

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

**Minutes of the Vestry Meeting 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

**1. Attendees:**

Rev. Christine Downey  
Pippa Crichton  
Wilma Brown  
Gavin Craig  
Margaret King  
John O'Connor  
Ann Donoghue

**2. Apologies for Absence:**

Lord Morton  
Steven Haigh

**3. Opening Prayer and Welcome**

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

**4. Minutes of October 3rd Meeting**

There was no errors or omissions noted from the minutes.

The minutes were thereafter approved by the meeting and will now be filed and displayed as normal.

**5. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting**

- Cleaner for hall: This is still being progressed. Margaret was speaking with one individual who showed interest in the role and they were thereafter encouraged to speak with Carole, but no further up date at the moment.  
Ann has also spoken with her contact who runs a cleaning business, but unfortunately they are struggling to find staff for the jobs they currently have so could not take on any more.
- Food bank donations: Vestry all commented on how amazing the donations have been. It is felt that having the donation basket within the centre of the church is a good reminder to people to bring in donations. A regular reminder will be sent out to the congregation to remind them about food donations.

- Toilet Rolls: Christine has just recently had her bulk order of toilet rolls delivered so if people were interested in purchasing them she would be happy to bring some over.
- Mar Thoma notice board: The notice board has now been made, now a decision of where it should go needs to be made so it can be put up.

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

- Clergy Conference: Christine has just attended the annual clergy conference in Pitlochry. Christine found this one a bit of a challenge and an exercise of restraint, as they were discussing the negative impacts of the digital world. Whereas, the digital platform has been nothing but beneficial in promoting St Marys.  
On the positive side, when Christine first arrived she was referred to as “the one who has the wedding chapel” whereas now St Mary’s is becoming known not just for its weddings but for what unique ways we are helping our communities.
- Succession planning: Efforts are still ongoing to recruit a new Treasurer. Christine has been in discussions with someone and the possibility of them working remotely. Ann and Margaret mentioned that they may also know someone that could be interested, they will reach out to them and let them know what the role entails. If we don’t find someone soon then other alternatives may need to be looked at. We are not alone in facing these challenges many other congregations are finding the same.
- Christine expressed her thanks to Gavin, for his hard work and dedication to the role of Treasurer for the last 4 years, it has been greatly appreciated.
- AGM: AGM is this coming Sunday (20<sup>th</sup>). You may notice that there is one less reading this week to keep the service a little shorter for the commencement of the AGM.
- Advent: Christine is intending to do a “Service of Healing” most likely on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of advent. There will be a service at the normal time of 11 o’clock but there will be an additional service at night for those that can’t attend during the day. Confirmation details will be sent out.
- Travelling Crèche: Christine asked Vestry’s opinion on whether they wished for the travelling crèche to be reinstated or whether to display it in the church like last year. It was felt by vestry that to do a travelling crèche put a lot onto the members of the ageing congregation and it was felt we would struggle to get the numbers needed. All agreed that displaying it in the church again was a sensible option.

- Mar Thoma: Christine failed to mention the Mar Thoma in her report and apologised for the oversight. Carole mentioned to Christine the possibility of contacting the Mar Thoma and asking if they wished to prepare a brief statement regarding their time and use of the hall over the last year and if a member of their congregation would like to attend the AGM. An email was sent out by the office this morning. We do appreciate that this was short notice so if this isn't possible would could invite them to attend advent Sunday.

## **7. Treasurer Report**

Gavin distributed his report which showed that the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2022 balance in the General Account was £48, 872.49 (£ 48,301.76 previous month)

There was £35,969 held in restricted funds or for other specific purposes, leaving £12,903.49 in unrestricted funds. (£12,332.76 previous month).

- £372.89 raised for Seafarers, Vestry agreed to round this up to £400.
- HMRC Gift Aid return of £3,182.51 received.
- PAT testing has been completed at a cost of £128.52.

The St Mary's Trust Account stood at £1,188.14 (previous month £1,265.14).

- Gavin asked if Vestry to authorise £100 being given to Graham MacBride for all his lawn mowing. This was agreed.
- Vestry discussed and authorised £50 grocery gift cards to be given to the cottage residents. A total of 5 cards would be needed. Ann agreed to source these.
- Gavin mentioned that the Wedding Organist fund was currently in debt. This will need to be looked into to see why this appears to be the case. Gavin and Carole will have a sit down and see if they can figure it out.

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

- Margaret didn't have a lot to report on this occasion as CET have been busy.
- Margaret has been trying to contact Konnect magazine with little success. Ann has agreed to contact them and ask them to contact Margaret.
- Choir festival: The choir Festival is on 25<sup>th</sup> November. Two schools have accepted the invitation to attend. Williamston and Kirknewton Primary are coming. The festival will also be live streamed, permission will be sort from the school to make sure that this is ok.

- Knitting Bee: There is one more Knitting Bee meeting and then it will be suspended during December. We are now affiliated with 3 charities, Seafarers, Kirknewton Green Room and The Ukrainian Appeal. These charities require different items at different skill levels which is great.
- Margaret mentioned that she is very keen to do a Rich man Poor man Dinner again next year as it has always been a successful event in the past. This will be revisited next year.
- Next CET meeting the plan is to discuss ideas for Easter.
- Bookbug: The end of October Bookbug was a great success, both Christine and Carole popped along. There was a good amount of people, a good atmosphere and it's lovely to be reaching the younger generation.

## **9. Fabric Report**

- Secondary glazing project completed on October 11th. Church VAT costs have been paid and can be reclaimed in early 2023 . The net cost to the church for this project was only in the region of £3200.
- A trial of reducing the number of heaters being used in the church during October led to no adverse comments as regards temperatures in the building, although the outside temperature at the time was not particularly low. Since the forecast for the near future is for mild weather, the heaters will remain off until there is a noticeable drop in the outside temperature. Unfortunately the heaters can only be switched on again by climbing a very long ladder but I am able to organise that relatively readily. I do not do it myself!
- I have had a drainage company, East of Scotland Drainage, investigating the gutters, down spouts and underground drainage around the church. Further investigation requiring some digging around some of the down spouts is still to be undertaken to find out whether there is actually a drainage system or simply a soak away.
- I am currently investigating the costs of having the gutters and down spouts either repaired or replaced. Repair would involve the gutters and down spouts being removed, taken away to a sand blasting facility, then any holes repaired, appropriate undercoat applied and then all surfaces painted. Followed by reinstatement the cost of replacement with suitably shaped gutters etc. is also being investigated.
- The electrics in the church and the Douglas Hall have been checked but no invoices have been received yet.
- Done n Dusted, Craig, has been asked to obtain additional insulation for the loft in the rectory. This is to allow us to claim the £700 which is still claimable from the Provincial Grant, most of which was already claimed

when the rectory was refurbished. This will cost the church a minimum of £700 but it seems a shame to lose out on available funds.

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

- Nothing of note.

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

- Nothing to report.

#### **14. AOB**

- Collection Plate: It was confirmed that the we are definitely having a collection plate in the service each week.
- AGM elections: Lay Rep and Alt Lay rep position is only for 1 year so Ann and Steven will need to be formally re-elected to stay in the post.
- Ann Clapham has volunteered to become a member of vestry.
- Friends of St Mary's leaflets: It is planned to send out these leaflets to past wedding couples from 2018 to date. Carole suggested that we send out the leaflets with a Christmas Card, Vestry agreed that this was a nice idea and a nice touch. The office will progress this.
- Blankets: It was suggested that we should have blankets available in the church again in case anyone feels the cold and needs a little extra protection. An email will be sent out to see if anyone has a spare blanket. Margaret also stated that this is something the Knitting Bees could help out with.

**Date of Next Meeting:** The next vestry meeting will be held at **7.00pm on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022.**

- **Due the darker evenings and winter fast approaching. The meetings will take place via Zoom or at the Rectory until Spring.**