

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 4 November 2008

Present: Mark Seymour (Chairman), Richard Grosse (Rector); Margie Stephen and Robin Willis; Nick Cooke, John Dymond, Alastair Gardner, Philip Gaskell, David Thompson, and George Willis.

1. The meeting commenced at 7.35 p.m. with a prayer.
2. **Apologies.** Susan Forsyth, Karen Gaskell, Margaret Johnson, Anne Winther; Peter Joynson.
3. **Minutes.** The Minutes of the meeting held on 28th July 2008 were approved, and signed by the Chairman.
4. **Secretary's Business**

4.1 Bishop's Letter re Implementing the New Diocesan Policy

Copies of a letter from Bishop David, which gave an update on implementation of the new Diocesan Policy and on the Casting the Net programme, had been sent to all Vestry members for information.

4.2 Child Protection – Historic Cases Review

Vestry members had no knowledge of any cases of child abuse. It was agreed that the secretary should indicate this on the form that had been sent from Synod Office and sign and return it.

4.3 Boundary Discrepancies

It has come to light that there is a discrepancy in the boundary between St. Mary's ground and that of Aberfoyle Motors as shown on the site plan of the 1952 deed compared with that shown on the modern Ordnance Survey map, which corresponds with the physical boundary on site.

It is therefore proposed to amend the discrepancy in the site plan of the 1952 deed through the issue of two Title Deeds, one transferring title to Aberfoyle Motors of two areas, and the other transferring title back to the Church of a third area. Vestry approved this action.

A problem had arisen in that the Diocesan Registrar had indicated that St. Mary's independent financial examiner should sign the deeds, which he was unwilling to do. The Treasurer offered to speak to Mr Bill Anderson, the Diocesan Chancellor to try to resolve this matter. [Note added: Mr Anderson subsequently spoke to one of the partners of Pagan Osborn, the firm handling this transaction. Further discussion, if required, will be between the firm and the Diocesan Office.]

4.4 Vulnerable Adult and Child Protection Coordinator

Hannah Sanderson has agreed to take on this role, and will go on a training course. It was noted that she would have to complete a Disclosure Form, and a character reference would have to be obtained and sent to the Bishop before he can confirm her appointment.

4.5 *Church Copyright Licence Report*

It was agreed to continue the CCLI licence for a further year to cover the inclusion of words of hymns and songs that are subject to copyright in the forthcoming booklet.

4.6 *St. Mary's Bell*

The Rector reported that the bell was in working order, and offered to ask James Gardner if he would ring it before Morning Service.

5. **Rector's Report**

The Remembrance Day Service is taking place at the Kirk at 11.15 a.m.

The Rector asked Vestry's views on the venue for the Christmas Services as organ pipes now occupied the back pews as part of the organ repair process. Vestry agreed that all Services should be held in St. Mary's, as additional seats could be brought in. For the Carol Service, there would be a reduced choir. Mince pies and mulled wine would be served after this Service (thanks to Mark and Philip).

It was decided to defer discussion with Vestry of "Casting the Net" until after the Clergy Conference in January 2009.

6. **Lay Representative's Report**

At the last meeting of the Area Council, on September 2nd, concern was expressed about the uncertain future of Area Councils. The Bishop will discuss this with the secretaries and convenors of Area Councils at their next meeting.

7. **Fabric and Gardens**

Thanks were expressed to Alastair, Mark, David Thomson and David Miller for their work in the garden, which included tree felling to allow scaffolding to be erected.

8. **Communications**

8.1 *Yearbook*

Vestry members were asked to comment before the end of November on the draft copy of the Yearbook that Karen had produced. Publication is planned for January 2009.

8.2 *Views on Worship*

Thanks were expressed to those who delivered questionnaires. Some had already been completed and returned. The Music and Worship team will discuss the results when the replies are all in. Area Contacts were asked to continue their visits.

8.3 *Database of Church Contacts*

Mark will produce the database.

Action: Mark

8.4 *News of Events*

The Rector offered to produce monthly sheets with details of forthcoming Services and other events.

Action: Richard

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

In a written report, which had been previously circulated, the Treasurer noted that:

9.1 *Cash Flow*

The end-September balance of £11,000 in the main bank account reflects the continuing stability of St Mary's finances and an underlying budget surplus. In line with best

practice for charities, we have altered the basis of St Mary's annual Gift Aid tax claims to our financial year rather than the fiscal year and, accordingly, a claim for the 6 months to 30th September 2007 of £2,300 including accrued interest has now been paid by HMRC. Future Gift Aid claims will cover the full 12-month period of each financial year.

9.2 *Renovation Project - Bank Loan Facility*

The Lay Chairman and the Treasurer have met with our local Bank of Scotland branch in Callander to discuss a potential loan facility for cash flow management in the closing stages of the Renovation Project. This has so far not led to any practical outcome but is still being pursued. This is now less urgent, given that (a) the predicted negative cash flow will now be eased by regular submission of VAT reclaims in periodic instalments, and (b) an indication from the Diocese that the SEC will offer a short term bridging loan if necessary subject to certain assurances. A cash flow forecast for the period of the Renovation Project contract is now being produced.

9.3 *Donations to St Mary's via the Rector*

Richard has indicated that, due to a change in his bus-driving rota, future donations to St Mary's from Aberfoyle Motors Ltd will drop substantially. However, he is now acting as relief driver on the local Stirling Council library van and has kindly agreed to donate his resulting earnings from the Council. As always, the Vestry is greatly indebted to Richard for his continuing generosity in making these arrangements.

9.4 *Insurances – Renovation Project Building Works*

An extension to the existing Parishguard policy to provide All Risks cover for the duration of the building works contract has now been set up with EIG, our insurers, and the additional premium has been paid. Certain conditions apply to the extension of cover, notably relating to site security and access. EIG have responded very efficiently over this matter.

9.5 *Insurances – Trustee Indemnity Cover*

As noted under a separate e-mail to Vestry, EIG have confirmed that Trustee Indemnity cover for the Rector and Vestry members as charity trustees is provided under the existing Parishguard policy. This basically insures individuals against damages and other costs and expenses arising from a 'wrongful act' committed unknowingly by a trustee, giving rise to a claim against them. However, there are significant exclusions to this, and it is not clear whether the procedures required by OSCR are the same as those of the Charity Commission (on which this cover is based). **Action: Nick to follow up**

9.6 *Church Giving Fund*

The response to this year's Harvest Festival special collection was particularly good, with a total of £365 being raised for the Fund including Gift Aid tax recoverable. The current balance in the Fund has increased accordingly to £795. The Secretary had circulated a summary of recent donations made by the Vestry to UK registered charities from the Fund. It was agreed to inform the congregation at the AGM that the intention was to support one local charity and one international charity every six months. A list of charities that had been supported in the past three years would be provided, and the AGM should make recommendations for consideration at the January meeting of Vestry. Nominations for July would be invited via the Newsletter.

10. **Church Renovation Project Report and Appeal**

In a written report, the Treasurer noted that:

10.1 *Contractors' Tender & Works Schedule*

- a) Following confirmation of the HLF repairs grant contract (see 10.3 below) the Vestry's contract for £198,786 with Hunter & Clark (as per the adjusted tender) has been confirmed via the architect. The contractors have now arrived on site to commence the agreed works programme. I attach a copy of Hunter & Clark's works schedule, which is also on display in the Church Room.
- b) A pre-start meeting chaired by Simpson & Brown was held on 24th September in the Church Room, attended by Hunter & Clark representatives, Paul Miller (see 10.4 below) and Richard, Mark and myself for the Vestry. A wide range of practical issues were discussed and minuted and arrangements agreed for the management of the contract. I will act as the Vestry's main contact point with the architect and contractors. Monthly site meetings will be chaired by the architect and attended by Mark and myself, the first scheduled for 19th November. In addition, George and David will unofficially monitor progress on site on an ongoing basis.
- c) Scaffolding has now been erected around the entire Church building. Consultation with the contractor and architect has confirmed that while this is in place, access from the Church porch to the Church Room will only be possible via the metal steps to the rear of the Rectory.
- d) The architect has now had a constructive site meeting with the contractors' slater regarding the condition of the Church roof. The slaters do not anticipate any unexpected additional costs. On the main roof, the top two rows of slates would be replaced, together with flashings and ridges. The porch roof will be completely stripped, and the roof above the organ will be partly stripped and re-slatted.
- e) As reported elsewhere, additional All Risks insurance cover has been taken out for the five-month period of the building works contract commencing on 13th October.

10.2 *Heritage Lottery Fund – Development Grant*

Following the successful submission of the Stage 2 application during the summer, the second and final 50% instalment of Development Grant amounting to £3,000 has been claimed and has now been paid by HLF.

10.3 *Heritage Lottery Fund – Repairs Grant*

- a) The contract with the HLF for a maximum grant of £91,900 was received in September and has now been signed by the Diocesan Trustees, the Secretary and Treasurer as representatives of the Vestry, and the Trustees of the National Heritage Memorial Fund. The grant ceiling is based on total eligible costs of £239,580. As noted above, this has enabled Vestry to confirm the works contract with Hunter & Clark.
- b) HLF have now issued written permission for the commencement of the agreed fabric repairs programme and have also authorised the release of the first 50% tranche of the grant monies, i.e. £45,950, for transfer to Vestry's dedicated Renovation Project bank account. The second tranche of 40% of the repairs grant will be payable in advance on submission of a satisfactory progress report covering expenditure on approved work covered by the first grant instalment.

10.4 *Organ Restoration Contract*

- a) Paul Miller of P M Pipe Organ Maintenance Ltd has confirmed a final contract price of £19,240 plus VAT for the full overhaul of the Binns / Willis pipe organ. As noted (see 10.1 b above) he attended the pre-start meeting held on 24th September. The organ has now been totally dismantled and the restoration work will be carried out over the duration

of the main fabric repairs programme. Some of the organ parts are being kept in the Church, using the rear pews as a temporary storage area, and will be cleaned on site prior to re-assembly.

- b) All organ parts removed from the Church are covered by the organ builder's insurance. New parts and all work carried out is guaranteed by P M Pipe Organ Maintenance Ltd for a period of 25 years provided they also carry out regular tuning and maintenance. This last point may lead to the termination of the existing organ tuning contract with Henry Willis & Co.

10.5 *Renovation Project Budget & Cash Flow Forecast*

- a) The latest Summary Budget statement was circulated to Vestry. Since the last Vestry meeting, the Appeal has continued to make good progress and the funding gap for the whole Project has narrowed significantly to £9,000. This is a most encouraging position, which has underpinned the key decision to go ahead with the Project, but we must continue to press on with the Appeal.
- b) The Treasurer is currently working on a cash flow forecast for the Project, based on projected stage payments of contractors' invoices and professional fees as forecast by the QS. A significant proportion of funding that has been secured for the Project is payable retrospectively against approved expenditure. Regular submission of claims for VAT repayment under the Listed Places of Worship grant scheme and for Gift Aid tax recoverable will therefore be essential. It is quite possible that Vestry will need to seek a bridging loan via the Diocese to cover a negative cash flow position in the closing stages of the Project. Personal loan guarantees of £25,000 offered by members of St Mary's will greatly assist in this, if and when the time comes to exercise this option.

10.6 *Renovation Appeal - Update*

- a) As of today, the Appeal has raised a total of £121,000 towards the original £150,000 target. The major contribution made by St Mary's congregation to this position is being put forward as a key factor in approaches to external trusts that we are still making.
- b) In September, immediately following the Harvest Festival service, the Chairman and Treasurer successfully completed a 100-mile pilgrimage walk from Aberfoyle to Iona, in aid of the Appeal. This proved to be a demanding but rewarding experience and they were delighted to have raised over £1,800 from their efforts so far. They are particularly grateful to those St Mary's members who insisted on sponsoring them, and to Bishop David for promoting their walk on the Diocesan website. This is the first time the web portal facility on www.workwithus.org, to which St Mary's subscribes, has been used to secure Gift Aided sponsorship donations and this has proved a very cost effective on-line fundraising service. This exercise will be repeated in spring 2009, when they walk from Aberfoyle to Whithorn, and the web page will be kept open until end May for this purpose.
- c) St Mary's forthcoming Christmas Fayre at Dounans, Aberfoyle on 6th December will also be raising funds for the Appeal, and special thanks are due to Hannah Sanderson for setting this up. Other fundraising events are planned, as noted in the last report, with the aim of widening the support for the Appeal from the wider community.
- d) Patrick Mileham had communicated that the Society of the Child Jesus was closing and that the remaining funds would be given to St. Mary's. They will be put in the Renovation Fund.

10.7 *Interpretation & Publicity*

- a) The architect has now provided a descriptive template for a 'triptych' style wall mounted interpretive panel telling the story of the original construction of St Mary's, its main features as a building and its renovation, as well as the history of the Scottish Episcopal Church, its resurgence as the 'English Church' in the nineteenth century, and its future mission in this area of Scotland. The total cost of the panel will be appreciably less than the £6,000 budget provision, and this is not grant aided by HLF. Vestry will need to approve a final design.
- b) Given that we have now raised over 95% of our budgeted funding for the Project, no further steps have been taken to produce an Appeal signboard and 'thermometer' for the outside of the Church. Very shortly the contractor's and HLF signboards will be erected. However, it was agreed it would be of interest to visitors to St Mary's to have an A3 size notice board inside the main entrance to the Church with some basic information on the Renovation Project, which could also attract donations to the Appeal. In addition, we should provide copy to the 'Strathard News' with a similar aim.

10.8 Use of Church Room

Normal access to the Church Room will be denied while the renovation work was taking place. The Rector agreed to make arrangements for coffee to be served in the Chancel following Morning Service on November 16th.

11. Preparation for AGM

It was noted that Karen will be retiring this year at the end of her four-year term. Johnny North and Hannah Sanderson will be proposed as new Vestry members.

12. Follow up to the Away Day

Most of the following points are ongoing.

1. Organise an ecumenical workshop with a similar agenda to the St. Mary's May 2008 Away Day (medium term)
2. Complete the Eco-congregation modules on worship and prayer (almost completed)
3. Create a leaflet showing the services of all local churches (SEC, Kirk, RC, etc)
4. Organise a joint activity with other churches in the area (barbecue/ picnic + litter pick on river in Aberfoyle a possibility in 2009).
5. Vary the liturgical diet to offer alternative services (Worship & Music Group have issued a questionnaire to seek feedback from members of the congregation).
6. Organise regular concerts, perhaps quarterly. (**Action: Mark** to ask David Wilson if he would become involved / the organist at Hyndland church might play (George is the link). It was noted that Mary-Clare Brown was keen to play the organ.
7. Promote the prayer group, which is a powerful medium for those who are comfortable with open prayer. (This group now meets monthly).
8. Promulgate to the community the existence of our church-giving fund and invite comments on where this should be spent. (This will be done at the AGM – see 9.6 above).
9. Find out what is happening in the community so as to focus our own thinking and activities.

Ruth Jack (Callendar Youth Project), Hannah Sanderson and Maxie Richards have each spoken about their work (in place of a sermon) at services since the last Vestry meeting. It was agreed that Nick should see if Gillian Forster (Green Routes) could come and talk to Vestry after the Church renovation is complete. **Action: Nick**

Philip reported on a meeting of the Lomond and District Futures Group whose action plan included improving football facilities and youth clubs.

10. Display our activities in the Church room and in the Church. (*Action: Philip* to provide a noticeboard, and *Robin* will keep it up to date).
11. Create a leaflet about St Mary's, with a note on the history of the church (*Action: Mark* to update).
12. Find a communications leader (defer to later)
13. Hold an annual meeting for area contacts
14. Ask David Sanderson to organise a walk (defer to later)
15. Consider what other opportunities there may be for spiritual growth (postpone till the Diocesan review is implemented).
16. Organise more parish pilgrimages.

13. **Any Other Business**

13.1 *Fundraising Event in Duntreath Castle Grounds*

It was agreed that the sum of £20 (which includes entry to the gardens) would be charged for the special sandwich lunch on May 31st 2009. Vestry approved Robin's suggestion of Louise Bustard as a speaker.

13.2 *Fanshawe Windows*

Vestry approved the idea of moving the Fanshawe Windows to the west end of the church so they can be seen after the organ is replaced.

13.3 *The Organ*

George asked if we could reconsider whether to replace the organ by a digital organ as, now that he had seen the Fanshawe Windows for the first time, he felt that the windows should not be removed from view again by returning the repaired organ to its original place. It was lovely to have the additional light that came into the church now the organ was away for repair. The Chairman said that George was welcome to bring this up again at the AGM, but the proposal to move the windows would partly meet his concerns.

14. **Dates of Vestry Meetings in 2009.** Friday January 30th, Wednesday April 29th, Friday July 24th and Wednesday October 28th.

The meeting closed with The Grace at 10.05 p.m.

Signed.....

Date