

St. Mary's Church, Dalmahoy

Minutes of the Vestry Meeting 7th August 2023

1. Attendees:

Rev. Christine Downey
Lord Morton
Pippa Crichton
Wilma Brown
Denis King
Steve Haigh
Margaret King (via zoom)
John O'Connor (via zoom)

2. Apologies for Absence:

Anne Clapham

3. Opening Prayer and Welcome

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

4. Minutes of 26th June 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 spoken with Fiona from the Diocese office at length about the idea of St Mary's having a presence within the new housing developments at East Calder. Christine explained that this would require resource and financial support. Fiona took note of this and it will now need to be seen whether there is any interest around this idea and if there is a chance of getting it up and running. This is only the first step of many.
- **Congestion issues within church during service:** Christine has noticed that when she makes it clear that she will be serving the front pews first, people wait and things run much more smoothly. Christine will endeavour to reinforce this during the service to prevent the congestion issues.
- **Events Committee Progress:** Due to there being a lot going on at the moment with planned events no progress has been made in regards to this. Margaret has full intentions of progressing this once she has time.

- **Rectory Cottage Name Change:** This is progressing well, the cottage is now listed as kiwi Cottage with the council and post office. Denis will seek Ben's advice of how to get it amended on the National Database as Ben has experience with this.
- **Mar Thoma electricity bill & rent:** Mar Thoma contacted the office with regards to the high energy bill following the heaters having been left on in the church. They offered £100 towards the bill which was gratefully received. Rent has been received for the month of June but we are still missing some months' rent prior to that. Pippa has it noted what is due so will send out a reminder again.
- **Marquee Suggestion to Railway Exhibitor Update:** Following Pippa informing them that vestry had concerns about using the church as a cafe for the weekend and offering them instead the use of two marquees no response was received. Pippa thereafter emailed them to check in and they replied stating that they understood the vestry's concerns and decision. They are considering using the marquees or alternatively they may just run it the same as this year. They will pop in to the office at some point to discuss it.

6. Other Matters from Christine

- **Organist Job Ad / Contract:** A job advert has been put together and has been submitted to the communications officer at the diocese asking for it to be included within the communicant. There is also a database of organist that Christine is going to advertise the vacancy on. Christine has also spread the word amongst other clergy and already has one lead regarding a potential organist to follow up on.
Christine read out the amended Organist contract to vestry, ideas and amendments were made and Christine will send out the finished contract to Vestry for a final check.
Christine asked vestry for thoughts as to who should be present at any interviews. It was decided that Christine will be present, Pippa to take notes and one other congregation member was suggested and will be approached and asked by Christine.
- **Christine time off:** Christine has some final annual leave coming up. Christine will be off from the 21st August until the 30th August, a total of 10 days.
- **St. Mary's Information Booklets:** It was mentioned that there were no more information booklets within the church. Christine was aware of this and stated that the supply has now run dry. It is not possible to get any more printed as those booklets were printed by a past congregation

member about 20 years ago. Vestry felt that there is a need to have some sort of leaflet regarding St Mary's history available as this is often what people look for when visiting a church. Christine felt that this was possible and will look into getting something produced.

7. Treasurer Report

Denis distributed his report which showed that the 31st July 2023 balance in the General Account was £49,482.01 (£54,821.43 previous month).

There was £47,133.86 held in restricted funds or for other specific purposes, leaving **£2,348.15** in unrestricted funds. (£8,131.26 previous month).

The St Mary's Trust Account stood at £249.12(previous month £459.12).

St. Mary's Annual Income to date: £76,778

St Mary's Annual Expenditure to date: £75,598

(The income includes £12,454 received at the beginning of the year from Blackie's estate).

- £1,365 paid to Kevin Skey Stonemason, for securing the stone cross on the church and gutter cleaning (Paid from Fabric Fund).
- £450 Charitable Giving Cheque cashed by Aquabox.
- £140 paid for Rachel Grant to attend at Glenalmond as approved by Vestry.
- £550 paid to Potter Tree Consultancy for survey completed of dangerous tree in grounds.
- £1080 paid to Frmwork Ltd for work done so far on St Mary's accounts.
- £110 paid from St Mary's Trust account for pest control.

Denis added that a payment of £950 had been received into the Trust account today from the Douglas Trust for pest control from Nov – Aug. This brings the balance to approximately £1199.

Denis pointed out that our unrestricted funds balance was extremely low and that we need to be very careful with our spending.

Denis looked into the legacy fund, having been asked what amount had been in there prior to the funds received from Blackie's estate. He found that £500 was in there prior and that it is ring fenced for something specific. Leaving the remaining funds available for use as wished by St Mary's.

The amount paid out to the accountant was queried by vestry members as it seemed to be higher than expected. Denis explained that Gordon (accountant) had charged for his 9 months of work (he started with us in February but had to go back to finances from October in order to get things up to date). This equates to £100 per month (~9hrs / month work). He is still in the process of getting the accounts in order.

The accountant situation will be monitored and reassessed in time due to the continual cost. The best-case scenario would be to find someone willing to take on the role of treasurer in the future.

9. Fabric Report

- **Church Guttering:** Eddie Jones the builder, is still in the process of getting prices for various component parts of this necessary work. He will get back to me when he is able.
- **The Cross:** The cross on the east end of the church was attended to during early July. The Stonemason had a short window between other planned work and was able to fit in this smallish job.
- **Kiwi Cottage:** Plans have been received and emailed to the three companies that had expressed an interest in quoting for the refurbishment project. A project manager from one of those companies visited the site this morning and plans to have something in writing for us in the next week or two.
- **The large sycamore tree:** Although a decision on how best to progress is not essential at this time, it should not be delayed indefinitely.

11. Lay Rep Report:

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

12. Eco – Rep Report:

- Nothing to report.

13. AOB

- **Legacy Giving:** This matter has been on the agenda for a while now and is something that vestry need to consider thoroughly and the best way to progress with it. It also needs to be made clear that if funds are left to St Mary's they are not designated to be used for something specific and can be used by St Mary's as required. Information regarding legacy

giving needs to be available to people so that they know their options but this needs to be done in a careful and considerate manner.

- **Fair trade Honesty Box:** It appears that somehow money from the Fair-trade honesty box ended up in an envelope in the office and was passed onto Denis who banked it into St Mary's account believing it to be a donation. Steve wanted it to be made clear that Fair trade in fact have a completely different bank account and the money from the honesty box is dealt with by Geoff Angell who is their treasurer.
- **Fire Safety Update:** An email was recently received stating that should a fire alarm be activated (in certain buildings, churches included) that is connected to local alarm companies' emergency services will no longer be automatically dispatched. This does not affect St Mary's as we do not have an automatic alarm system. Someone would need to contact emergency services in the event of a fire.
This did however raise the question of a fire safety training update need and whether this is something that should be looked into. Alan Coupe who is responsible for Health and Safety and the extinguisher checks, will be spoken to about this for some advice.
- **Church Letter Box:** The church letter box on the wall by the hall entrance has broken. The hinges have rusted and the lid broken free. It was raised by a member of the congregation that a new one should be sought and that perhaps a more secure one would be more appropriate. John O'Connor kindly offered to purchase a new one if we could provide him with the size we would need.

Date of Next Meeting:

The next vestry meeting will be held at **7.00pm on Monday 4th September 2023.**

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