

St Mary's Episcopal Church, Aberfoyle

Rector: Revd. Richard Grosse

www.stmarychurchaberfoyle.org.uk

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Minutes of Vestry Meeting

Held in the Church Room on 23 January 2013

Present: Mark Seymour (Chairman); Richard Grosse (Rector); Barbara Carruthers; Nick Cooke; Susan Forsyth; Alastair Gardner; James Gardner; Peter Joynson; Jean Sykes; David Thompson and Anne Winther.

1. The meeting commenced at 7.35 pm with a prayer.

The Chairman welcomed, in particular, the three new Vestry members – Alastair Gardner, James Gardner and Jean Sykes as well as the other Vestry members in attendance. Each new member will be asked to complete two Declarations which will be provided by the Secretary in the next few days together with a note of specific documents of which Vestry members should be particularly aware. The Chairman will provide a hard copy of the Church Governance Manual for Jean Sykes and those with access to St Mary's website now have the password to refer to the manual online.

2. Apologies: Margie Stephen

3. Sharing Faith – A Vestry Member (AiM 7A.4)

The Chairman shared with us some interesting thoughts which prompted contributions from the Vestry also.

4. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2012 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4.1 There were no matters arising.

5. Rector's Report

A representative from St Mary's at the General Synod (Edinburgh 6-8 June 2013) is being sought and a member to serve on the Standing Committee for two years. Vestry was asked to consider. In the meantime, these positions would be advertised in the Weekly Bulletin, Pew Leaflet and by notices in Church. *Action: Vestry/Richard Grosse*

6. Casting the Net – Mission Action Plan

6.1 Following the resignation of Philip Gaskell from his involvement in this, the Rector reported that he is now picking up the threads. While a replacement for Philip would be ideal Richard has taken over in the interim. Susan Forsyth offered to assist the Rector in this role. However, it was noted that the implementation of the Mission Action Plan (MAP) was the responsibility of the Vestry.

6.2 It was agreed that the MAP 6 month review be deferred until the next Vestry meeting, by which time the Rector will have considered matters and will have developed a programme of further action..

6.3 *AiM 7A7* It was felt the best time for the Lent Group to meet this year would again be after Sunday service.

Action: Richard Grosse

6.4 *AiM 7B.* The aim of joint advertising with Church of Scotland, Aberfoyle, of our services and other activities should be postponed until the kirk has installed a new minister.

7. Secretary's Business

7.1 The CCLI Licence from 1 January 2013 has been renewed for the year.

7.2 The Diocesan Schedule, part completed, has been passed to the Treasurer for completion and return to the Diocesan Office.

7.3 Draft Minutes of the Annual Meeting on 9 December 2012 have been sent to the Diocesan Office and will also be posted on St Mary's website. *Action:Mark Seymour/David Thompson*

7.4 *Gift Aid Declaration.* A new form has been prepared effective from 1 January 2013 in response to revised requirements laid down by HMRC. The Secretary believes that existing Declarations held by him contain all essential information and therefore remain valid.

7.5 Regarding Gift Aid Envelopes, it was noted that the new envelopes produced by Donation Envelopes have adopted the same wording as our Gift Aid Declaration. The suggestion that we should use the same wording on our Gift Aid envelopes was questioned. However, the acceptability of any abbreviated wording should first be checked with HMRC. The Chairman has kindly undertaken to produce new Gift Aid envelopes in a format better suited to fit the pew shelves. *Action:Mark Seymour*

7.6 In the absence of any volunteer to take over as Vestry Secretary, David Thompson confirmed his willingness with Marie's assistance to continue, until a successor is found, up to the end of this year – but not beyond. On behalf of Vestry the Chairman expressed his thanks to both.

8. Area Contacts

8.1 As Philip Gaskell is no longer a Drymen area contact, another contact is required.. Another contact is also needed to cover Strathblane. One or two names were suggested, but it was felt another meeting of area contacts should be arranged to discuss this. *Action:Mark Seymour*

8.2 Concern was expressed at the difficulty in finding some rural addresses. However, it was pointed out that there are several web sites to assist with location such as Royal Mail Post-Code Finder/Checker.

9. Music & Worship

9.1 As there is no longer a formal group covering these activities the Rector asked that this item should be deleted from future agendas.

9.2 However, the Rector is grateful to Margie Stephen and Jean Sykes for all they contribute and felt the informal communication between them works.

9.3 No 'relief' organist is currently available and concern was expressed that this meant no opportunity for Jean Sykes to have holiday cover occasionally or to participate in Sunday service as an ordinary member of the congregation. The possibility of attracting a Dunblane Cathedral organ scholar to play occasionally at St Mary's should be explored again. *Action:Nick Cooke*

9.4 Vestry recognised that the introduction of 'new' or unfamiliar hymns should continue, but that an opportunity to rehearse for a few minutes before the Sunday service commences would be welcome. *Action:Jean Sykes*

10. Treasurer's Business

10.1 The Treasurer's Report to Vestry circulated before this meeting stated:

Cash Flow

Cash flow remains evenly poised at present, and there is currently a running balance of some £5,000 in the main bank account, with no outstanding bills. A significant transfer of funds is due to move to the Renovation account – see below.

St Mary's Annual Report & Accounts 2011-12

Under the procedure approved at the 2012 AGM, I attach the final draft of the Report & Accounts for Vestry approval. A copy has been previously sent to the Secretary for any alterations to be made to the wording of the Trustees Report. The figures in the Accounts have all been agreed with our Independent Examiner. Once approved, I will lodge signed copies of this document with the Diocesan Office and Independent Examiner and, in electronic format, with the annual return to be submitted to OSCR. Please note the Accounts are a historic cash flow statement prepared on a receipts and payments basis. Two specific points should be mentioned:

(a) An exceptionally high level of donations were made by the Rector to St Mary's in connection with his Library van driving duties. Since last February, with Richard's approval, these donations have been allocated proportionately (40/60) to St Andrew's and St Mary's as an offset against the annual distribution of Linkage costs. In 2012 this has resulted in a net repayment of costs due to St Andrew's of £545 at the financial year end. This situation is unlikely to be repeated.

(b) Certain income from 2012 fundraising events (the Michael Forsyth and Judy Urquhart lectures) and some Gift Aid donations which have been included in unrestricted funds but have been allocated for Renovation Fund use will shortly be transferred to the Renovation bank account. After this transfer, total Renovation account funds will stand at £4,021.

Loan Repayment

In line with my remarks at the AGM, I am proposing that Vestry approves the use of the adjusted Renovation account balance to repay the sum of £2,000 to a member of St Mary's, representing the first two annual repayment instalments of the £15,000 interest free loan given for the Renovation Appeal. After this has been made, there will be a balance of £2,021 potentially available for the cost of the Church floodlighting project. The new balance of the loan will be £13,000.

Independent Financial Examiner

I should like to propose that Stephen Nisbet of Ind-Ex Accountancy Services be re-appointed Independent Examiner to St Mary's Vestry for the coming year. Stephen and I have collaborated closely on the production of the 2012 Accounts and have no doubt he will be very supportive of my successor as Treasurer.

Church Giving Fund

The special collection for the Fund from the 2012 Christmas Carol service totalled £310 including Gift Aid tax recoverable. The total balance in the Fund available for distribution in donations currently stands at £1,330. Nominations of grants to appropriate UK charities are invited from any member of St Mary's, for Vestry approval.

10.2 The 2011-2012 Annual Report & Accounts had been circulated to Vestry in advance of this meeting and a few adjustments noted at the AGM had now been agreed with the Independent Examiner, so the Treasurer believed these documents were now ready for Vestry approval and signature. The 2011-2012 Annual Report and Accounts were unanimously approved by Vestry and signed by the Chairman and Secretary.

10.3 Now that the Church Renovation project has been completed the question was asked whether the Church Renovation Fund still needs to feature in the Accounts.. The Treasurer confirmed it did need to do so as a Restricted Fund for outstanding loan repayment and other purposes. He also reiterated that the Church Giving fund was also Restricted.

10.4 The external floodlighting of the Church still needs to be fully funded and the Chairman reported that he was continuing to explore possible grant sources for this purpose. It was suggested that one such source could be Communities Foundation Scotland. This would be investigated, but it was thought it did not award grants itself, but was more an advisory body.

10.5 It was agreed that the Treasurer's proposal for repayment of the first £2K of the interest free loan provided by a member of the congregation to complete the Renovation Project should now be made. .

10.6 The proposal that Stephen Nisbet of Ind-ex Accountancy Services be re-appointed Independent Examiner to St Mary's Vestry for the coming year was approved.

10.7 Alastair Gardner has kindly agreed to take over as Treasurer from Nick Cooke and has the full support of Vestry. This transfer of responsibility will now take place during 2013.

10.8 Vestry expressed its thanks and gratitude to Nick Cooke for all he has done for St Mary's as Treasurer over the past sixteen years.

10.9 *Church Giving Fund* Vestry agreed to the following charitable donations now: Crossroads West Stirlingshire £300; Children's Hospice Association Scotland (CHAS) £300 and Strathcarron Hospice £300.

Four further proposals: Sponsor a Mum (CINI); The Chesney Trust; Callander Youth Project and Christian Aid would be reviewed in six months' time.

10.10 *Robert Sutherland Legacy* The Treasurer confirmed that this legacy for the benefit of St Mary's has now been received by the Diocese. The capital sum of £30K will remain under Diocesan control. It is hoped that this might generate c£1K p.a. income for St Mary's and that in principle it could be applied to supporting the CTN Mission Action Plan. The Treasurer agreed to discuss procedures further with the Diocese.

10.11 In answer to a question regarding St Mary's response to the SEC Pension Fund consultation, the Treasurer regretted that he had been unable to do so by the December 2012 deadline. However, the view of St Mary's Vestry was very much in line with the Executive summary of the Consultation Paper in any case.

11. Communications

11.1 Barbara Carruthers reported that one of the visitors to St Mary's on a Church Open Day was a Dean of Liverpool Cathedral who had subsequently written enthusiastically to Barbara about her visit.

11.2 Although the Church is not opened weekly during the winter months, the COG members still meet and enjoy the fellowship.

11.3 Vestry expressed its appreciation and thanks to Barbara for her excellent contribution in producing the weekly Pew Leaflet.

12. Godly Play

12.1 James Gardner reported that sales of Christmas cards designed by the children had raised £35 for St Mary's.

12.2 The theme of Godly Play this year will be 'Living Stones'

12.3 Responsibility for disclosure is being transferred from Disclosure Scotland to a PVG scheme which it is thought may mean payment of a disclosure fee in future.

12.4 James reported that he had attended a Youth Committee meeting in Perth representing St Mary's with about a dozen participants discussing the development of Child Friendly churches.

12.5 It was confirmed that an Easter Garden for St Mary's will again be created.

12.6 The next meetings of Godly Play will be on 17 February and 10 March.

12.7 James explained he is unsure of this location from August onwards.

12.8 In the light of 12.7 a male to assist with Godly Play is sought and this will be advertised in the Pew Leaflet.
Action:James Gardner/Anne Winther

12.9 It was noted that ‘Thirsty’ was no longer operating at Gartmore House. It has equipment funded by St Mary’s in the past and we should be aware of its present location and security. Barbara Carruthers will check.
Action:Barbara Carruthers

13. Fabric Report

13.1 No report had been received for this meeting from Jamie Parker.

13.2 It is still to be confirmed whether Ian Macdonald has fixed mesh to the gable-end louvres to keep out jackdaws.
Action:Mark Seymour/Jamie Parker

14. AOCB

14.1 The new carpet is fraying on its outer edges towards the altar and there is a hole in the carpet near the organ both of which need repair.
Action:Mark Seymour/Jamie Parker

14.2 Forthcoming events in St Mary’s were noted as follows:

February 2013 ‘ Last of Barrett’s Privateers’ indie folk band due to record at St Mary’s. They have undertaken to give a concert later in the year.

15 March 2013 Talk by Mary Bates on ‘Travels with my Great Grandfather’

July 2013 A ceilidh/folk group would like to hold a concert in St Mary’s *Action:Mark Seymour*

15. Date of next Vestry meeting – Wednesday 24 April 2013

16. The meeting closed with prayer at 9.30 pm.

Signed.....

Date.....