

## St. Mary's Church, Dalmahoy

### Minutes of the Vestry Meeting 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023

#### 1. Attendees:

Rev. Christine Downey  
Pippa Crichton  
Wilma Brown  
Denis King  
Steve Haigh  
Anne Clapham  
Margaret King  
John O'Connor

#### 2. Apologies for Absence:

Lord Morton

#### 3. Opening Prayer and Welcome

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

#### 4. Minutes of 7<sup>th</sup> August 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

- **Store-front Church Idea:** Christine has not received any further updates regarding this idea.
- **Events Committee Progress:** Margaret has approached several members of the congregation regarding forming an events committee. The idea being that there is a group that can be approached to see who is available to help with any events that may be coming up, or even if Carole needs extra help during busy spells. So far a number of people have agreed and Margaret intends to speak with a couple others. This will now replace the CET.
- **Rectory Cottage Name Change on Database:** Denis has not yet had the opportunity to speak with Ben on how to progress this. But once Ben has some free time this will be progressed.
- **Mar Thoma rent:** Mar Thoma are now up to date with their rent payments.

- **Church Mail Box:** A new mail box has been delivered thanks to John O'Connor purchasing that for St Mary's. It will be put up soon.
- **Organist update:** Christine was pleased to share the news that a new organist has been hired and will be due to start at St Mary's mid-October. His name is Thomas Leigh and is an exceptionally talented organist and more than St Mary's hoped for. He is very enthusiastic, keen to get the congregation involved and will bring some fresh ideas.
- **Fire Training Update:** Due to Christine being on annual leave Alan Coupe has not yet been spoken to regarding this.
- **Church Information Booklet:** Margaret suggested using the leaflet we used for the leaflet drop within in the church in place of the History / Information Booklet we previously had. Vestry thought that this was a good idea.

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

- Christine informed vestry that she has some new ideas and intends to do more at St Mary's. Christine will be introducing "St. Mary's After Dark". This will involve an evening of readings, music and prayers. These evenings will be open to everyone, they will be free and user friendly. The readings will not all be from the bible. The first one of these evenings will take place on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and is in Celebration of the Hunters moon. The rest will be scheduled for 2024. Musicians will be hired to come and play music during these evenings. Christine is hoping to get funding to pay for the musicians. The first one is probably a bit soon to have funding in place. Christine has £250 in the Rectors discretionary fund that she intends to use towards this and will make up the difference herself. Anne Clapham mentioned that not everyone is comfortable driving in the dark that may like to come. She suggested that a notice be put up regarding people that are happy to give lifts to others so they can attend. Pippa will organise this.
- **Christmas Services:** The plan this year is to have a 5pm Family Christmas Eve Service and a 10:30 pm service. There will be an Advent 4 service and the normal Christmas day service.
- **AGM:** The AGM is fast approaching. It is on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November. Christine asked that reports be submitted as soon as possible. Pippa will send out last year's report to everyone for reference.

There will be a few changes to vestry. Denis, Margaret, Wilma and John are all stepping down.

So far, we have a nomination for Mandy Smart to join vestry. Douglas Walker has agreed to take over Denis's role temporarily until a full-time replacement is found.

Vestry will still be in need of nominations for the Rectors & Peoples Wardens. If you are interested, please approach Margaret King and or Wilma Brown.

- **Website maintenance:** Andrew Brown has agreed to help with the maintenance of our website, which will thankfully save us some money.

### **7. Treasurer Report**

Denis distributed his report which showed that the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 balance in the General Account was £49,018.01 (£49,482.01 previous month).

There is £47,133.86 held in restricted funds or for other specific purposes, leaving **£1,884.15** in unrestricted funds. (£2,348.15 previous month).

The St Mary's Trust Account stood at £1099.12 (previous month £249.12).

**St. Mary's Annual Income to date: £82,425**

**St Mary's Annual Expenditure to date: £81,708**

(Income includes £12,454 received at the beginning of the year from Blackies estate).

- £300 paid for Christine's attendance at the Clergy conference
- £1,500 quarterly grant received from Douglas Trust
- £524.94 half yearly disbursement from SEC Unit Trust Pool received.
- £220 received for Mar Thoma Church rent. This brings them up to date as at end of July.

Denis put forward a motion to move the money donated from Blackie to be transferred from the restricted funds to the unrestricted funds. This makes the process of releasing money from the legacy fund when needed much more straight forward. Vestry agreed.

Denis wished to raise the suggestion that was provided during the Vestry away day earlier in the year of Sponsorship of Purchases. Due to time constraints this could not be discussed fully, but an article will be put in the next In Touch regarding it.

## 9. Fabric Report

- Still no word from Eddie Jones regarding the cost of refurbishing the rainwater goods on the church building.
- A second quotation has been received regarding the works needed to refurbish the cottage.
- Spotless Cleaning from Currie have been engaged to do a 2 hour fortnightly clean of the Douglas Hall at a cost of £33. Today will be their first visit.
- The church infrared heaters have been switched off at their master panel in the vestry since late May/early June. This was partly done to prevent a situation arising when they might be inadvertently left on unnoticed. Partly because the need for them to be used during the summer months tends to be very limited.

It would be my suggestion that they remain switched off until the temperature changes substantially but I would like to have the Vestry's opinion on this.

Similarly, the heating in the hall has been switched to off since early June. Occasional use has been made for some of the less active classes held in the hall and Pippa has access to a plug-in heater in the office when needed.

One question that I would like to have an answer to is:

Would you like me to arrange to have the heaters moved down the walls in the church to as close to the recommended 2.8 metres above floor level as is feasible?

Vestry all agreed that this should be done.

- **Large Sycamore Tree works:** A range of quotes have been received from Heartwood Tree Care. The quotes ranged from £2600 - £1650. The quotes were dependent on whether the tree should be felled or pollarded and whether all wood and waste was removed from the site or not. Vestry decided that the best option was that the tree be felled and the logs left on site and other waste removed, the cost of this is £2350.00. This option would prevent additional cost in the future.
- **Money Appeal:** Margaret suggested that perhaps St Mary's should do an appeal for funds again as they were done approximately 12 years ago to raise money for the organ. St Mary's finances are really struggling at the moment but there are constant outgoings coming in such as the cost of the works needed on the Sycamore tree, which needs doing but it is a substantial amount of money. It was agreed that this idea should be considered but a sufficient team would need to be in place to run all aspects of the appeal.

- **10. Events Committee:**
- See comments in matter arising

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

- Other than the Synod coming up in October nothing to report.

### **12. Eco – Rep Report:**

- Nothing to report.

### **13. AOB**

- **Charitable Giving:** As discussed earlier in the year, there is still £500 left for this year's charitable giving. Vestry decided that it would be a good idea to hang onto it just now as winter is coming and it may be the case that we have to help out the local community again with costs of heating.
- **Legacy Giving:** Steve mentioned that he had recently read a leaflet that he was given by Christine from the Church of England on Legacy Giving. It made him realise as much as it is important that money is not left for specific items / jobs, the families of the person would like to know exactly what the money was used for and ideally have something identifiable. An idea of a wish list was suggested, so that people could choose what the donated money was used towards. It was felt that it would be a good idea that Carole (Fabric Co-ordinator) / Denis (Treasurer) / Steve Haigh (eco-rep) perhaps come up with some suggestions.
- **Garden Maintenance:** Christine informed Vestry that Graham MacBride is on his last year of being able to continue the vast job of maintaining the church grounds and cemetery. Steve Haigh said that he would be willing to help out, but cannot commit to the level of what Graham currently does. Steve informed vestry that just cutting the grass alone can take 3 – 4 hrs. Christine will speak with Martin and Brian (gardeners for Dalmahoy) to see if they have any suggestions.
- **General Finances:** The current finances are of real concern to vestry as the number of outgoings (individual and monthly) keep increasing but our income is decreasing. It was suggested that we have good look at what we charge for Weddings, Funerals, Baptisms and the hall costs be looked at. It was also suggested that we need to be not so afraid of asking people to pay for the privilege of using St Mary's in all capacities. The running costs have increased for all, including us.

**Date of Next Meeting:**

The next vestry meeting will be held at **7.00pm on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023. This will be in person in the hall for those that can, zoom will also be available.**