a safety measure. These would cost £49 each plus a further £10 to fix them to the wall. Alan felt that we should proceed with installing these in the office and kitchen but not the sacristy and boiler room as their footfall was a lot less, The meeting approved this.

Alan had also investigated the question of a formal Fire Risk Assessment. The last of these was done in 2015, since which there have been no structural changes. While the Assessment is not a legal requirement, an annual review should be carried out by a 'competent person'. Alan had been in touch with the authorities as to what this would entail. As a result he has volunteered to take this role on for St Mary's. This will give St Mary's a saving of the £300 cost of an outside company doing the assessment. The meeting expressed their gratitude to Alan for taking this task on.

The Caravan Club had asked Pippa what the annual charge was for siting their small shed in the church grounds. It was agreed, that providing they had it and its contents covered by insurance, the yearly charge would be £50. It was also agreed that as the Club had been regular users of the Douglas Hall, albeit under different titles, that any meetings held in the hall would be charged at the Non Commercial Users rates of £15 per hour with a 2 hour minimum and maximum of £ 60 for the day with a 20% discount applied (therefore £12 per hour with a maximum of £48 for the day).

## **10. Fabric Report**

Carole reported that :

### THE HEATING PROJECT.

A Canon 35 Application was submitted after the four week consultation with the congregation. It goes to the Diocesan Buildings Committee for consideration at their next meeting. Nothing has been heard to date.

An application for funding for the heating project has been made to Scotland's Churches Trust. Their next round of decision making for grant disbursement is on September 14th. It is possible that between £3K and £5K could be granted but also it could be less and that also presumes that we receive anything at all.

### THE SECONDARY GLAZING PROJECT

Carole explained that the installation of the secondary glazing in the sacristy was carried out at short notice as a slot in the companies schedule had become available due to a cancellation. She had felt that this should be a separate project to the larger one being explored for the main church. This was because Grant funding cannot be applied for if work has already started and In turn, she could not see any way that the congregation could give informed consent to the project unless they could view the type of installation.

Carole is presently completing an application for a grant from the FCC Scottish Action Fund. This is the only grant provider willing to give large amounts for this type of work. The application has to be in before December and a decision will not be made until March 2022. Once that decision has been made and depending on the outcome, a decision on how or whether to proceed will be made. A four week consultation period with the congregation is complete, with no negative comments. A Canon 35 will be submitted.

Positive discussions have been held with experts in the field of church roofing and guttering as these were areas that were highlighted as requiring action in the Quinquennial Review. These people will talk with David Willis, who carried out the review, to come up with a range of options to consider for the work that may be required.

The downspouts from the roof gutters at the rectory were found to all be choked to varying degrees. This became evident during the recent particularly heavy rainfall when the rainwater appeared to be spouting up out of the pipework, where it goes down into the ground. A1 was called in and all of the downspouts were pressure jetted.

### **11. Hall Committee Report:**

At the current time there is no actual hall committee. It is hoped that this can be reinstated in the future. The meeting decided that in the meantime, when an event is scheduled a co-ordinator is appointed and that they will be responsible for its organisation and getting volunteers, of which there are normally plenty, to assist.

### **12. Lay Rep Report:**

Diocesan Synod is planned for October. St Mary's will be represented at this and a report will be given.

### **13 .PVG Report**

Nothing to report.

### **14. AOB**

- A letter had been received from Rona Finlayson in her role as secretary to the Mission To Seafarers Scotland. The letter outlined the work that the MTSS carries out. They are currently refurbishing their Centre in Grangemouth. As part of this refurbishment they are replacing their double-glazed windows, which are blown. The letter asked if St Mary's could sponsor a window at a cost of £500 (a memorial notice would be put in place for St Mary's). The meeting agreed that a representative of the MTSS would be invited to give a talk at a Sunday Service and a retiral collection held. The remainder of the £500 would then be made up from St Mary's Charitable Giving allocation.

**Update : Christine has contacted Rona, who will give the talk on October 17<sup>th</sup>**

- The Auld Spice Band, who perform at our Ceilidh's had sent a letter letting us know that they are available for bookings again.
- Ella and Christine are going to contact Currie Primary school to talk about the possibility of running a Choir Festival. This will be to understand what the current rules are and what could be done to allow a festival to go ahead.

- Margaret King pointed out that there is a lack of people to carry out all the tasks that are required to be addressed. We can't always rely on volunteers from within St Mary's. There was discussion about whether Pippa would be willing to work some extra hours and, if so, how many hours would be required. This will be explored.
- Discussions are being held with Oatridge College regarding the possibility that they could assist St Mary's by carrying out some grounds maintenance as part of their course work.

**Date of Next Meeting:** The next vestry meeting will be held at **7.00pm on Monday October 4<sup>th</sup>**. At present this will be, again, a face to face meeting which will also allow for people to attend via Zoom.