

St. Mary's Church, Dalmahoy

Minutes of the Vestry Meeting 1st May 2023

1. Attendees:

Lord Morton
Wilma Brown
Pippa Crichton
Denis King
Margaret King
John O'Connor
Carole MacBride

2. Apologies for Absence:

Rev. Christine Downey
Steven Haigh
Anne Clapham

3. Opening Prayer and Welcome

As Christine was absent today, Wilma chaired the meeting, She said a prayer and welcomed the attendees to the meeting.

At this time Vestry were informed of the sad news that Margaret Hunter had passed away that afternoon. Prayers and thoughts were sent to her and her family.

4. Minutes of 27th March 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

- **Treasurer update:** A meeting is due to be arranged between Denis and the accountant regarding the progressing handover. Denis anticipates that the hand over should hopefully be concluded by the end of June.
- **Steam Clean:** Margaret and Carole were both pleased and impressed by the quality of the service provided. They noticed a big improvement in everything they cleaned but especially the floor. They have agreed with the company that they will contact them when a one off clean is needed.
- **Rectory Cottage:** See below Fabric report for update.

- **Flower Rota:** People have already been signing up. We have flowers paid now till the end of May. Money has been donated and memorial requests made, this should hopefully encourage others to take part.
- **Amazon Business Account:** Pippa has looked into this and you can set up an Amazon business account where payment is by invoice. Pippa will now set this up.

6. Other Matters from Christine

- **Rachel Grant attending Glenalmond July 30th- Aug 5th:** Mary's has again decided to fund Rachel attending this summer's Annual Scottish Episcopal Church Gathering for teenagers. This will be Rachel's 3rd summer attending and it always seems to be very successful and Rachel has made connections with people that she meets up with outside of the camp.
- **Clergy Conference Pitlochry 6th Nov - 9th Nov:** Vestry have agreed to fund this year's clergy conference for Christine to attend. This will be discussed further at the next meeting when Christine is in attendance.
- **Vestry Role Courses:** These courses are due to begin in September. Vestry felt that more information was needed before any decisions could be made. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

7. Treasurer Report

Denis distributed his report which showed that the April 2023 balance in the General Account was £57,515.64 (£61,328.46 previous month)
There was £48,844.36 held in restricted funds or for other specific purposes, leaving £8,672.28 in unrestricted funds. (£10,136.39 previous month).

The St Mary's Trust Account stood at £678.54 (previous month £738.54).

St. Marys's Annual Income to date: £50,616

St Mary's Annual Expenditure to date: £39,898. (This includes the final payment of £12,454 received at the beginning of the year from Blackie's estate).

- £1,850 has been paid out for Christine's passport / citizenship. This was approved by Vestry.
- £1,550 was received in donations from a funeral. Thank you, letters have been issued to the two contributors.
- £100 donation was received from a baptism.
- £300 paid out for the assessment of the West Window regarding possible leakage.

- Geoff has sent away the half yearly Gift Aid claim. St Mary's should receive £3,100 within the next month.
- £60 paid to H Lawrie for Pest Control.
- £500 from the refreshments served at the Model Railway exhibition to be paid in.
- **Bishops Lent Appeal:** Denis suggested that as we didn't do a push for the Bishops Lent Appeal this year that perhaps when the Charitable giving is discussed in June we could discuss a donation then.
- **Dual Authorisation on Bank Accounts:** This has now been set up on both St Mary's bank accounts. Now when a payment is to be made a second person, either, Gavin, Wilma or Pippa need to authorise it.
- **Sunday Plate:** The current practice is that Denis collects the donations and deposits it into the bank and the end of the month. Denis feels that something should be put in place where by perhaps two people confirm donations and sign them off. Vestry agreed this would be best practice. Denis will look into how to set this up.

8. Community Engagement Team (CET)

- There has not been a lot of progression with new items as the team have been busy with ongoing projects. The next events in planning are St Scruff's and then the Autumn Craft Fair.
- Margaret feels that the future of the hall in terms of new projects needs to be discussed. As the people involved with the hall already really cannot take any more on. Margaret would like to look at the possibility of re-establishing a hall committee. Margaret will discuss this with Christine and then it will be looked at further during the next meeting.
- **Hall Takings:** Pippa informed vestry that the hall has taken approx. £737 (not inc. Mar Thoma monthly rent which is £65 / month) from January – April 2023.

9. Fabric Report

- **Church:** I am aware a piece of guttering on the south side of the church to the east side of the porch has detached itself and fallen to the ground. There are also a few tiles on the southern roof which have slipped and will need to be reinstated.
- **The lights:** above the keyboard and pedal board of the organ stopped working during Holy Week and Alan had to resort to using a plug in light which he was bringing from home for each service. An electrician has

now resolved this problem which involved faulty wiring causing the switch on the RCD unit to keep tripping.

While that electrician was working on the lighting problem, I discovered that I can switch off each of the Far Infrared Heaters individually on the master fuse box in the cupboard in the Vestry. I hadn't realised this previously.

I plan to reduce the number of heaters which are being switched on for Sunday services according to the weather conditions. Since most of the heaters are 3KW, at the new tariff rate which comes into force during the third week in May, each will cost approximately £1.30 per hour to operate compared with approximately 50p per hour at present. There are 9 units in the church so the cost would rise from under £5 per hour to over £11 per hour if all were left on.

Members of the congregation will be encouraged to sit below the units which are operating for maximum comfort. I could also reduce the number of heaters which are switched on by the control panel from 9 to 5 for the early period of each Sunday when the choir and Alan are the only people in the church. That would potentially save roughly £5 per hour.

Perhaps we need to highlight the effect that the increased energy costs are likely to have on our energy spending in the hope that those who support the church financially on a regular basis might increase their giving by even £5 per month although £10 would give even more leeway for the higher anticipated bills.

- **The west window:** secondary glazing will be removed, thoroughly cleaned and reinstated during the next few months. It would appear that the condensation problem could have been caused by the essential pointing, undertaken prior to the secondary glazing being installed not having sufficient time to dry out thoroughly. As a result, as it continued to dry out, the moisture was trapped between the external glass and internal unit resulting in condensation.
The worry that the condensation was a result of water ingress seems to have been allayed. However, the exterior of the west wall is in need of additional repointing and this will be taken forward during coming months.
- **Douglas Hall:** the steam cleaning of the oven and hob, fridge and dishwasher and the flooring in each of the toilets, the kitchen and the hallway have been very successful.

I would recommend that this becomes an annual routine around Easter time.

Regular weekly cleaning is still being undertaken as required and as appropriate to the use of the hall. When larger events are scheduled, I intend to ask for help from some of the many people who have expressed a willingness to help clean up after or prepare the hall beforehand. My concerns are that a lot of the moving of chairs etc. is quite physically demanding and I wouldn't want anyone to hurt themselves.

It is my intention to thoroughly clean the extension area. There are items being stored there which could be stored in the attic space instead, access to them is required so infrequently. This would hopefully make it an easier area to access and make more efficient use of. Help will be needed and I will appeal for help once I have a specific date in mind.

Margaret and Mandy have tidied the cupboards in the hall and have identified items which we will probably dispose of at the de-stash/up-cycling table top sale planned for Saturday 3rd June. All proceeds going into church funds for fabric related use.

The condition of the ramped access to the hall is causing me increasing concern.

The tiled areas underneath where the mats have been placed are breaking up and potentially causing trip hazards. I believe that the access to the hall now needs to be addressed, taking into account the recommendations made in the access report which was prepared in 2020 just around the time of the first lockdown.

I recently photographed a very nice ramped access to a building in South Queensferry where decking boards were used. Recycled plastic decking boards are now available and I would like to suggest that the use of that particular type of material should be investigated as an aesthetically pleasing, durable and safe option for a new ramped access to be installed before next winter.

- **The Rectory Cottage (aka Blackie's Cottage or Kiwi Cottage):** removal of all of the previous tenant's possessions is almost complete. Most of the flooring has been removed and disposed of. Roughly half of the wallpaper in the lounge area has been removed, principally to be able to see the condition of the walls behind the paper. Although I am no expert, the external walls look to be in good shape.

Pine flooring has been exposed in the lounge room and the room previously used as the only bedroom.

Initial drawings have been received from Ross Mullen of R2 Draughting Services.

Amendments to those drawings will be requested now that we have become more aware of the potential possibilities for the use of the cottage and the type of market that we should aim for as prospective future tenants.

Although not exactly a blank canvas, supporting walls will dictate certain restrictions, the number of potential ways to renovate the property is increasing weekly.

We do need to be very mindful that our existing available budget is substantial but not necessarily sufficient to cover the best way to reconfigure the rooms.

The potential income from the property may need to be used as a bargaining point to perhaps request financial support in the form of a loan from somewhere out with or perhaps even within the congregation.

None of the interested contractors have seen the drawings so far, mainly because the plans will definitely need to be amended to more closely represent our requirements.

Once a confirmed set of drawings are available, they will be provided to each of the contractors for quotations to be submitted.

I would imagine that it could be well into June before we are at that stage.

Some work has been undertaken to tidy up the garden ground regarded as being associated with the cottage. Some additional work will be required and maintenance of the area undertaken during the coming months. If anyone from the congregation would be willing to volunteer to keep the grass in check then their assistance would be very welcome. A petrol driven lawnmower would be available for this.

- **The Rectory:-** there are 3 wooden sheds in the Rectory grounds, each in a state of disrepair. Two are needing to be removed entirely. Not simply because of their condition but mainly because of the wildlife activity which appears to be living below them. One replacement shed has been acquired but needs to be rebuilt on an appropriate site and base of Ben's choosing. If any members of the congregation would like to volunteer to assist with the demolition of the sheds and disposal of the accumulated

debris, their help or that of their more able-bodied friends or relatives would be greatly appreciated. We will hopefully be able to request the use of one of the estate trailers to load the debris onto.

11. Lay Rep Report:

- Nothing to report.

12. Eco – Rep Report:

- Nothing to report.

13. AOB

- **Coronation of Kings Charles:** The possibility of celebrating the coronation within the hall / Church on Sunday was discussed. It was felt that it was best to do something low key, such as having some non-alcoholic fizzy wine and some cakes to mark the occasion.
- **Organisation of chairs in hall:** Carole felt that Mar Thoma need to be informed of how to reorganise the chairs within the hall following their service on a Sunday. How to go about this will be decided.
- **Re-establish car pool:** Margaret mentioned that some members of the congregation can only attend church and or choir practice if they are given a lift. It is felt this could be better facilitated if a rota of those willing to provide lifts was organised. Vestry agreed that this would be a good idea. Margaret will progress.
- **Moving Children's area in church:** Carole reminded vestry about the idea of moving the children's area from the rear of the church to the front was discussed at the Vestry away day. However, Carole thought that this idea could be dual purpose. By having more space at the front of the church it would allow more space for those that attend with mobility issues and require a wheelchair or walker. They would not have to negotiate the pews and they would be closer to the front. Carole also intends to bring chairs over from the cottage which would also be easier to sit in than the pews. This idea needs to be looked into further and possibly trailed.
- **Crusader Court Fundraiser:** Olive asked if Vestry would consider making a donation towards Crusader Courts Fundraiser. They are trying to raise funds to purchase a second defibrillator. Vestry agreed in principal but it would need to be discussed at the Charitable Giving meeting in June.

- **“Store-front Church”**: Carole voiced the idea of a Store-Front Church within the Calderwood development. The idea would be that it could be within another building and that it would provide a point of contact with St Mary’s and also advertise St Mary’s Church. It would require people to run it. Carole felt there would likely be funding / grants available to help with things like this. This idea is very much in its infancy and would need to be looked at in detail and see if it would be a realistic possibility.

Date of Next Meeting:

The next vestry meeting will be held at **7.00pm on Monday 5th June 2023.**

This will be in person in the hall for those that can, zoom will also be available.