

# 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 Vestry Meeting

Held in the Church Room on 20 January 2010

**Present:** Mark Seymour (Chairman); Richard Grosse (Rector); Barbara Carruthers; Nick Cooke; Philip Gaskell; Peter Joynton; Jonny North; Bill Richardson; Margie Stephen and David Thompson.

1. The meeting commenced at 7.35pm with a prayer.
2. **Apologies:** Susan Forsyth; Margaret Johnson; Hannah Sanderson and Anne Winther
3. **Minutes:** The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2009 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

### 3.1 *Matters Arising*

#### *Casting the Net – Recommended Reading*

Copies of the books listed are now available and all members urged to read these.

#### *Toy Box*

No additional soft toys so far. Jonny North kindly agreed to source these.

**Action: Jonny North**

#### *Discussion Group*

So far no further progress had been made to form this group. It was suggested that to start with this might develop from the Lent Group.

**Action: Richard Grosse/Margie Stephen**

#### *St Mary's Re-dedication Service*

It was confirmed that David King would not be guest organist for this service

### 4. **Secretary's Business:**

Draft Minutes of the December 2009 AGM were now completed except for confirmation of the date of the next AGM which will be on 12.12.10.

### 5. **Rector's Report & Casting the Net**

The Rector explained that most of what he had to report had already been included in his weekly Newsletters. Regarding the St Mary's re-dedication service on 28 March 2010 he and Mark Seymour are preparing the guest list for this event. Invitation cards will be printed and posted by Mark Seymour. Marie & David Thompson will monitor replies. Members without e-mail to be informed, but event will also be publicised in the Magazine.

**Action: Mark Seymour/Marie & David Thompson**

Carol and Mark Seymour are very kindly organising a lunch at Thorntree following the Re-dedication service.

The Rector was not ready to report further at this point on Casting the Net.

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

The last Area Council held as an open meeting earlier this month was well attended despite the weather. The meeting was attended by Bishop David and he spoke about the Covenant which affirms that all provinces have an equal voice in Communion. This was discussed at the Lambeth Conference. The draft Covenant is available highlighting the things that bind us together, and this can be found on the website. It is expected to be another 2-3 years before the draft is finalised.

The following forthcoming services/events were mentioned:

2 February 2010 Candlemas Service Bridge of Allan  
3 February 2010 St Saviour's (Lenten) Study Group  
21 March 2010 Healing Service Bridge of Allan  
18 May 2010 Talk on Vestry membership by Peter Mackie at Auchterarder

The next Area Council Meeting (with Casting the Net on the agenda) will be in May.

## **7. Music & Worship**

### **7.1 *Christmas Eve Midnight Service***

Some of the hymns were thought to be not very uplifting. Richard Grosse noted this comment and would bear it in mind for next Christmas.

### **7.2 *Forthcoming Services***

First drafts of the Re-dedication and Easter services prepared by the Rector will be shown to Margie Stephen and Jean Sykes for comment. A Taize service is planned for 7.30pm on Ash Wednesday. Duration about 45 mins. **Action: Richard Grosse/Margie Stephen**

### **7.3 *Lent Group***

Margie Stephen is making arrangements for Lent Group meetings for the St Mary's area. There will probably be four of these, but dates and timings will have to take account of the concert series at that time. Reference will be made to the book 'Mission-Shaped Spirituality'.

**Action: Margie Stephen**

### **7.4 *Introducing New Hymns***

Regarding exploring new hymns it was felt that these can be introduced even if the Music and Worship Group is not revived.

### **7.5 *Matins***

The possibility of introducing a Matins Service either, say, on the third Sunday of each month instead of Eucharist, or perhaps added on to the Eucharist periodically, was discussed. Suggested a Matins group set up to consider structure. However, not clear what demand exists for Matins Service. Richard Grosse will take soundings and investigate after Easter. **Action: Richard Grosse**

### **7.6 *Prayers of Intercession***

Additional members of the congregation willing to participate in prayers of intercession would be welcome and one or two have recently shown interest in doing so. David Adam's book, 'Prayers of Intercession – Year C' is recommended guidance.

## **8. Communications**

Mark Seymour stated that there is still the need for someone, not necessarily in Vestry, to take responsibility for Communications. Some aspects are already covered with Karen Gaskell continuing to produce the excellent Magazine and the Rector his most informative weekly Newsletter.

It was also noted that new notices promoting St Mary's are needed for hotels, guest houses, libraries, shops, etc. Karen Gaskell can produce these provided Area Representatives ensure these are then placed. **Action: Karen Gaskell/Area Representatives**

Jonny North agreed to become Area Representative for Balfon.

## **9. Financial Stewardship Team Report & Church Giving**

In a written report circulated shortly before the meeting the Treasurer noted that:

### 9.1 Cash Flow

The end December cash balance for the General and Church Giving Funds remains healthy at around £5,000, with nearly £7,000 due in retrospective Gift Aid tax claimed for the last financial year, which will comfortably allow for settlement of the Rector's accrued Linkage mileage claim for the year.

### 9.2 Annual Accounts 2008-09

I am pleased to confirm that the Report & Accounts for the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009 have now been approved by the Independent Examiner with no alterations to the figures tabled at the AGM. The Report & Accounts have now been signed off by all parties, with original filing copies sent to the Diocesan Office and to OSCR.

### 9.3 Investment Portfolio

Smith & Williamson have recently carried out a further restructuring of the fixed interest stocks within the portfolio. These have been designed to reduce the level of gilts in favour of strategic corporate bonds. This exercise has realised a useful gain in the market value of stock sold, which has been reinvested in new holdings.

### 9.4 Insurance Cover – Legal Responsibilities and Health & Safety

Further to my last report, the new levels of insurance cover on the Church and Rectory have now been confirmed with EIG as our insurers. I will keep EIG informed of the recent completion of a fire safety risk assessment and fire plan for the Church carried out by Alpha Fire Risk Consultants in late November, and plans to establish and monitor Health & Safety procedures.

### 9.5 Rectory Maintenance

The agreed programme of external re-painting will now be carried out in the spring.

### 9.6 Church Heating System - Communities and Renewable Energy Scheme

I am in contact with Emotion Energy of Milnathort, who work with Bissets on renewable energy systems, to progress the possible installation of an air source heat pump and other options for the Church and Rectory under the CARES grant scheme - see [www.communityenergyscotland.org.uk](http://www.communityenergyscotland.org.uk). I will be attending an Eco-Congregation event in the Scottish Parliament on 26<sup>th</sup> January to promote practical ways in which local Churches around Scotland have reduced their carbon footprint.

### 9.7 Church & Rectory Energy Supplies

Further to my last report, I have confirmed a new one year supply contract with Scottish & Southern Energy for both properties with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> February. This was secured on our behalf by Utility Aid pending confirmation of a longer term agreement under the planned energy purchasing scheme run by Inenco based on wholesale gas and electricity prices. The new SSE supply contract will achieve substantial savings on what the Vestry would have been paying under the renewal of the previous Scottish Gas contract.

### 9.8 Budget 2009-10 and Congregational Stewardship

Please refer to the separate draft budget paper with supporting notes, which is submitted for Vestry approval. ***Vestry is asked to raise awareness of the need for all members of St Mary's to review their current level of personal giving to the Church in the light of the draft budget. Following St Mary's very successful Stewardship campaign in 2006, it was agreed that a 'reminder' exercise should be carried out by Vestry on a regular basis, and certainly at least every three years.***

### 9.9 Church Giving

There was an excellent response to the special collection at the very well attended Christmas Carol Service and exactly £600 was raised for the Fund after including Gift Aid tax recoverable on envelope giving. After deducting the two £250 donations made in the autumn to Help for Heroes and the Matthew Miller Cancer Fund, the current balance in the Fund now stands at £612. Further donations to UK registered charities may be proposed at the January meeting of Vestry. Barbara has suggested Mercy Ships, which provides essential medical, dental and longer term health service support to countries in West Africa, as being worthy of consideration - for more information, see [www.mercyships.org.uk](http://www.mercyships.org.uk)

#### 9.10 Discussion and other points on above Report

(a) The Fire Safety Risk Assessment and Fire Plan referred to at 9.4 above is being held by the Secretary at present, but on completion of the few recommendations requiring action the document will be filed in the Church Room alongside the Health and Safety file referred to in these Minutes at 11.1 (d)

(b) Mark Seymour has ordered required fire signs, containing instructions specific to St Mary's for display.

(c) Referring to 9.9 above, after discussion the following donations from the Church Giving Fund were approved:

Mercy Ships £100

Medecins sans Frontieres (Haiti Appeal) £300

It was also agreed to have a special collection on Sunday 24 January for the Haiti Appeal which will be added to the above sum from the Church Giving Fund for Medecin sans Frontieres. Margie Stephen will announce this and David Stephen will organise. *Action: Margie Stephen*

### 10. Budget 2009-10

The Treasurer presented a draft budget and noted as follows:

10.1. The attached budget statement covers St Mary's general income and expenditure for the current financial year, which is shown in comparison with actual figures for the last two years. It incorporates all items classified under the General and Church Giving Funds. All transactions relating to the Church Renovation Fund have therefore been excluded.

10.2. The 2009-10 budget assumes a static level of total income, taking into account projected regular giving and a break even position on the programme of Church concerts in the spring. Vestry should consider sending a clear reminder to all St Mary's members to review their personal stewardship commitment to St Mary's via the use of assured regular giving under Gift Aid.

10.3. The level of net general expenditure is projected to rise by some 3% on the previous year after taking account of St Andrew's Callander's 40% share of Linkage costs. Assumptions on expenditure include:

- Rector's stipend and pension fund contributions as advised by the General Synod office, including a significant increase in the latter item.
- Rector's travel expenses based on 12,000 miles private car use, reflecting current demands on Richard.
- Continued provision for Lay Reader travel and incidental expenses.
- Rectory maintenance to include external repainting and roof / joinery work already completed / committed.
- Diocesan Quota to remain at present levels, subject to confirmation by the Diocesan office.
- Two organ tuning visits per year from Paul Miller, plus organist fee payments of £30 per service to Jean Sykes.
- Worship and music costs to include annual contributions of £240 each for use of St Anthony's Balfron and the Killearn Kirk for monthly services.
- The Linkage newsletter still fully subsidised by the current editor. Website hosting and maintenance costs included under Communications costs.
- No provision for any running costs of a Sunday Club for children.
- No provision for potential installation of energy saving power supply systems on the Church or Rector buildings, to be costed and budgeted separately.

10.4 Estimated donations of £3,000 from Aberfoyle Motors Ltd regarding the Rector's voluntary bus

driving duties to be treated as Linkage income, with 40% of this passed to St Andrew's – i.e. the net benefit to St Mary's is £1,800 for the year.

10.5. Provision is made for a £800 grant budget for Church Giving Fund donations, with estimated collection receipts from the Harvest Thanksgiving and Carol Service collections of £750, with no further subsidy from the General Fund budget.

10.6 The current draft budget indicates a marginal operating surplus of £430 for the year. However, if we discount the net benefit of the Aberfoyle Motors donations noted at para 4 above (see budget lines indicated by \*) as being solely dependent on our Rector's generosity, this becomes an operating loss of £1,370. In other words, this produces a break even position, which I suggest does not give sufficient coverage for contingencies or the need to make future provision for a Church fabric 'sinking fund'. This highlights the need for action on stewardship as noted at para 2 above.

10.7 Vestry is invited to comment on the draft budget.

10.8 *Discussion and other points on above budget*

(a) The Treasurer proposed that at the next Vestry meeting the key issue in the budget to be addressed is a 'stewardship reminder' to all members of the congregation to review their level of personal giving to St Mary's. Vestry agreed.

(b) Vestry also agreed the need for a proposed Church fabric 'sinking fund'. It was suggested that the annual budget should make provision for this, based on an agreed target amount, to be included in the additional revenue to be raised through increased givings.

**Draft 2009-10 Operating Budget and 3 year Financial Profile is on the following page:**

**ST. MARY'S CHURCH, ABERFOYLE :**

**DRAFT 2009-10 OPERATING BUDGET AND 3 YEAR FINANCIAL PROFILE**

<u>General &amp; Church Giving Funds only.</u>	<b>BUDGET 2009- 10</b>	<b>ACTUAL 2008-09</b>	<b>ACTUAL 2007-08</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Gift Aid - Standing Orders	<b>17,500</b>	16,623	14,970
.. .. - Free Will Offering Envelopes	<b>3,000</b>	3,037	2,918
Donations - Gift Aid & Other *	<b>10,000</b>	12,507	12,091
Collections - plate	<b>2,500</b>	2,458	2,742
Church Giving - Special Collections etc	<b>750</b>	407	724
Tax Recoverable - Gift Aid	<b>6,900</b>	5,748	2,301
Social & Fundraising events (net)	<b>0</b>	0	0
Sundry (net)	<b>50</b>	47	87
	<b>40,700</b>	40,827	35,833
Investment Income	<b>1,500</b>	1,688	2,583
Bank Interest	<b>30</b>	45	188
	<b>42,230</b>	42,560	38,604
<b>Less : Church Giving Donations</b>	<b>-800</b>	-750	-400
<b>Net General Income</b>	<b>41,430</b>	41,810	38,204
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Rector's stipend + NI + pension	<b>31,850</b>	29,789	28,933
Rector's travel & other expenses	<b>5,500</b>	5,255	4,024
Lay Reader expenses	<b>100</b>	131	84
Rectory - Council Tax	<b>2,400</b>	2,305	2,300
.. - repairs & maintenance	<b>2,000</b>	977	758
.. - insurance	<b>450</b>	401	373
	<b>42,300</b>	38,858	36,472
<b>Less: St Andrew's Callander *</b>	<b>-15,720</b>	-14,018	-12,333
<b>Net Linkage Costs</b>	<b>26,580</b>	24,840	24,139
Diocesan Quota	<b>5,750</b>	6,109	5,546
Church - grounds / building maintenance	<b>800</b>	991	811
.. - heat & light (inc. Church Room)	<b>2,500</b>	2,459	962
.. - cleaning	<b>570</b>	657	520
.. - insurance	<b>1,200</b>	1,080	1,003
Organ & organist fees	<b>2,000</b>	1,869	2,135
Worship & music	<b>900</b>	1,281	662
Communications	<b>250</b>	232	235
IFE and other fees	<b>150</b>	150	278
Vestry + sundry expenses	<b>300</b>	242	759
<b>Net General Expenditure</b>	<b>41,000</b>	39,910	37,050
<b>OPERATING SURPLUS / DEFICIT</b>	<b>430</b>	1,900	1,154
<b>'ADJUSTED' SURPLUS / DEFICIT</b>	<b>-1,370</b>	-467	-2,195

## **11. Church Renovation Project and Appeal including Additional Works**

In a written report circulated shortly before the meeting the Treasurer noted that:

### *11.1 Main Contract*

- (a) The installation of the Fanshawe and Mileham stained glass in the west window in mid November marked the completion of the main fabric repairs programme on the Church. Bryan Hutchison, the glazier, has advised us that cleaning the east window stained glass would enhance its brightness and colour, and he has also suggested future improvements to the new plain glass in the porch.
- (b) As far as I am aware, all contractors and professional fees have now been paid on the main contract, including Gavin Walker's services as structural engineer. Simpson & Brown are still engaged on the design and supply of the interpretation panels to be mounted on the west wall above the font – see below.
- (c) The Belfast sink has now been installed below the window in the new Vestry WC and final refinements are being made to the worktop and shelving as requested by the Church flowers team. Snagging work on the hot water geyser is still in progress.
- (d) I have received from the Quantity Surveyor the Health & Safety File which comprises all key documentation under the CDM regulations applicable to the main contract covering repairs and alterations to St Mary's. It is a legal requirement to make this information available to any designer or contractor undertaking future works on the building, including maintenance. I will therefore place the file in the Church archive for safe keeping.

### *11.2. Additional Works to the Main Contract*

- (a) During the past 3 months, the installation of external security lighting and additional spots and wall light shades for the interior of the Church has been completed by Bissets to the specification agreed with Cotterell Lighting. The new carpet extension around the font at the back of the nave has also been completed.
- (b) Hayes & Finch have been assisting us in the selection of suitable chairs to replace the short pews. Based on feedback on the three designs on view over the Christmas period, the current choice is for the 'Priory' design in dark red with book boxes for 16 chairs in the chancel crossing area and without boxes for 4 chairs alongside the font; these are stackable three high. We have also been advised by others that we should aim to sell the four short oak pews for between £100 and £150 each, which would clearly help defray the cost of the chairs.
- (c) I am now finalising and submitting the application to the Big Lottery 'Awards For All' fund for a maximum grant of £10,000 based on current costings for (a) the renovation of the Crawford railings, (b) upgrading the existing acoustic sound system as well as new sound equipment for the use of the new 'Thirsty?' young people's meetings led by Hannah, and (c) the new chairs in the Church. The underlying rationale of the bid is that these items are needed in the interests of public safety and enjoyment of all who come to St Mary's as well as to promote more diverse ways of using the Church for the benefit of the wider community, e.g. for small groups and public concerts.

### *11.3 Interpretation Panels*

- (a) Tom Parnell of Simpson & Brown has now provided a draft design for the text and pictures to appear on the folding triptych panels for the back of the Church, as noted in my last report. The design makes full use of George's excellent photographs of different stages of the renovation project in progress, as well as interesting archive illustrations James Miller's architecture and the Aberfoyle area. We are now agreeing the final design so the finished article can be installed very shortly. The final cost of the panels will be included as eligible expenditure for the final Heritage Lottery Fund grant claim.

### *11.4 Heritage Lottery Fund – Repairs Grant*

- (a) HLF has kindly allowed a further extension of the deadline for the submission of the final grant claim as noted above to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010.

#### *11.5 Renovation Project Budget and Cash Flow*

- (a) There has been no change to the budget position since my last report. The SEC bridging loan of £10,000 was approved by the Administration Board meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> November and the funds have been received and are in use. The current bank balance in the Renovation Fund account is £2,500. The SEC loan will be repaid out of projected income of £13,000 from retrospective HLF grant, VAT repayment under the LPW grant scheme, and Gift Aid tax claims.

#### *11.6 Renovation Appeal – the Future*

- (a) As I explained at the AGM, the completion of the Church renovation has been achieved thanks to meeting the Renovation Appeal target but it leaves Vestry with an outstanding interest free loan repayment commitment of £15,500 which fortunately can be phased over the next few years with the agreement of the lenders. In addition, it is my view that some measure is needed to put in place a ‘sinking fund’ to provide for future long term maintenance of the fabric of the Church building. This suggests that some measure of ongoing fundraising linked to the Church building will be essential.

#### *11.7 Conclusion*

- (a) I propose to make this the final report on the Renovation Project and Appeal. I should like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues Mark, George and David for their commitment as members of the Working Group, to all other Vestry members for their support at crucial junctures and to everyone in St Mary’s whose generosity and support has ensured a successful outcome to what has been a major undertaking for a relatively small congregation. Bishop David’s visit on Palm Sunday to re-dedicate the Church will be a very happy and momentous occasion in the history of St Mary’s.

#### *11.8 Discussion and other points on above Report*

- (a) It was emphasised that the interest-free loan of £15500 leaves us with a repayment commitment that will entail future fundraising to meet this.
- (b) The favoured style of chair ‘Priory’ costs £80 per chair and an extra £12 with a box. An offer of £150 per pew has been made which it was agreed should be accepted.

For the future, it was suggested that chairs could be ‘adopted’ to commemorate a loved one as a source of funding.

- (c) Colour proofs of the draft of the Tryptich prepared by Simpson & Brown were on view. When closed, it was suggested some means of identifying what it is would encourage visitors to open it!
- (d) The meeting noted that Nick Cooke proposed to make this the final report on the Renovation Project and Appeal and the Chairman took this opportunity to express Vestry’s appreciation of the enormous contribution made by Nick in bringing this major project to such a successful conclusion.

## **12. Health and Safety**

It is a legal requirement that St Mary’s Church appoints a Health and Safety Officer. The Chairman reported that, so far, he had been unable to identify anyone willing to fulfil this role.

One name, not a Vestry member, was suggested as a possible candidate and will be approached.

*Action:Mark Seymour*

## **13. Away Day for Casting the Net**

Due to insufficient time for discussion this topic was postponed until the next Vestry meeting.

## **14. Concert Series in March**

Further details of the proposed series of three concerts late in March were given by the Chairman.

Serious concerns were expressed that total budgeted costs of almost £2K could be very difficult to recoup through ticket sales. It was recognised that support for these events, especially all in one week, is impossible to gauge with any accuracy. There was particular concern that the Strathendrick Singers, who are holding their main concert of the season in Killearn on 28 March, might not be so well supported in St Mary's a few days earlier.

It was reluctantly decided not to proceed with the Strathendrick Singers concert on 26 March. The Lyra concert on 24 March and Telemann Ensemble on 27 March will proceed as planned.

Tickets will be £10 each per concert, concession £7.50 each for over 65s and £15 each for 2 concerts.

Publicity and promotion placing posters wherever possible throughout the area absolutely essential.

One advertisement each in Stirling Observer and Park Life.

**15. A.O.C.B.**

*15.1 Organ*

It was stated that there was now a gap at the organ since reinstatement. This is considered unsightly by some and also the source of a cold draught for those seated nearby. **Action: Nick Cooke**

*15.2 Leaflet for Church Re-dedication Service*

Mark Seymour is preparing a leaflet for this occasion.

**16. Date of next Vestry Meeting – Wednesday 28 April 2010**

The meeting closed with prayer at 9.50pm

Signed.....

Date.....

