

**St. Mary's Church, Dalmahoy**  
**Minutes of the Vestry Meeting 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

**This meeting was a hybrid of zoom and in person from the rectory.**

**1. Attendees:**

Rev. Christine Downey  
Lord Morton  
Pippa Crichton  
Margaret King  
John O'Connor  
Ann Donoghue  
Steven Haigh  
Anne Clapham  
Denis King

**2. Apologies for Absence:**

Wilma Brown

**3. Opening Prayer and Welcome**

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

**4. Minutes of 9<sup>th</sup> January 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 ongoing. Margaret is taking a different approach and contacting companies about the possibility of them doing a one off deep clean prior to big events which are expected to have a large footfall and potentially food present.
- **Solar Panels:** Steve has sent Christine a document outlining what he learnt from the webinar that he attended in December. Christine will progress this.
- **Treasurer update:** Gavin and Denis held a telephone conference call with Gordon Mavor in mid-January. Gordon requested documents to set up St Mary's on an accounting package called Xero. This will be used to produce our accounts and any other reports that we require. Gordon

will be sending a formal contract for us to sign. Denis expects that it will be March at the earliest before all is finalised.

Margaret asked Denis is it was possible for him to provide Vestry with the breakdown of St Mary's incomings and outgoings so we know what money is available for charitable giving and how are finances are situated.

Denis agreed that this was a good idea and that he can provide whatever information is required.

- **Legacy Fund money:** Denis spoke with Gordon regarding the monies that we are holding in the Legacy Fund with a view to investing it in something that gains income. We have yet to hear back regarding this, we also appreciate that he may not be able to give firm advice on this as there are rules around what financial advice can be given. Gavin has mentioned that the bank may have an easy access account which attracts a low rate of interest. Denis will have a look to see if that is possible or if there is something better.
- **Common Cup:** This will be reinstated on the 19<sup>th</sup> February. Christine plans to have a discussion regarding the logistics and how the service will go on Sunday after the service. Steve checked that the plan to use the liturgical assistant as a second chalice bearer is still going ahead, Christine confirmed that this was the case. Chalice bearers will be appointed by stewards from the list. The list will also need to be looked at and new chalice bearers recruited.
- **Vestry away day:** The vestry away day is scheduled for Sat 18<sup>th</sup> February, where the main topic of discussion will be Charitable giving with a proposal being put together. Christine has now secured a venue. The Dalmahoy has offered us the use of their Castle Room free of charge which we are incredibly appreciative of.

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

- **Immigration application:** Christine's application has been submitted and is currently being processed. The cost of the application and citizenship / passport will be £1,800. This cost is considerably cheaper than having to apply for a visa as she did previously. Christine asked vestry if they would consider helping them towards the cost. Vestry discussed this and the unanimous decision was that the church should pay for the full amount of the application. This was proposed by Margaret King and seconded by Lord Morton.
- **Lent:** Lent is coming up and Christine plans to offer a Sunday Lent study studying the Synoptic Gospels.

- **Pastoral Care:** There are now two notebooks situated in the tray within the office. One is for pastoral visiting and the other for noting any incidents that may occur. Christine appreciates that this is a new way of doing things but it is essential to keeping ourselves and others safe. The notebooks are confidential, the only two people that will be looking at them will be Christine and Caroline. If you are unsure what to note down in the books please speak to Christine or Caroline.  
There are also laminated cards available if you are PVG registered for you to take on visits.
- **World Prayer Day:** This will be Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March at 2:00pm at the East Calder Church, Main Street, East Calder. There will be posters coming.

### **7. Treasurer Report**

Denis distributed his report which showed that the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022 balance in the General Account was £55,680.91 (£53,872.54 previous month)  
There was £48,636.11 held in restricted funds or for other specific purposes, leaving £7,044.80 in unrestricted funds. (£5,135.43 previous month).

The St Mary's Trust Account stood at £903.54 (previous month £1,327.14).

- The balance appears slightly higher as the January payroll has not been paid yet from the Diocese. This is due to them moving Direct Debits to standing orders.
- Mar Thoma October – December payments still awaited.
- £6,087 due to be paid into account in February. This is the reclaim of VAT on the secondary glazing and organ tuning vis the Listed Places Worship Scheme.
- £110 paid to H Lawrie pest control.
- £220 to Kevin Skey for cleaning gutters at Rectory / Rectory cottage and checking stonework.
- £772 to Done n Dusted for electrical inspection and remedial work on church and rectory.

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

- The first meeting of January 2023 has now taken place and a lot was discussed and sorted. Dates have been chosen for the main events throughout the year all the way to Easter 2024, such as an egg hunt, BBQ, Craft Fair etc. All dates will be sent to the office.
- It was also decided that advertising in What's on and or Konnect magazine is not going ahead. It was felt that the benefits did not outweigh the cost implications. It was decided to stick with advertising

on our website and In Touch. Dates of events happening will also be sent to the communications officer at the Diocese so they can be advertised in the Communicant.

- The leaflet drop will still be going ahead but amendments need to be made to the leaflet first as there are size and number of fold restrictions.

### **9. Fabric Report**

- Not much to report this month.
- The long-awaited invoice for the electrical testing of the church and hall has been received and paid. The reports have not been provided as yet of work needing to be done.
- There have been problems with the electricians in the rectory. Christine stated that they are not able to have certain appliances on at the same time without the breaker going, this has happened for a while but it has been getting worse. Work will be needed to rectify these problems.
- The state of the car park as regards fallen branches and debris still concerns Carole but she doesn't feel that there is anyone within the congregation who could readily tackle the clearing. Any suggestions on how to address this would be welcome.

Vestry suggested contacting Oatridge college to see if they could help with this. Ann Donoghue offered to contact them to see how they are placed.

### **11. Lay Rep Report:**

- Synod will be on February 25<sup>th</sup>. Unfortunately, Ann is unable to attend as Bookbug is on that morning which has already been advertised. Unfortunately, Steve is also unable to attend as he already has plans that cannot be rearranged.

### **12. PVG Report:**

- Nothing to report.

### **13. AOB**

- **Infrared Heaters:** When the heaters were installed within the church it was done in a way that should they need to be lowered in the future they could be. This was due to the recommended height being lower than the level suggested by the people that did the assessment. Vestry were asked if they felt the church was warm enough and the majority said no.

Christine now has access to the app to control the heaters and stated that in the first instance she intends to put the heaters on earlier and also increase the temperature to see if this makes a difference. She will trial this for 2 weeks and if people still feel that the church is too cold, then it will be looked into getting the heaters lowered.

- **Council Tax and Legacy giving via wills:** St Mary's is a small church with a limited congregation, every donation is very much appreciated. However, the Sunday service donations alone are not sufficient to maintain the church and to undertake the charitable giving the church wishes to do.

Ideas need to be considered of how St Mary's can increase their donations. An idea previously suggested was to do with council tax. Many people opt to take the two-month break and make 10 payments a year instead of 12. It was wondered if people would be willing to donate some of this payment to the church. Another option is that of giving money through wills. This option means that no money is paid up front but when it does become available it helps to continue the life of St. Mary's. This will be discussed further at the Vestry Away day.

- **Sunday Coffee time:** Margaret mentioned she felt that coffee time on Sunday mornings was becoming quite fragmented. This makes socialising difficult for those that are less mobile. Margaret wants to explore new set ups to bring people back together.
- **Communicant:** Steve mentioned that he felt the Communicant magazine that comes out every 2 weeks from the Diocese is worth keeping an eye on. At the moment this is only distributed to Vestry members but it is felt that it should be distributed to the whole congregation. Pippa will now send this out to everyone on the emailing list.

**Date of Next Meeting:** The next vestry meeting will be held at **7.00pm on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023.**

**Due the darker evenings the meetings will take place via Zoom or at the Rectory until Spring.**