

St. Mary's Church, Dalmahoy

Minutes of the Vestry Meeting 26th June 2023

1. Attendees:

Rev. Christine Downey
Lord Morton
Pippa Crichton
Wilma Brown
Denis King
Anne Clapham
Margaret King (via zoom)
John O'Connor (via zoom)
Carole MacBride (via zoom)

2. Apologies for Absence:

Steve Haigh

3. Opening Prayer and Welcome

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

4. Minutes of 5th June Meeting

There was no errors or omissions noted from the minutes.

Carole asked that an amendment be made to add Eddie Jones full name which was thereafter done.

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

5. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

- **Cost for hire of church for use as cafe during railway exhibition 2024:** A great deal of thought has been given to this by vestry since the last meeting. Some concerns were raised by vestry about using the church for commercial reasons especially on the Sunday, this did not feel right to some. There were also concerns raised about potential risks of damage and the fact that everything would have to be moved to make this feasible. Vestry felt that a better idea would be to erect two marquees, which we will provide, in the church grounds.
Pippa will inform them of this decision.
It was discussed that the use of the church, especially on a Sunday would not be completely discounted but would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- **Sunday Plate Sign off:** This has been set up and is now in place.
- **Store-front Church Idea:** Christine has not yet had a chance to bring this idea to the Bishop due to him being very busy at the moment. Christine is hoping that he will be in support of this idea as it is a way of bringing the church to new people. Christine appreciates that this would take a lot of organisation and the hope is the Diocese would have resources to help with this. Christine would be willing to spend a couple hours a couple times a week within Calderwood, to help provide and build a connection with the church. Christine will pursue this when she has the opportunity.
- **Congestion issues within church during service:** This past Sunday there was actually no issues and all went smoothly. Christine has however come up with a system that will be implemented in a bid to help with the congestion at communion. Christine along with the chalice bearers will serve Margaret King, John O'Connor and Olive, who are seated at the front, while everyone else remains seated. Once Christine is back in place the rest of the congregation will be invited up in an orderly manner.
- **Rectory Cottage Name Change:** Denis has written to the council and informed them of the intention to change the name of Rectory Cottage to Kiwi Cottage. He should receive a reply within 21 days.

6. Other Matters from Christine

- **Communion Sunday 25th:** Christine wanted to say a thank you to the congregation for managing communion well on Sunday.
- **BBQ / Canada Day:** The BBQ Day managed to raise £15 from ball hockey and the challenge of trying to get the ball into the goal. We witnessed some hidden skills especially from Alan Coupe and Judy Goodman. Christine and Ben very much enjoyed the day and wanted to express their thanks to everyone for coming and braving the weather. Tonka also had a great time and was exhausted and snoring by the end of the day.
- **Christine time off:** Christine has some time away during July and August. July, she has the conference at Windsor and August annual leave. Christine is working on the next 3 Sundays services and they will be printed off ready this week. Christine however will be here most Sundays other than the 9th July.
- **Rectory Mower:** Ben has managed to fix the mower this year. He still needs to purchase new blades but he will be able to replace them himself as he now has the right tools for the job.

- **Rectory shower pump and sink:** The work undertaken on the sink unit was far more extensive than first thought so the end cost (£787) was more than expected. However, Ben has sourced a pump for the shower and has learnt how to install it.

7. Treasurer Report

Denis distributed his report which showed that the 24th June 32023 balance in the General Account was £56,975.62 (£59,679.75 previous month).

It should however be noted that as this vestry meeting is earlier this month the report does not show an end of month figure. The monthly stipend, administrator salary and electricity bills will come off before month end. There will also be some monthly offerings to come in. A rough estimate is that the balance will drop by around £2,800.

There was £48,844.36 held in restricted funds or for other specific purposes, leaving £8,131.26 in unrestricted funds. (£ 10,835.39 previous month).

The St Mary's Trust Account stood at £459.12 (previous month £618.54).

St. Mary's Annual Income to date: £70,806

St Mary's Annual Expenditure to date: £62,132. (This includes £12,454 received at the beginning of the year from Blackie's estate).

- Charitable giving payments totalling £1,750 have been made to the charities agreed at the last meeting.
- A cheque for £450 has been sent to the charity Aquabox, this has not been cashed yet.
- £787 paid to Done n Dusted to replace shower pump and sink unit in Rectory.
- £110 was made from Declutter Sale Table Fees.
- £40 income from Fairtrade Honesty Box.

Denis informed vestry that there is a Fabric Fund that currently has approximately £1300 in it. He asked if this money could be used towards some of the upcoming fabric costs. Vestry agreed that this make sense to be using this money for these jobs.

- **Legacy Giving:** Questions were raised regarding legacy giving and if the legacy fund was restricted for specific jobs or could it be used for other purposes.
 Christine said that legacy giving is something that needs to be seriously looked at and a protocol decided by vestry and agreed upon. This will also involve the constitution and to clarify what St Mary's means by "legacy fund" People need to be clear about what the fund will fund, is it unrestricted and undesignated etc. This will be further discussed in August with a proposal in place for the AGM as it is felt that's the right time for it to be discussed.

8. Community Engagement Team (CET)

- Nothing much to report. The team are carrying on with organising the events scheduled for this year.
- Margaret did mention that they are very busy and could really do with some extra help for specific events. An idea of having an Events Committee was raised, which would have a list of people that could be called upon to help out with certain events. It was agreed that this would be a good idea and Margaret will progress.
- **St Scruffs:** The next large event is St Scruffs on 22nd July. Unfortunately, both Carole and Christine will not be available on that day. This will have a large impact so help will need to be sought. Christine will speak with Ben to see if he could offer his services. Margaret will also speak to people about helping out.

9. Fabric Report

- **Trees:** A lot of work has been carried out on the trees in and around the church grounds by Heartwood Tree Services. Tree work has also been carried out in the Rectory grounds.
 All of this work, which was necessary was commissioned solely by Carole who has either paid the invoice directly or donated sufficient funds to the church to cover the costs. The invoice for the rectory work has not yet been submitted but will be paid when sent to Carole.
- **The Church Guttering:** Eddie Jones, a local builder who has worked on church maintenance issues for many years believes that the present gutters should not be replaced but SHOULD be removed in sections, have all the existing paint removed by sand blasting, be prepared for reinstatement and then reinstalled on new supporting brackets.
 Carole would be keen to go ahead with his suggestion BUT, if we decided to do that then we would be very unlikely to be able to apply for any

grants towards the costs.

This is because grant givers tend to want to see several quotations. We could perhaps seek a small grant from the Diocese. Carole is aware of another grant provider which is considering offering grants of up to £1000 for essential maintenance required at height which due to the costs, many churches just can't afford.

Eddie is no longer VAT registered so his labour would be VAT free. The cost of the materials would be invoiced separately, including VAT and this VAT could be recouped through the currently available scheme. The estimated costs are in the region of £5000 BUT this is an essential maintenance which has been neglected for a number of years and there are certain areas of the guttering where water cascades down the stonework when the rain is heavy.

Carole asked vestry for permission to make arrangements with Eddie to give a firmer quotation of the costs and then for the works to be undertaken as soon as he could manage, this may not be before 2024. This was agreed by vestry.

- **Area of concern:** Kevin Skey (Stonemason), pointed out a major area of concern on the east end of the church.

There appears to have been some eastward movement at the very top of the roof where the stone cross is situated. He has recommended that it is dealt with **ASAP** because of the risk of the cross falling and breaking. It could cause damage and of course the cross itself would then need to be mended and reinstalled. There is also the minor risk that it could fall on someone. The middle cross has fallen from the roof previously, landing in the garden in pieces, some of which have disappeared over the years. It has never been reinstated.

Carole asked vestry for permission to ask Kevin to send a quotation for the costs and to undertake the necessary work when he is able. Since scaffolding will be involved, the cost is likely to be quite high. Vestry agreed especially due to Health and Safety Concerns.

- **Carole will be on holiday or busy with preparations for my younger son's wedding from 7-24th July.**

During week commencing Monday 10th July, Graeme, Carole and also Steve will not be able to do any grass cutting.

No doubt Graeme will make every effort to have the grass cut by 6th July and will probably try to attend to it again on Tuesday 18th as long as they are back from our holiday. Steve is also available during that week to help out so it should not need any help from others.

- **The large sycamore report:** Andrew provided, two recommendations along with a third option should also be considered before one of those options is chosen.
The third option is to engage a specialist, Andrew Potter to consider the correct approach to hopefully maintaining the tree although not necessarily in its current shape and form.
He might recommend reducing the height substantial and reshaping the canopy or if the inner density was found to be poor, he might recommend felling and replanting. Carole will provide updates when she has them.
- **Kiwi Cottage:** No update yet about the cottage drawings. Ross had his annual holidays booked for June and was moving home. Carole hopes to have an update soon

11. Lay Rep Report:

- Nothing to report.

12. Eco – Rep Report:

- Nothing to report.

13. AOB

- **Electricity Bill April – May 2023:** On Wednesday 3rd May Pippa entered the church (having been off on the Monday due to a bank holiday), to find the Infra-red heating had been left on since the Sunday 30th April by the Mar Thoma Church. They had inadvertently turned off a switch which stopped the signal which stopped heating going off. This has resulted in an additional cost of £300. It was agreed that Mar Thoma should be made aware of the error and the costs that have been incurred as a result and ask for a donation towards them. Pippa will send an email along with asking for 3 months overdue rent.
- **Shaking hands to exchange the peace:** Denis asked if the practice of shaking hands as opposed to waving could be reinstated. It was agreed that this would be a good idea for those that feel comfortable in doing so. But if people didn't feel comfortable, they could still wave.
- St Marys welcomed Katie and the Boswell family from Texas on Sunday. They stated that they felt very welcome and very much enjoyed the service. Christine would like to express her thanks to everyone for

always being so welcoming and making people feel so comfortable. This is the essence of St Mary's.

- As Christine and Pippa both off for 2 weeks from 1st July. Wilma Brown and Margaret King will be the points of contact. The out of office reply will include their email addresses should people require them.

Date of Next Meeting:

The next vestry meeting will be held at **7.00pm on Monday 7th August 2023.**

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