

St. Mary's Church, Dalmahoy

Minutes of the Vestry Meeting 1st July 2024

1. Attendees:

Rev. Christine Downey
Pippa Crichton
Wilma Brown
Mandy Smart
Ella Henderson
Steve Haigh (Zoom)

2. Apologies for Absence:

Lord Morton
Judy Goodman
Anne Clapham

3. Opening Prayer and Welcome

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

4. Minutes of 20th May 2024 Meeting

There were 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

- **Lawn mower:** The lawn mower has unfortunately had to go in for repair. Despite Ben's efforts to replace the deck by himself, it was discovered that the mower had been badly twisted and welded after a past incident meaning that Ben could not fix the new deck in place. The new deck has to be adjusted to fit the twisted mower.
- **Bequest received:** St Mary's Trust has received a bequest from Olive in the amount of £31,000, this will go towards the upkeep of the Church, Rectory and the Cottage. A thank you to Olive's family has been sent by Christine to show our appreciation for her generosity.
- **Pippa leaving:** As you are aware, Pippa is leaving as she has accepted a new job with Veterinary Specialist Scotland as a Receptionist. Christine and Pippa met with a possible replacement earlier today. The informal interview went well, she has a lot of experience with customer service, computers and seems very adaptable. She is currently on maternity

leave and is looking for a part time job to return to work. She is coming in Wed 10th July, to see what the job entails.

- **Cottage Update:** The cottage is now finished (except minor snagging) and ready to be rented. The refurbishment came in at £86,600, which is just £1,600 over budget. This was due to having to get drawings re done and to fix the leak in the chimney which had not been previously repaired properly.

When the cottage was rented previously St Mary's used a letting agent to manage the property. This would obviously incur a monthly cost and additional costs if the tenant contacted the letting agent for any reason. Christine has been looking into the possibility of not having a letting agent and managing the property ourselves with the help of Done and Dusted. Done and Dusted have offered to manage, maintain and do the inspections for the property. Negating one of the main reasons to have a letting agent. Christine has sought advise from Mary (estate office) and Craig, Done and Dusted, who already manage rental properties and they have both advised her that it is straightforward and definitely the way to go. A letting agent can be bought back in at any time in the future if needed.

Christine proposed that a rent of £1000 / month would be asked for. There are tenants available to move in from 15th July, once relevant paperwork is gathered and signed. A month's rent will be secured as a deposit and lodged with an approved third party.

Concern was raised by a member of vestry, about what if things go wrong with the tenant? would a letting agent be best and better equipped to deal with this? Christine acknowledged that renting a property always comes with an element of risk, but there are plenty of resources out there to assist and as mentioned if we find in the future a letting agent is a better option we can do that.

Once the cottage is inhabited, Craig will initially check the property every few weeks for snagging and in case there are any teething issues. After that inspections will be done quarterly.

Steve did wish to add that everyone who has been involved in the refurbishment of the cottage has done extremely well and he is pleased and surprised that we were only just over budget. He felt it would also be interesting to see when we would recoup the costs.

- **Church roof / repairs:** See Fabric Report.
- **BBQ & Service:** Christine wished to thank everyone for yesterday's service and the BBQ and making it a great day, the bonus was that the rain stayed away. The food as always was delicious.

6. Other Matters from Christine

- **Christine Annual leave:** Christine will be away from 5th Aug till 26th Aug. She will however be here for St Scruffs. Christine will also be away for the next vestry 12th August; Wilma will therefore chair the meeting.

7. Treasurer Report

Denis distributed his report which showed that the 1st July 2024 balance in the General Account was **£14,620.58** (£27,311.77 previous month).

There is £1905.50 held in restricted funds or for other specific purposes, leaving **£12,715** in unrestricted funds (£25,782 previous month).

The St Mary's Trust Account stood at £430.12 (previous month £550.12).

St. Mary's Annual Income to date: £126,292.56

St Mary's Annual Expenditure to date: £159,348.05

- £200 donation from Baptism
- £335 donation from Sarah Wilbey Recital
- £150 donation from funeral
- Paid Sarah Wilbey £400 for recital
- Paid £124 to Done n Dusted for new lock on office door
- Paid £4,600 for continuing work on Kiwi Cottage refurbishment. Total paid out £86,600, £45,000 of which came from the Douglas Trust
- £216 paid to Alclean Drainage for drainage work on Rectory and Kiwi Cottage
- £200 paid to Igreja Episcopal Angliana (Charitable Giving)
- £500 paid to Bethany Christian Trust £500 (Charitable Giving)
- £250 paid to UNICEF (Charitable Giving)
- £60 paid to H Lawrie for Pest Control
- Bequeath of £31,246.55 received for St Mary's Trust.

Christine added that Igreja Episcopal Angliana were extremely grateful and surprised by the donation that they received from St Mary's. They have been sending Christine updates and photos of what the money has been used for.

Steve mentioned that he finds the annual Income and expenditure amounts difficult to interpret as to where the money goes and why there is a discrepancy between the two amounts.

Christine agreed and suggested that it would be useful to have the figures in a clearer form for those that don't understand accounts as easily. She suggested that this would be useful at least by AGM if not before.

9. Fabric Report

- **Church Repairs:** Following the receipt of Olive's generous donation, Carole has asked Vestry if she can start proceedings on the re-pointing of the church in order to tackle the damp issues. Carole would like to obtain quotes from various people in the first instance and will report back to vestry.

As mentioned previously, a lot of the church stones were put in wrong at the time of building. This thankfully does not contribute to water ingress and is more of an aesthetic issue. To rectify this is incredibly expensive and out of reach for St Mary's at the moment. By repointing the stones, we should tackle the main issue at hand.

Vestry agreed for Carole to start obtaining quotes.

- **Church Roof:** This is in hand and we are awaiting a start date for works to commence. Money has been set aside for this.
- **Grass cutting:** Carole and Graham are back to cutting the church grass. If anyone knows of anyone that could help out, perhaps school leaver age, looking for experience? something to do? possibly for some monetary compensation? Or anyone else that could lend a hand? please let Christine or Carole know. Steve has offered to help out when he can.

10. Events Committee:

- **St Scruffs:** St Scruffs dog show is on **Saturday 10th August** this year, Ella suggested that posters get done and up as soon as possible and to advertise the show on as many platforms and places as possible. Christine is working on the poster, so it should be displayed by next week. Ella has also been in talks with Margaret and is planning on providing hot dogs at the show. Vestry agreed that this would be a good idea.

11. Lay Rep Report:

- Nothing to report.

12. Eco – Rep Report:

- A heating engineer attended and did a walk-through of the hall, looking at the boiler and radiators to see what could be done to raise our

efficiency. The system that we currently have is designed more for residential properties.

We also have a water tank in the loft so this needs to undergo test for Legionella, this is in hand and people have been approached about doing this.

There are another two people (one of which is Aquarius which manage the Rectory and Cottage heating systems) coming out to assess the heating.

Steve mentioned that the Scottish Episcopal Church have reached out as they are aware that we did the Heat Hack workshops. They have asked for feedback and have also supplied information and suggestions about various grants that are available and that we may be able to make use of which is good.

13. AOB

- **Pastoral Visiting:** Ella felt that although pastoral visiting is a great idea, she feels that sometimes it becomes routine and perhaps the people that really need it are not receiving it.

Ella also felt that as St Mary's doesn't have a parish, we have no barriers as to who we can reach out to. It was felt that since Covid a lot of people that used to be involved with St Mary's have drifted away and perhaps not enough has been done to try and welcome them back. It was felt that it would be nice if specific time could be set aside to provide a space for those that would like to reach out or be involved in some way to encourage them to do so. To let them know that they are needed, welcomed and wanted here.

Vestry felt this was a good idea, something perhaps like the Faith lunches that used to be held.

Christine stated that she is in touch with some people who aren't regular attenders for one reason or another, some who share their reason and some that don't. She felt that this is a good idea and would need some development, so it would be a good idea to get some people together to discuss how this can be progressed.

- Pippa's last day of employment will be Wed 31st August 2024, (But she is on annual leave from 22nd July till 31st July). However, she will be available beyond this to help out if needed.

Date of Next Meeting:

The next vestry meeting will be held **Monday 12th August at 7pm 2024**
this will be held within the hall in person.

Vestry dates 2024:

23rd September

4th November

16th December