

St Mary's Episcopal Church, Aberfoyle
Rector: Revd. Richard Grosse

www.stmarychurchaberfoyle.org.uk

A charity registered in Scotland: SC023266

Minutes of Vestry Meeting

Held in the Church Room on 13 April 2011

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

1. The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm with a prayer.
2. **Apologies:** Margaret Johnson and Anne Winther
3. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2011 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3.1 Matters Arising

None

4. Secretary's Business

4.1 St Mary's Episcopal Church Aberfoyle/Aberfoyle Motors: Boundary:

A letter dated 27.01.2011 from Laura J. Robson of J&H Mitchell W.S. to Alicia Rootes had been copied to the Secretary and was read to the meeting. Contrary to earlier indications that this transaction was due for imminent settlement, the matter is still not close to being finalised. It was noted that there had been no further news of any progress. It was also pointed out that, strictly speaking, the sale of Aberfoyle Motors to the local Community should not proceed without the boundary issue first being resolved.

The Secretary was asked to check with the Diocesan Office as to the latest situation. However, the Rector has advised not to pursue this matter at present.

4.2 Red Book 2011//12 Edition

The General Synod Office is seeking any amendments to our entry. At present neither Disabled Access nor Induction Loop facilities are indicated – by symbols. It was agreed to add Assisted Disabled Access (if this can be indicated) and Induction Loop symbols. **Action:David Thompson**

4.3 Vulnerable Adult & Child Protection Coordinator

A new notice naming Melanie Grosse in this position is now displayed in the Church and Church Room. Two forms to be returned to the Diocesan Office are still to be completed and it is hoped to do so shortly. **Action:David Thompson & Melanie Grosse**

4.4 Data Protection Act: Registration

At the last Vestry meeting the question was raised as to whether St Mary's was required to register. Both the website ico.gov.uk and the circular issued by the Churches Main Committee in 2001 re Data Protection for Churches confirm that, in our case, there is no requirement to register.

4.5 The Diocesan Schedule

Following the AGM in December 2010 this schedule was duly completed and returned to the Diocesan Office by the Treasurer with the Secretary's thanks.

4.6 *Date of next Vestry meeting*

The Secretary explained that due to family commitments he would be unable to attend the next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 20 July and asked if Vestry would be agreeable to this being brought forward by one week to Wednesday 13 July and this was accepted.

4.7 *HMRC Fit & Proper Person Declaration Form*

Vestry members were thanked for completing and returning these to the Secretary for safe keeping. All were now to hand.

4.8 *Secretary Vacancy*

The Secretary reminded Vestry that he would not be continuing after the end of 2011.

5. **Rector's Report**

5.1 *Monthly Service at Killearn*

In future this service on the first Wednesday of each month will commence at 11.30 am.

5.2 *Sacristan*

Margaret Johnson has intimated her resignation due to health problems. Vestry discussed how Margaret's long and valued contribution to St Mary's could best be recognised.

The question of a successor was also considered. Various suggestions were made, but none was very practical. In the first instance, the position would be discussed with Jean Sykes, who had been helping Margaret by undertaking some of her duties of late. Jean would be asked by the Rector if she wished to continue with these. However, it was recognised that it would be unrealistic to expect Jean to act as both Sacristan and organist.

Action:Richard Grosse

6. **Casting the Net**

Philip Gaskell observed that worshippers would be aware on recent Sunday mornings of the visibility of Casting the Net, while after the service 'Compass' meetings – an introductory course to Christian Faith and the Spirituality of the Scottish Episcopal Church had been taking place.

The latest meeting of the Mission Planning Group had taken place on 13 April immediately before this Vestry meeting. A timetable was being drawn-up leading to a congregational meeting in the second half of June, possibly during the week, with six weeks' notice of the date. Before then a meeting with our two facilitators is likely to be scheduled for mid-May after the Sunday morning service.

In addition to setting the above timetable the Mission Planning Group has also been going through the Nine Marks of Mission.

The Chairman expressed the need for all members of St Mary's to be made aware of the Casting the Net programme and especially the forthcoming Congregational meeting. He is prepared to write individually to all our members on these matters and Philip and Mark agreed to liaise.

Action:PhilipGaskell&Mark Seymour

7. **Lay Representative's Report**

Philip Gaskell referred to his report in the Spring 2011 issue of the Church Magazine in which he covered the recent annual Diocesan Synod which he had attended as St Mary's Lay Representative.

The Chairman thanked Philip for acting in this capacity and for his continuing contribution.

8. Music & Worship

8.1 Annual Carol Service

The Rector sought guidance from Vestry with regard to the form of this service.

The detail of the service varies from year to year but in essence consists of eight lessons with carols between them. The readers are chosen by the Rector in the main outwith the congregation. He stressed that he regards the service as a means of trying to draw in those on the furthest boundaries of St Mary's.

These readers are, in the main, unfamiliar with Church and even after rehearsal, understandably extremely nervous about reading. For this reason their voices sometimes do not carry and therefore cannot be heard. Naturally this detracts from the service. Notwithstanding this, Richard believes valuable links are forged by this approach.

Richard asked Vestry if it is wished that the service in December is arranged as before or should there be a change? Should we be recruiting in good time, for example, two first class readers to share the lessons?

In the discussion that followed among the points made were:

- General view is to keep to eight (or nine) lessons and carols in traditional manner
- More careful choice of 'outside' readers to minimise 'nerves' factor
- Continued inclusion of 'Kirk' representation desirable
- Further rehearsal and microphone awareness
- Despite some adverse comments received by Richard he felt the music overall was excellent and hoped to have Malcolm Wood to play again
- Vestry agreed that the Rector should continue to be encouraged to engage with the local community in arranging this service, recognizing that this was a more important objective than achieving perfection.

To assist the Rector in planning this year's carol service Richard will form a small group and Philip Gaskell, Bill Richardson and Mark Seymour volunteered to join him in this. **Action: Richard Grosse**

9. Health & Safety

9.1 The Chairman thanked Jonny North for taking on the role of Health & Safety Team Leader.

9.2 The original version of St Mary's Health & Safety Policy Statement based on a 'model' provided by the Diocesan Office and already adopted with minor amendments by Vestry some time ago has very recently been subjected to review by a professional expert on Jonny's initiative. The outcome is a more comprehensive document which Vestry will be asked to approve as soon as possible after this meeting,

Action: Mark Seymour & Jonny North

9.3 Jonny North reported that a Risk Assessment has been carried out on the Crawford Rail. Rather than attaching mesh, an effective natural barrier by planting a 'hedge' of shrubs should provide a durable solution to the risk of anyone, especially small children, falling under the rail.

9.4 The Fire Escape stairway outside the Church Room has been identified as a potential hazard for young children and Jonny reported his intention to place an easily detachable security chain across the top of this.

10. Financial Stewardship Team Report & Church Giving

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

10.1 Cash Flow

Following settlement of the Gift Aid tax claims for the 2009-10 financial year, various significant bills have been paid and the bridging loan of £10,000 from the SEC for the Renovation Project repaid with accrued interest. A loan of £500 to the Renovation Project from a member has also been repaid. Cash flow is once again tight but is expected to improve steadily as the positive results of the recent Stewardship initiative come through.

10.2 Report & Accounts For Year Ending 30th September 2010

The final document has now been approved by Vestry and signed off. Original signed copies have been filed with the Diocesan Office, OSCR, and the Independent Financial Examiner. A summary version of the Accounts and a brief commentary will appear in the next Linkage newsletter.

10.2 Congregational Stewardship Initiative 2010

In financial terms, the final results of the initiative are generally very favourable, with a total of 18 new or increased pledges received. The resulting increase in assured giving amounts to almost £7,200 a year with Gift Aid included. This is close to the target we hoped to achieve, and sincere thanks are once again expressed to all who have made this result possible.

10.4 Budget 2010-11

As agreed with the Chairman, a draft budget has been circulated to Vestry members and changes made to incorporate an improvement in Marion's wages for Church cleaning and an increase in the Church Giving Fund allocation. Final budget figures for the General and Church Giving Funds projecting an operating surplus of £3,265 have now been approved by the Vestry, and this should now be formally recorded.

10.5 Diocesan Quota

The total quota payment due for the year ending 31 October 2011 has been confirmed at £5,790 based on 15% of 'accountable income'.

10.6 Fundraising Events

Plans are now well advanced for the organ recital in the Church on 10th April and the return visit of the Lyra Ensemble on 21st May. Net surplus income of £1,450 from social and musical events has been incorporated into the current year's General Fund budget.

10.7 Renovation Project – 'Awards For All' Grant Expenditure

Now that all grant aided work has been carried out, a project completion report has been sent to the 'Awards For All' Scotland office. Total expenditure on the renovation of the Church railings and path, the purchase of a new Church audio system and public address sound equipment for the 'Thirsty' youth group, plus the replacement of the short pews with chairs in the chancel crossing, amounted to £9,940. This has left a small overspend on the grant award of £9,847.

10.8 Church Giving Fund

As requested, I have attached a summary of all donations made from the Fund in recent years. The current total available in the Fund for donations is £700. ***Nominations by any members of St Mary's of donations to suitable UK charities should be made via the Vestry Secretary for the April meeting.***

10.9 At the meeting the Treasurer also reported that he is now a member of the Diocesan Administration Board and has found this involvement interesting.

10.10 Discussion and Decisions regarding this Report

(a) The question was raised as to whether Gift Aid tax recovery could be made more than once per annum. In response the Treasurer reported that HMRC had recently changed their procedures which could be helpful in this regard.

(b) Final approval of the Budget for 2010-11 already given is recorded herewith.

(c) 69 attended the organ recital on 10 April and the net proceeds from the event were £640.

(d) Vestry approved the following charitable donations from the Church Giving Fund: Artlink Central, Callander Youth Project, Chesney Trust, Christian Aid and the Red Cross Appeal in aid of the Japanese Tsunami victims. Each of the above to receive £100 leaving an unallocated balance in reserve in the Fund of £200.
Action: Nick Cooke

11. Communications

In a written report circulated well before the meeting Barbara Carruthers noted that:

11.1 Work is in progress to produce a leaflet about St. Mary's to put in the Tourist Office. Making this look professional enough is something that's needs help. Any suggestions?

11.2 A leaflet for guidance of people coming to an Episcopal Church for the first time has been circulated within the Compass group for comment. No comments have been received. Further copies will be available at the Vestry meeting : comments would be helpful.

11.3 Requests for offers of occasional help to assist Melanie and myself to 'man' the proposed opening of the church on Tuesday afternoons during June July and August have met with no response. The idea is to open it from 2.30 – 4.30 and offer tea/coffee etc. in the Church Room. This requires two people to be in the church and at least one in the Church Room. Melanie has offered to be present on all Tuesdays, as have I, but help in the Church Room and relief helpers in the Church would be appreciated.

11.4 Billie Bates is working on the prototype for a poster advertising the Church Opening to be placed under the main church notice at the foot of the lane.

Help is required to enlarge Billie's probably A4 poster to A5 or larger. Offers or advice ? Also some form of A-frame support for the poster would be useful. Again help? Offers?

11.5 The weekly, what I understand is being called "the pew leaflet", is distributed each Sunday. No feedback has been forthcoming.

11.6 The Godly Play initiative is going well and there seems to be an interested response from some of the congregation.

3 children at the first meeting became 4 at the second. We hope to gather a few more as time goes by. All credit to James Gardner for initiating this venture and getting it up and running. Also to his father who has made it possible by providing James with transport. Now having attained the magic age of 17, James hopes in a little while to become independent. There will be a Godly Play meeting on Good Friday in the afternoon to enable people to find out more about it.

11.7 Finally, could a little time be given to discussing what are seen as appropriate ways in which to encourage members of the congregation to offer help or make comments? The direct approach so far tried does not seem to work. Would something, e.g. a questionnaire, distributed via the pews, be a good idea?

11.8 Discussion and Decision Regarding this Report

- (a) Discussion followed on some of the matters raised in Barbara's report including a comment received from Anne Winther expressing her view that 'Godly Play' is excellent but very poorly attended. She asked how Vestry might assist in marketing and promoting it.
- (b) Regarding 11.7 above it was agreed that Barbara's suggestion of a questionnaire in the pews should be tried in an effort to elicit responses to some of the issues she has raised.

12. Concerts/Events in St Mary's

12.1 As reported earlier at 10.10(c) the organ recital was well supported and enjoyed as were the excellent refreshments at the interval. Thanks to Carol Seymour, Saffrey Miller and John Tilman for organizing this.

12.2 A return visit by The Lyra Group is booked for 21 May. So far no tickets have been sold. Offers to provide accommodation for the group are sought.

12.3 It is hoped to arrange a concert later in the year by the Telemann Ensemble.

12.4 A talk by Michael Forsyth on his highly successful charity fundraising ascent of Mount Vinson in Antarctica is under discussion.

12.5 The Concerts/Events Group will welcome suggestions for future events.

12.6 The Vestry was reminded about the concert to be held at Holy Trinity, Stirling, by the Kyiv Classic Accordion Duo on 31 July. They are playing at Holy Trinity as an alternative venue to St Mary's. Members were asked to encourage attendance.

13. Fabric Report

13.1 Jamie Parker's agreement to take on responsibility of Fabric Team Leader is much appreciated. At This stage he had very little to report and in his absence Mark Seymour reported on the following item:

13.2 Scottish Water proposes to put in a water meter for the Church. While water consumption may be minimal the Chairman pointed out that waste water charges could be significant. The proposal should be resisted if possible. There is also a potential problem that the siting of the meter might interfere with the location of one of the proposed floodlights. *Action:Mark Seymour*

14. AOCB

None

15. Date of next Vestry Meeting – Wednesday 13 July 2011

16. The meeting closed with prayer at 9.00 pm

Signed.....

Date.....