

St. Mary's Church, Dalmahoy

Minutes of the Vestry Meeting 23rd September 2024

1. Attendees:

Rev. Christine Downey
Wilma Brown
Mandy Smart
Pippa Crichton
Steve Haigh
Judy Goodman
Anne Clapham
Kate Graham
Olivia Almond

2. Apologies for Absence:

Lord Morton
Ella Henderson

3. Opening Prayer and Welcome

Christine said a prayer and welcomed the attendees to the meeting. Christine welcomed Olivia to the meeting. Emma who was going to be St Mary's new administrator could no longer take on the role. Christine re advertised and as a result hired Olivia who started with St Marys recently. Olivia has also agreed to become the new Vestry Secretary.

4. Minutes of 12th August 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

- **Fundraising Update:** Christine was pleased to inform vestry that a donation of £10,000 had been received anonymously towards the church repointing works. The vinyl Thermometer sticker has been received, but has yet to be placed. This needs to happen as soon as, as we need to get people talking about it. Christine has recently had a talk with the Bishop regarding St Mary's financial position and possible routes of funding and the difficulties of finding volunteers versus paid roles. Christine is exploring all avenues.

Christine intends to put out letters to past wedding couples and baptismal families asking for their support so that the church can still be here for another generation to enjoy as they have. A similar idea was done in the past to raise money for the organ repairs. Christine will try and find out who drafted the letter and to get an idea of its content as it was very successful.

Christine very much liked the ideas of a Pancake Dinner on Shrove Tuesday (4th March 2025) and a Ceilidh night. Anne also suggested a Harvest Supper. Dates will now need to be sorted and entered into the diary.

- **St. Mary's Merchandise:** A selection of photos and a sketch of St Mary's was given to Matthew (Wilma's Son). He thereafter designed a picture of St Mary's that can be lasered onto wood or slate. Wilma showed Vestry an example of a wooden and a slate coaster. The design was beautiful and stood out very well on the wooden coaster.

Vestry agreed that the wooden coasters along with a wooden bread board would be the perfect items to start selling at the Dalmahoy.

A decision of adding the wording St Mary's Dalmahoy since 1850 was made and Matthew can find the best placement for the wording on the design. Matthew will then laser the coasters and boards and a polishing workshop "Polish & Natter" will be set up by congregation members to finish them ready to sell.

To help items sell, it was suggested that we need to encourage people to come and see the church so they are more likely to buy souvenirs.

Christine suggested it would be a good idea to open the church more often. It is open on a Monday and Wednesday morning at present. But can be opened on a Tuesday and a Thursday morning and a Sunday afternoon. St Mary's will be incorporated into tours run from the Dalmahoy next year.

6. Other Matters from Christine

- **Bishops Visit:** The Bishops visit went very well. The Bishop remarked on the community feel and the relaxed vibe of St Mary's. He loved the service and appreciated the music. Christine agreed that St Mary's is a very special place and reminded him that it needs to be viewed individually and not in amongst all the other churches.
- **Thomas:** Thomas has sadly left St Mary's and his grand piano is now no longer on the stage. Paul Chamberlin is available to play the organ till at least the end of October.

An ad for a new organist / music director has just been published.

- **Hymns:** Christine is going to be asking the congregation for their favourite hymn and the reasons why. Christine will then let the individual know when their hymn will be played and either ask them to tell people their reasons for choosing that hymn or the reason can be included in the Bulletin.
- **Weddings:** Weddings are up next year already compared to this year so that is good news. The other good news is that the Dalmahoy will continue to do Weddings. They will be the only Warner Hotel to do Weddings. They realised that people want weddings at the Dalmahoy.

7. Treasurer Report

Denis distributed his report which showed that the 20th September 2024 balance in the General Account was **£29,753.55** (£14,876.29 previous month).

There is £19,254.98 held in restricted funds or for other specific purposes, leaving **£10,498.57** in unrestricted funds (£11,399.79 previous month).

The St Mary's Trust Account stood at £29,484.67 (previous month £31,616.87).

St. Marys's Annual Income to date: £160,072

St Mary's Annual Expenditure to date: £177,995

It should be noted that prior to the month end, which is also the financial end of year the September payroll and quota still have to be paid. That will be approximately £3,800. Also, a Grant of £715 was given for the Tormain Project for which we await the corresponding invoice. So, if these are subtracted from the £10,498.57 amount a truer figure for the balance in the General Account at the end of year will be £5,983.

- Donations of £18,000 have been made so far for Church Re pointing. £16,700 is eligible for Gift Aid to be claimed on. That will bring the total so far to £22,175. Gift Aid will be claimed when the half yearly claim form is submitted to HMRC in October.
- The quarterly grant of £1,500 was received from The Douglas Trust
- The half yearly dividend from the SEC Unit Trust Pool was received. It was £551.86

- CCLI paid £337.72 for church copyright licenses.
- Clergy Conference payment of £310 made,
- £181.47 made to Kevin Mayhew for church candles. £94 of this was covered by a sponsorship donation made last November.

St Mary's Trust Account:

- Two payments of £60 each to H Lawrie for Pest Control
- Kiwi Cottage £1,000 rent deposit has been paid into a holding account. .
- The Douglas Trust has paid £3,500 into the Trust Account to pay the cost of moving the ramp at the entrance to the Douglas Hall.

Christine mentioned that Denis has expressed his concerns regarding St Mary's Financial position. Christine will have a discussion with Denis about what his advice would be regarding potentially taking money out of the Unit Trust. Christine mentioned that cost cutting ideas and measures are being looked at and implemented where possible. The taps are being replaced in the wash rooms. Sensor lights were priced but are very expensive and not possible at this time.

9. Fabric Report

- Buckstone Roofing have been working to remove the gutters and down spouts from the church. Some sections have cracks along them but only one was found to be blocked. Many of the gutter supports have corroded and broken so need replaced.
It was mentioned that the bottom row of slates especially on the south side do not protrude out far enough to direct the rain into the gutters. Discussions will be had as what's best to do. Carole has also enquired into having a camera survey done while the down spouts are removed. The outcome of the application to the Provincial Building Grant Committee will not be known till Early December. The stone masons input is dependent on available funds. They will only do the work to what the funds allow at the time.
Carole would like to be kept informed regarding funds available so she can liaise with the Stone mason.

10. Events Committee:

- **Choir Festival:** The Choir Festival will be held on Friday 22nd November this year. Letters will be sent out as soon as possible by the office to the head teachers of the local Primary Schools to see if they wish to attend.

11. Lay Rep Report:

- The next Diocesan Synod (Financial) meeting is 24th October

12. Eco – Rep Report:

- A follow up Heat Hack meeting was held on 28th August. We know the actions we aspire to, but are limited due to available finances. Work on the ramp has started. It is unclear at present if the old ramp is being removed or just sectioned off. As mentioned the tap replacement is going ahead, everything else is on hold just now. The next Heat-hack meeting is scheduled for 6 months time.

13. AOB

- **Charitable Giving:** The total amount remaining to give this financial year is: £226.00
Steve suggested donating to Christian Aid Humanitarian Appeal Gaza following a Just Peace workshop he attended. Christine and Vestry agreed that this would be a good cause due to the horrors that are happening there daily. The total remaining amount will be donated to the appeal.
- **IT Support:** Kate has noticed some issues with the office computer recently, one of which is that it is now not updating due to lack of space. She felt that some sort of IT support would be helpful. A computer repair shop was contacted previously. Pippa will source the number and provide it to Kate / Olivia to contact them.

Date of Next Meeting:

The next vestry meeting will be held on **Monday 28th October at 7pm 2024** this will be held within the hall in person.

Vestry dates 2024:

AGM 17th November

16th December