

# St Mary's Episcopal Church, Aberfoyle

Rector: Revd. Richard Grosse

[www.stmarychurchaberfoyle.org.uk](http://www.stmarychurchaberfoyle.org.uk)

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## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2008 at 11.45 a.m. in the Church

The meeting, which followed the Morning Service, was attended by 36 members of the congregation.

**1. Apologies.** Apologies were received from Mrs J. Dymond, Lady Forsyth, Mr and Mrs J. Parker and Mr and Mrs. R. Willis.

**2. The Minutes.** The Minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2007, copies of which had been distributed in advance, were approved and signed.

### 3. Vestry Report

The Chairman said that the Vestry had held four meetings since last December. Copies of the Minutes were on the church website [www.stmarychurchaberfoyle.org.uk](http://www.stmarychurchaberfoyle.org.uk). An EGM had been held on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at which the decision had been taken to proceed with the renovation plans.

The Vestry had an Away Day in May to reflect on long-term strategy in the light of what we are doing now and what we need to change. This predated the Diocesan Review. Another Away Day will be held in 2009 to follow up a number of action points.

There had been two joint events with St. Andrew's in Callander.

Mark thanked Vestry members for their hard work and support throughout the year, mentioning especially Nick Cooke (Treasurer), for his enormous workload as renovation coordinator, involving collaboration with the architect, and as fundraiser, in addition to the preparation of the annual accounts, John Dymond (Secretary) who was retiring after nine years in the post (to be replaced by David Thompson), Karen Gaskell (Communications Team Leader) who was stepping down having served a full four-year term, but will still produce the Newsletter, Margie Stephen (Lay Reader), Margaret Johnson (Verger), Jean Sykes (Organist), and Marion Nolan, the church cleaner.

### 4. Rector's Report

The Rector gave a written report, which is presented here in full:

"The building chaos attending the Annual Meeting this year will be proof that Vestry has not been idle. The scope and nature of the renovation has been, and will doubtless continue to be, discussed at length. Were money no object, everyone's vision of St Mary's might well be satisfied. As it is, the finished project will necessarily represent something of a compromise, reflecting that to some extent we are stewards of the generosity of past generations.

It is a matter though for much thanks that a sizeable proportion of the cost of the works has now been raised. This would not have been possible but for the generosity of many, and the tireless efforts of Vestry Members. Various events have taken place to promote the works, including a musical evening in May, and a remarkable sponsored pilgrimage over a week in September. A Jumble Sale at Dounan's Camp is about to be held.

The Diocese launched its Policy and Action Plan to congregations in May. It is heartening that one or two members of our congregation have been recruited by the Bishop to spearhead the plan in the parishes. To enable discussion of the Plan as it might relate to our parish, Vestry convened an Away Day at David Marshall Lodge in the spring, to pool ideas. It was agreed that one starting point was issuing a questionnaire about preferences

for our worship. The replies have of course been varied, and underline the difficulty of satisfying all shades of taste and opinion within the confines of one main weekly service. The Plan and what arises from it will doubtless be a recurring topic in the year to come. From experience it is relatively easy to sit and discuss ideas on a sheet of paper. What is harder is to put plans on paper into realistic effect in the parish and thereafter sustain them. The Rector is determined therefore to evaluate all suggestions carefully to avoid wasted effort and disillusionment. Action Plans are never the quick and painless solution to the problems of apathy and declining membership that one might imagine. Like most things, it takes time and perseverance before fruit is borne.

The Bishop has visited on various occasions, and during his last visit confirmed four young people. Although a happy occasion, these too presents St Mary's a challenge for the future. How do we encourage this age group? Over the year there have been tentative feelers put out to the community regarding welfare of its younger members. One visiting preacher Ruth Jack of Callander Youth Project offered much food for thought. The Rector endeavours to play an active role in the Strathard Community Trust, a group that plays an important part in improving amenity and opportunity in the area.

It only remains for me to acknowledge and thank you all for the vast array of effort and talent that has been expended by many in manifold directions, but all for the common good. May God offer us his wisdom and guidance to us all in the time to come."

Mark thanked Richard for all that he had done for St. Mary's over the past twelve months.

## **5. Child Protection Report**

Catherine Riches resigned as Vulnerable Adult and Child Protection Coordinator during the year and Hannah Sanderson is in the process of assuming this duty.

## **6. Presentation of Accounts**

Nick Cooke, Treasurer, introduced the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 30 September 2008, copies of which were distributed, and pointed out that as income this year had exceeded £100,000 SORP compliant fully accrued accounts had been prepared. These accounts were examined and approved by our Independent Financial Examiner, Iain Kyle CA (the Treasurer of St Saviour's, Bridge of Allan).

Nick commented that this had been a good year financially. The three designated funds – the General Fund, the Renovation Fund and the Church Giving Fund – all have an operating surplus, with a total surplus of £44,874, due in major part to the inflow of funds for the Renovation Appeal. The aggregate fund balance at 30 September 2008 is £134,732. The downside was the sharp decline of £7,700 in the market value of St. Mary's investments.

The renovation project started in October; it is expected that it will be completed in March 2009. As a result of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and contributions to the public Appeal, we were now within £8,000 of the total cost. The fundraising activities organised by members of the congregation (a musical evening and Garden Open Day at Blairuskin Lodge, Kinlochard, a sponsored pilgrimage from Aberfoyle to Iona Abbey and a Christmas Fayre) raised £4,500. Nick thanked those who helped in kind as well as financially.

There were no questions on the accounts. Peter Joynson proposed the adoption of the accounts, and this was seconded by David Miller, and unanimously approved.

The Chairman thanked Nick for all his work and for his comprehensive report.

## **7. Church Giving**

A note of the charities that had been supported in the past three years had been distributed and those present were encouraged to submit names of charities for future support.

## **8. Lay Representative's Report.**

Philip Gaskell reported that, during the past year, he had attended 3 meetings of the Dunblane Area Council. Matters for discussion included:

- the revision of Canons.
- the report from the Lay Representative at the General Synod.
- special services and events in other churches (renovations, summer missions).
- the Policy Action Plan, which was adopted at an extraordinary Synod in September.
- the future role of the Area Councils. They will cease as a focus for discussions about parish life and become a forum and enablers of mission and training for clergy and lay people.
- the adoption of three-year plans, with an annual review

One lay member and a clergy member from each Council will attend Standing Committee meetings.

### **9. Vestry Membership and Appointments**

Mark Seymour expressed the thanks of the Vestry and of the whole congregation to Karen Gaskell, who was retiring from Vestry at this time. Johnny North, was proposed by David Miller, and seconded by Philip Gaskell, for Vestry membership. This was unanimously approved.

Philip Gaskell and Saffray Miller agreed to continue as Lay Representative, and alternate Lay Representative, respectively. They were both unanimously elected.

Hannah Sanderson was proposed as Vulnerable Adult and Child Protection Coordinator by Alastair Gardner, seconded by Kate Joynson. This was unanimously approved.

### **10. Church Renovation Project**

Nick reported that the Heritage Lottery Fund contract for up to £92,000 for fabric repairs (a fixed percentage of eligible costs) had been signed in October. The architect had accepted the tender from Hunter & Clark, and the builders were now on site. The organ had been removed by Paul Miller and, with the exception of some pipes stored in the church, had been taken to Bonnybridge for repair. The architect is in overall charge of the project. He comes monthly for meetings with the contractor, and with Mark and Nick. With the bills starting to come in, Nick is planning the cash flow and regular gift aid reclaim. The renovation work should be complete by March next year.

### **11. The South Transept**

George Willis had circulated a letter in which he expressed concern that, as part of the renovation project, the organ would be returned to its former position after being repaired, thus closing off the South Transept. Only when the organ had been removed had he seen how much light came into the church through the window, and been able to admire the Fanshaw windows. He therefore asked the congregation to reconsider its former decision to approve the renovation project. He recommended that the pipe organ should be replaced by a digital organ, which would not obstruct the light entering the church.

Several members of the congregation spoke eloquently both for, and against this idea. In his summing up, Mark noted that the only thing that had changed since we made the decision to proceed with the renovation project was that we could now view the South Transept. It had possibly been a premature decision to repair the pipe organ and return it to the South Transept, but any change in plan would require full costings. If we continued with our renovation project, there was always the possibility of replacing the organ at a later time.

George proposed the motion "The South Transept should be saved, and in order to do so, a digital organ should be purchased". A vote was taken. The result was that there were 6 votes in favour to 22 votes against. The renovation project will therefore be completed as planned.

**12. Any Other Business**

12.1 *Church Pews.* Hannah Sanderson asked that the pews should not be put back in place after the renovation, so that we could have chairs that are easily moved to make space for group activities such as "mothers and toddlers". Mark said that the pews were not in fact coming out as part of the renovation, but that consideration would be given to finding additional space. Part of Mission and Growth would be concerned with the use of the church building.

12.2 *Seating.* The congregation are sitting closer to the front as a result of the back pews being unavailable at present, but it was suggested that they should be encouraged to move even further to the front.

12.3 *Sound System.* Improvements are required to our sound system.

**13. Date of Next Meeting:** The A.G.M. will be held on 6th December 2009.

There being no other competent business, the Chairman thanked the congregation, and the meeting closed at 13.08 p.m.

Signed.....

Date.....

(Vestry Chairman)