

St Mary's Episcopal Church, Aberfoyle

Rector: Revd. Richard Grosse

www.stmarychurchaberfoyle.org.uk

A charity registered in Scotland: SC023266

Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 9 December 2012 at 12.15 p.m. in the Church

The meeting, which followed the Morning Service, was attended by 22 members of the congregation.

Mark Seymour, Vestry Chairman, welcomed everyone and thanked all for attending

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Juliet Edmonstone, Michael Forsyth, Susan Forsyth and Philip Gaskell..

2. The Minutes.

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 11 December 2011, copies of which had been distributed in advance, were approved and their adoption proposed by Billie Bates, seconded by David Miller and signed by the Chairman.

3. Vestry Report.

The Chairman reported that the Vestry had met on four occasions. Copies of the Minutes of these meetings are available in Church and Church Room and on the Church website: www.stmarychurchaberfoyle.org.uk

Our Mission Action Plan (M.A.P.) was launched by Bishop David on his visit to St Mary's in February. Implementation of the Plan is underway by the Rector and Vestry. The M.A.P. is a three year rolling programme to February 2015, but is reviewed by Vestry every six months.

The Chairman thanked all those who had contributed to the life and work of St Mary's over the year including those members of the congregation who work behind the scenes as well as the office bearers and Vestry – in particular Philip and Karen Gaskell who have now retired as Lay Representative and Magazine Editor respectively.

In thanking the Godly Play team the Chairman noted that a replacement is now being sought for James Gardner before he departs to university next year. A volunteer to organise concerts and events, temporarily being led by the Chairman, is needed as is help in the Church gardens.

Lastly, and above all, Richard Grosse, our Rector, was thanked for all he has done for St Mary's over the year.

4. Rector's Report.

In his Annual Report delivered from the pulpit, during the preceding service prior to the AGM, the Rector stated:

We are the Body of Christ.

The Annual Meeting of any organisation is composed of piles of paper and columns of figures. Both of course are necessary for its smooth functioning. We though are neither club nor society. Rather we gather together as a representation of Christ's body on earth as best we are able.

Someone suggested to me recently that we might hold a party in the New Year. The reason would be to celebrate the dedication and hard work that is and has been given within our body. I never mention names at an Annual Meeting for obvious reason but you will be aware of who these people are. The range of talent and vision within a small church is remarkable. Some contributions are noticeable, especially those of the main office bearers. Others quietly work in the background unseen and often unremembered but nevertheless all are of crucial importance. I offer my heartfelt gratitude.

In February the Bishop was present at the launch of our Casting the Net Mission Action Plan. Following a day event in October 2011 at Kinlochard, those present recommended to the members of Vestry a plan focusing on two particular aspects of St Mary's life. The first aspect is to reach out to children and young people. We have a great deal to thank those involved in Godly Play for putting the children element at least into practice. A similar action to serve the needs of young people, as opposed to children is notoriously difficult to achieve, but naturally in my day to day ministry I endeavour to make myself known to that local age group as best as I am able.

The other aspect recommended is a sharing of faith by sensitive and confident evangelism. There are many views and opinions as to how this might best be done. Some feel it best to directly challenge others to come to faith and of course in some instances, that approach will be met by success. Others, including myself, incline to building bridges to meet others half way. Sometimes inviting others to faith is akin to feeding a timid animal from the palm of the hand: it takes time and patience to establish trust and familiarity.

With this bridge building in mind, I have been delighted by the success of the concerts that have been staged here over the past year. The suggestion of a Jazz evening raised eyebrows but eventually provoked a great deal of favourable local comment. It is sometimes forgotten the sheer hard labour involved in these concerts. Another worthwhile project has been the opening of the church on set summer afternoons.

A personal priority in ministry has been to maintain good fellowship with those of other denominations. No good can come of petty rivalry and jealousy between denominations. The Songs of Praise in June and other shared services with Aberfoyle Kirk have been encouraging. I am sorry that the Kirk Minister has moved elsewhere this year and pray that her successor will be equally keen to co-operate.

The year has been overshadowed by the illness and death of David Stephen a faithful and dearly loved member of the congregation. St Mary's was full for his Memorial Service in June.

We are here part of a Linkage with St Andrew in Callander. Please spare a thought for the people facing what is likely to be a prolonged period of disruption after a renewed outbreak of dry rot.

So what will 2013 bring St Mary's? Jeremiah the Old Testament prophet was sent by God to the house of the village potter to watch him work at his wheel. The clay in the potters hand was being made into a vessel. Sometimes the pot being made would become misshapen. A deft touch of the potter's hand would correct what was wrong to be whole again. We entrust ourselves to be clay in God's hand.

I finish with two favourite prayers that I hope reflect my opening comment.

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours

God be in my head
And in my understanding
God be in my eyes
And in my looking
God be in my mouth
And in my speaking
God be in my heart
And in my thinking
God be at my end
And at my departing.

5. Presentation of Accounts 2011-2012

The Treasurer, Nick Cooke, opened his Report with the observation that this was the 16th year he had presented the Annual Accounts – too long for one person in his opinion and a concern of Vestry. Succession planning is vital, especially given Scottish Episcopal Church and Office of Scottish Charities Regulator (OSCR) requirements. He considered it unlikely a successor could be found who could be both Treasurer and Book-keeper. Accordingly, it was planned to define a simpler role for the new Treasurer with the Book-keeper role outsourced. The Treasurer and Vestry Chairman are looking at options – with a possible ‘candidate’ living locally in mind.

It was explained that the 2012 Draft Accounts circulated at this meeting had been produced by our Independent Examiner, Steve Nesbit, as a first step in this direction. He is able to act as a book-keeper under charity law, but cannot act as Treasurer.

These Draft Accounts were not yet entirely accurate and the full Report & Accounts document for Vestry approval will be drafted by the Treasurer as the Diocese requires.

The Treasurer commented on the 2012 Draft Accounts as follows:

- Overall year end position is stronger than last year – income levels held up, expenditure is down, the investment portfolio improved in value.
- Draft figures do not reflect correct treatment of Church Giving fund as part of St Mary’s restricted funds, which will be rectified.
- BUT two large ‘black holes’
- 1. No provision made for annual repayment of the £15,000 interest free loan that is not shown in the figures. We now owe £2,000 in overdue instalments to the member of St Mary’s whose generosity made the completion of the Church Renovation project possible.

- 2. The surplus of £6,300 was only made possible by the extraordinary generosity of our Rector who for the past 2 years has been a part time driver of the Stirling Council library van and donated his earnings to the Linkage. But Richard has recently decided, for reasons of his own, that he cannot continue his driving duties. We should never take such a situation for granted, but it will make 2013 a tougher year for St Mary's.

I ask the Meeting to authorise the Vestry to approve a final 2012 Report & Accounts as soon as possible, under the arrangements I have outlined. The full document will be circulated to the congregation at the same time as copies are filed with the Diocese and OSCR.

The Meeting unanimously agreed to authorise Vestry to approve the final 2012 Report & Accounts as outlined above.

6. Lay Representative's Report

The Lay Representative, Philip Gaskell, was not present, but had submitted his report which the Chairman summarised, with copies available at the meeting, as follows:

It has been my privilege to be lay representative over the last few years during which the Diocese adopted Casting the Net as its approach to mission and growth - which is now "the way we do things". The choice of the 'Casting the Net' story of the miraculous catch of fish from John roots us scripturally and reminds us that our primary task is not the organisation of the church but the call to disciples who respond to Jesus. The Diocese recognises that its congregations are sustained by the faithfulness and constancy of people and their clergy and that our vision remains steadfast.

'Our Diocese comprises a thriving group of hopeful, caring and committed congregations whose shared life, worship and effective engagement with people and issues in their communities attracts growing numbers of people from diverse backgrounds to share the values and work of our Church.'

Area Council meetings which happen three times per year have become open to all and now provide opportunities for growth and learning together. The next meeting is in February and is the Bishop's roadshow. Details are given in Richard's weekly email - do make the effort to attend.

At its annual meeting in March this year, **Diocesan Synod** approved a review of Casting the Net Policy and Action Plan, which restated this vision and our underlying principles of the Nine Marks of Mission. It reaffirmed the work of five Action Groups as:

The **Congregational Development Group** has developed the work of Mission Action Planning and seeks to embed the Nine Marks of Mission in all congregations across the Diocese. Congregations together prayerfully shape a new future in mission and call on the resources of their people and the Diocese to respond. Casting the Net Liaison Officers in each church have become a thoughtful and energising network, passionate about mission.

The **Ministry and Education Group** seeks to respond to the desire of people to 'learn more about their faith'. That process of learning itself engenders faith and a desire to serve in ministry of all kinds - the Group intends to provide training for a wide variety of lay ministries with the support of Area Councils.

The **Children, Parents and Young People Group** recognises that every age group should be represented in a healthy congregation and looks at how we can encourage children and young people to be active members of our congregations. Those who lead Young Church are a key resource and are strengthening as a CTN network.

The **Clergy Development Group** recognises that, in a period of change and challenge, the capacity of clergy to provide leadership for their congregations is vitally important.

The **Charges and Groupings Group** invites us to look strategically at the way in which our congregations are distributed across the diocese and at the way in which our clergy resources are deployed.

The **Administration Group** represents our view that administration of the highest quality is vitally important to the life of the church

The revised Policy and Action Plan included a set of common aims for these Action Groups that will shape the direction of Casting the Net over the next three years. These aren't just words they are being used to create formal annual delivery plans that will be reviewed by Standing Committee

- Working creatively and supportively to develop mission-shaped communities of faith
- Education, training and support to build confidence and encourage growth
- Building dynamic and loving relationships through which we share our faith and serve others.

7. Vestry Membership and Appointment of Lay Representative and Alternate Lay Representative

Jean Sykes, Alastair Gardner and James Gardner were elected to Vestry, all being proposed by Kate Joynson and seconded by Melanie Grosse.

Susan Forsyth and Anne Winther both agreed to extend their current Vestry membership by a further two years each and were proposed by Melanie Grosse and seconded by Saffrey Miller. David Thompson agreed to extend his current Vestry membership by one further year and was proposed by James Gardner and seconded by George Willis.

Jonny North, who has completed his term on Vestry and was not seeking re-election, has indicated his willingness to continue as Health & Safety Officer.

Following Philip Gaskell's retirement as Lay Representative, Nick Cooke has agreed to take up this position and was proposed by Kate Joynson and seconded by Anne Winther.

Saffrey Miller has agreed to continue as Alternate Lay Representative for a further year and was proposed by Peter Joynson and seconded by Alastair Gardner.

8. A.O.C.B.

None

9. Date of Next Meeting

The Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday 8 December 2013.

There being no other competent business the Chairman thanked the Congregation and the meeting closed at 1.15 pm with the Grace.

Signed.....

Date.....