

St. Mary's Church, Dalmahoy

Minutes of the Vestry Meeting 4th December 2023

1. Attendees:

Rev. Christine Downey
Pippa Crichton
Lord Morton
Steve Haigh
Anne Clapham
Wilma Brown
Mandy Smart
Judy Goodman
Ella Henderson (Zoom)

2. Apologies for Absence:

All persons present.

3. Opening Prayer and Welcome

Christine said a prayer and welcomed the attendees to the meeting and the new season of vestry. Christine welcomed the new vestry members and each of them were provided with a copy of the constitution. One will be emailed to Ella.

4. Minutes of 13th November 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

- **Bell rope:** Christine received an email during the week from the head of maintenance for the Bell Ringers Association of Scotland. They have offered to come out and see what they can do. They have asked for a photograph so they can see what the issue is in advance. When they come out Christine will ask them to give the bells a check over in case there are any other issues.
- **Water Jug at rear of church:** There is a jug in the church it just needs to be put out before the service.
- **Net Zero Workshops:** Steve is progressing this. He needs 5 people not including himself and he needs an engineer which at the moment is proving difficult to source. Carole and Christine are interested in

attending. Carole was also going to speak with the Scout Leader to see if they would be interested as people out with the congregation and within the community are needed.

Lines of enquiry will be made by Steve and Christine to try and gather the people that Steve needs. Steve also intends to make an announcement to the rest of the congregation after the service to see if he can gain further interest. However, if Steve is unable to attend then Christine will read out the notice on his behalf.

Jean the head of Heathack mentioned that she may attend the sessions and may be able to help out with an engineer.

- **Mar Thoma Rent increase:** A letter was emailed to Mar Thoma proposing the rent increase from January 2024. They have accepted the new rent of £100 per month.
- **Treasurers aid update:** Steve asked if there was any update regarding the treasurers' aid. Christine has been in conversations with Ollie at St Mungo's who are trying to find someone to help, but as yet they don't have someone. Christine will follow this up on Wednesday. Denis has very kindly agreed to continue to help out until he needs to step back or we find a replacement.
- Steve raised a question asking if in fact the new heating, although more environmentally beneficial, is it making a considerable financial benefit? Christine informed vestry although it may not seem like it, but it is making a difference. The infra-red heaters cost £8 / hr for 3 hrs. to heat the church up ready for the Sunday service. The previous heating system would be turned on at 3 in the morning to have the church "heated" for 10:30 am at a cost of £10 / hr. We are also using the church a lot more than we did previously so the cost and figures of energy use will be more.

6. Other Matters from Christine

- Christine informed vestry that 4 people attended Night Church last week and that it went very well. Christine thought some people may question why she is offering these services when only a few people come. Christine stated that if you don't offer anything there is nothing people can attend, we need to be available and accessible. Even if one person comes it's worth it. People need us at different times.
- Christine is working on a new family service for Christmas Eve, so if families with children wish to come this is the one to come to.

- Carol Service 16th December: Last year this was a very busy service and we hope that it is as busy this year. Christine intends to do what happened last year and have a space for children at the front of the church so they feel included. There are a lot of families in the surrounding areas that are associated with St Mary's that like to come.
- Christine intends to schedule a meeting with the new manager and events manager of the hotel. As the hotel will not be doing weddings from 2026, this will have a direct impact on us. A new revenue stream will need to be discussed and generated hopefully with the help of the hotel. This may take more of a historical or art route rather than religious. We need to make our presence known to tourists that come and stay in the hotel.
- Kiwi Cottage: The cottage has now been stripped back and is now ready for the contractors to begin work in January.

7. Treasurer Report

Denis distributed his report which showed that the 30th November 2023 balance in the General Account was £72,507.51 (£ 45,813.12 previous month).

There is £1,676.50 held in restricted funds or for other specific purposes, leaving **£70,831** in unrestricted funds (£43,787.00 previous month).

The St Mary's Trust Account stood at £875.12 (previous month £935.12).

St. Mary's Annual Income to date: £37,884 (inc. bequest below)

St Mary's Annual Expenditure to date: £13,052

- £25,000 received as a bequest from a generous donor.
- £3,380 received from HMRC as Gift Aid Return.
- £1,500 received from Douglas Trust, quarterly payment.
- £770 received in funeral donations.
- £700 received in funeral donations.
- £170 cheque still not cashed by PDSA.
- £400 paid for Sunday after Dark. Donation received from musician towards it.
- £150 donation received from Mar Thoma for extra use of hall.
- £60 paid to H Lawrie for Pest Control from St Mary's Trust Account.

- Denis asked vestry if a donation to Poppy Scotland could be made from the plate collected on Remembrance Sunday. The vestry agreed that a £100 donation should be made.
- Vestry agreed that a £50 voucher should be given as a thank you to Judy Whiteman who checks our books are in order.
- Christine informed vestry that the current living wage has increased and asked if vestry agreed that our admin wage be increased to keep in line with that. Vestry all agreed to the increase.
- Donation to Ratho Primary: Ratho primary attended the choir festival and arranged their own transport, as such it was agreed that a donation would be made to the school. Vestry agreed that a donation of £120 be made.

9. Fabric Report

- The FCC Application for the grant for the exterior pointing of the church was completed and submitted today. Carole will update us as and when she hears anything.

10. Events Committee:

- Nothing to report.

11. Lay Rep Report:

- Nothing to report.

12. Eco – Rep Report:

- Steve asked if the office had received or heard anything about the Thermal monitor we should be receiving. Pippa informed him that she had received an email asking for the Wi-Fi details so they can set the monitor up and then it will be sent out. Pippa will update him once it has been received.

13. AOB

- New sign for A71: this will be progressed. Christine would like two signs one for each direction and for them to be placed in a better position. This will no doubt involve consultation with the council regarding where they will allow the placement of the sign.
- Christine would also like to update the signs as you enter the Dalmahoy estate as they are outdated and have been amended on several occasions. Christine hopes to consult the hotel once their new signage is

completed to have our signs complement theirs and perhaps receive some financial aid with them.

- Cottage Christmas Hampers: The congregation have been asked to donate some food items to go into the hampers for the cottage residents.
- People's warden: Mandy has offered her services to become people's warden. This is a position that is normally elected by the constituent members of the congregation at the AGM or at a special meeting called for the purpose of electing a People's warden. Therefore, Christine will call a meeting at the end of the Sunday service to enable this.

Date of Next Meeting:

The next vestry meeting will be held at **7.00pm on Monday 15th January 2024. This will be in person at the rectory or via zoom due to the darker evenings.**