

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 27 October 2010

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

1. The meeting commenced at 7.35pm with a prayer.
2. **Apologies:** Margaret Johnson and Jonny North
3. **Minutes:** The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2010 were approved and signed by the Chairman after the Secretary had drawn Vestry's attention to the following point. Under Casting the Net 3.5 'bullets' 5 and 6, in her email to Vestry of 23 August 2010, Karen Gaskell pointed out that identifying the Nine Marks of Mission and the 'audit' of the Church's health against the Nine Marks of Mission are carried out by the Mission Action Planning Workshop. A copy of her email will be attached to the signed copy of these Minutes by way of clarification.

3.1 *Matters Arising*

None

4. **Secretary's Business:**

4.1 *HMRC – 'Fit and Proper Person' Requirement – Guidance Note and Declaration* had been circulated to Vestry with the Agenda for this meeting. Six Declarations had been completed and returned to the Secretary either before or at this meeting and other Vestry members were requested to do likewise at their earliest convenience. *Action: All as appropriate*

4.2 *Seminar for Charity Trustees: Pitlochry 02.11.10:* Nick Cooke and David Thompson are the only members of Vestry booked to attend this. They were asked to report back with a summary of the main points of this seminar to Vestry. However, Colin Liddell who is leading this seminar, has already cautioned that in his past experience trustees attending have found it difficult to do this.

5. **Rector's report:**

5.1 There will be no service on Sunday 26 December (Boxing Day)

5.2 On Sunday 16 January Bishop David will conduct the 11.15 am service

6. **Casting the Net:** (Philip Gaskell)

6.1 The Mission Action Group led by Philip Gaskell will comprise the following: Barbara Carruthers, Nick Cooke, Joan Dymond, Susan Forsyth, James Gardner, Philip Gaskell and Richard Grosse.

A meeting is to be arranged with our facilitators Andy McCafferty (Ordained Facilitator) and our Lay Facilitator which will be attended by those names above.

Congregation, Church and Area profile to be carried out. It was pointed out that the Profile of St Mary's already exists and is on our website.

It is hoped to draw on the experience of pilot CTNs already carried out in the Diocese.

6.2 It was also reported that a new Diocesan Casting the Net Officer – Susannah Silver – has been appointed.

7. Lay Representative's Report:

Philip Gaskell reported that there had been one meeting for Area Representatives since the last Vestry meeting. This was a talk in Alloa entitled 'Better Vestries' followed by a question and answer session.

8. Music and Worship:

8.1 Kate McNaughton has recently played the organ at two Sunday services in St Mary's enabling Jean Sykes to have a break. Kate is currently living at Trossachs Holiday Park, but it is not clear as to the permanence of her residence in the area and her future availability as relief organist. In the short term, Jean and Kate will decide who plays when.

8.2 For the Carol Service to be held at 4.00pm on 19 December it is hoped Malcolm Wood will be available to play the organ. If Malcolm is available, Philip Gaskell will ask him to liaise with Richard Grosse on the detailed arrangements. *Action: Philip Gaskell/Richard Grosse*

8.3 David and Cara Wilson will be approached to see if a choir can be arranged to lead the singing at the Carol Service. *Action: Richard Grosse*

8.4 Matthew Beetschen, organist at Dunblane Cathedral, also to be invited to ask one of his students to play at St Mary's at a future date. *Action: Nick Cooke*

9. Communications:

9.1 Barbara Carruthers reported that 'Park Life' magazine is asking for dates of events at St Mary's in the near future. Mark Seymour to supply Barbara with list of these events so that she can advise 'Park Life' *Action: Mark Seymour/Barbara Carruthers*

9.2 The leaflet for visitors circulated to tourist/visitor establishments in the Aberfoyle area earlier in the year has been well received.

9.3 The question was raised as to whether we have a leaflet suitable for informing and welcoming new residents to the area that could be used by Area Representatives. It was confirmed that these leaflets already exist, but would need updating.

9.4 Barbara also feels better communication with potential/existing occasional worshippers in outlying communities about St Mary's would be helpful.

10. Financial Stewardship Team Report & Church Giving:

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

10.1 Cash Flow

As a temporary measure to ease the current cash flow pressures, I have transferred £5,000 from the Renovation Fund to the General Fund bank account. This will be reversed pending submission and receipt of the Gift Aid tax claim for the 2009-10 financial year. Thereafter, we will hopefully see an improvement in General Fund income as a result of the new Stewardship initiative (see below).

10.2 Fundraising Events

Last week, a very enjoyable talk was given by Patrick Mileham in the Church entitled 'Cry Havoc' detailing the events of the Stirlingshire insurrection of 1820. Organised jointly by the Loch Ard Local History Group and Gartmore Heritage Society, the event has so far raised a total of £70 for St Mary's funds. Sadly, due to unforeseen circumstances, the audience was unaware that wine and refreshments were available afterwards

in the Church Room. Once again, however, the appearance and acoustics of the Church received favourable comments from many of our visitors.

10.3 Church Heating System: Renewable Energy Supply

Further to my last report, this matter will be given priority over the winter months. I plan to attend the next meeting of the Stirling area Eco-Congregation network to be held at old St Ninians Church where a recently installed air pump heating system is reported to be achieving very good results.

10.4 Buildings Maintenance

Ian Macdonald, a local slating contractor in Gartmore, has recently carried out running repairs to the Church and Rectory roofs. An annual contract with Mr Macdonald is being considered.

10.5 Special Services – Fees / Donations

St Mary's currently has no set scale of fees or donations for the use of the Church for special services. The Vestry of St Andrew's, Callander has recently agreed a £200 fee for weddings and £100 for funerals, with an optional donation for baptisms or other services. *Vestry is asked to consider the introduction of a similar scale at St Mary's.*

10.6 Church Giving Fund

The collection proceeds from the recent Harvest Thanksgiving service amounted to £152 including Gift Aid, and this amount will be credited to the Fund. As in previous years, a hand out will be provided with the service sheet at the Christmas Carol service listing the charities supported by the Fund in 2010. The next Vestry meeting in January will consider potential donations from the balance available in the Fund.

10.7 Congregational Stewardship Initiative 2010

Following Vestry's approval at the last meeting that St Mary's should run a Stewardship initiative, I have now instigated the necessary steps. As of today, all Area Contacts have now received their batches of envelopes to be personally delivered to all members of St Mary's. This comprises 'current' individuals or families listed in the 2009 Yearbook plus new additions and others known to have worshipped occasionally at the Church recently – a total of 55 households. The covering letter from the Rector and Chairman, is based on the letter we used in 2006 but with significant amendments suggested by other members of the Stewardship team.

Area Contacts are being asked to deliver all envelopes within the next 2 weeks if possible so we can wind up the initiative by early December – i.e. this is a short, sharp effort that should not be prolonged over the Advent and Christmas period. Either Mark or myself will give Area Contacts advice or assistance as necessary.

10.8 Renovation Project Business:

(a) Cash Flow

The working balance in the Renovation Fund bank account now stands at £1,350 after paying for all outstanding bills – see below. The £10,000 short term SEC loan will be repaid following (a) receipt of monies due under final LPWG and Gift Aid claims and (b) the reversal of the temporary £5,000 General Fund transfer noted above.

(b) Hunter & Clark – In Administration

A final retention payment of £5,428 due to Hunter & Clark under the main repairs contract has now been made to Zolfo Cooper as the company's administration agents, as agreed with the Architect.

(c) Awards For All Scotland – Grant Expenditure

All works funded by the grant have now been completed, including the replacement of the Crawford railings carried out by Iron Horse Studios in association with Greenlands Gardens, which has greatly improved the appearance of the external approach to the Church. There is an underspend of £306 on the Awards For All grant monies received, which it is hoped can be spent on other works associated with the path to the Church Room.

(d) ***Additional Works – External Lighting***

The National Park Authority has given planning consent for the external lighting scheme agreed with Cottrells, subject to standard notification procedures. A source of funding for the scheme has yet to be identified.

10.9 Discussion and Decisions regarding this Report

(a) ***Special Services – Fees/Donations*** (see 10.5 above). Vestry agreed to the Treasurer's proposals that where the Church is used by non-members of St Mary's for weddings a fee of £200 will apply and for funerals a fee of £100. If St Mary's provides the organist this will attract an additional fee.

It is not clear what policies have been adopted by other churches in our area, but it is recognised that our fees should be in line with neighbouring churches. We should attempt to discreetly establish what these are.

Concern was also expressed that all such use of St Mary's as outlined above should be with a member of our Vestry or congregation present. This to be additional to our Rector if he is conducting the service and/or if our organist is playing.

(b) ***Congregational Stewardship Initiative*** (see 10.7 above). The Treasurer emphasised the need for Area Representatives to deliver all envelopes as soon as possible so we can wind up the initiative by early December. However, it was noted that the lists of Area Reps are unequally spread and may need to be more equally redistributed for the future.

(c) ***Awards for All Scotland – Grant Expenditure*** (see 10.8 (c) above). While Vestry agreed that the replacement of the Crawford railings was a great improvement visually and for the adult user, there was a danger that small children could fall or even walk under the handrail and come to harm wherever there is a steep slope. In particular the section where the path leads from the Car Park and is close to the burn is a potentially serious hazard. It was agreed that Mark Seymour would identify the sections posing a risk and consider the feasibility and cost of installing mesh/netting where necessary. ***Action:Mark Seymour***

In answer to the question of the gate removed from the foot of the steps from the lane, Mark Seymour explained that it no longer served any purpose as it was fenced only at one side.

(d) ***Additional Works to the Main Renovation Contract*** (see 10.8 (d) above). An estimate from James Bissett, Electricians for the installation of the proposed floodlighting is awaited. When this is to hand funding applications will be made. It was noted that running costs are not yet known, but the specification is for low energy lighting. ***Action:Mark Seymour***

11. Additional Works to the Main Renovation Project

11.1 Mark Seymour is seeking volunteers to help him over the next few weeks with removal of R.Ponticum and planting of new specimen rhododendrons recently purchased at cost of £300 for Church garden. ***Action:Mark Seymour & Volunteers***

11.2 Sound System:

A bracket for the lectern microphone is needed.

Action:Jonny North

12. Concerts/Events in St Mary's

12.1 Strathendrick Singers Christmas Concert (12.12.10 at 7,30 pm)

All ticketing will be by Strathendrick Singers. Ticket price £10 each including refreshments. Philip Gaskell will organise volunteers for refreshments.

Action:Philip Gaskell

Proceeds to be shared between Strathendrick Singers and St Mary's

12.2 Carol Service – refreshments (19.12.10 at 4.00 pm)

Alastair Gardner or Tim and Anne Winther to arrange.

Action:Anne Winther

12.3 *St Petersburg Lyra Group (21.05.11)*

Booked for return visit.

12.4 *Future arranging of programme of concerts/events*

Vestry appreciates all the time and effort expended by Mark Seymour in arranging concerts in St Mary's to date and thanked him for this. However, Mark requested that a single individual or a very small group take over this role from him in order to organise future concerts and events. This individual or group does not necessarily have to be formed from existing Vestry members. Nick Cooke asked that Vestry should approve policy guidelines for all future concerts/events within which this individual or group should work, especially where these affect St Mary's finances **Action:Mark Seymour/Nick Cooke**

13. Vestry Membership and Vacant Offices

13.1 *Vestry Membership*

With the exception of Susan Forsyth who has kindly agreed to remain on Vestry for another year no members are due to retire at the next AGM. Accordingly, it has been decided not to seek additional nominations to Vestry for the next year.

13.2 *Vacant Offices*

(a) Hannah Sanderson has tendered her resignation as St Mary's Vulnerable Adult and Child Protection Coordinator. Melanie Grosse has agreed to take on this role.

(b) In the absence of any volunteers to take over as Vestry Secretary, David Thompson has agreed to continue for one further year to end 2011, or sooner if a replacement is forthcoming.

(c) Fabric Convener remains vacant and a suitable volunteer must be found as soon as possible.

Action:Mark Seymour

(d) The position of Health & Safety Officer must be filled as a matter of urgency as it is a legal requirement. Jonny North to be asked to consider taking this on.

Action:Mark Seymour

(e) Keith Gibbs has retired as Lessons Rota Coordinator and is thanked for his contribution. Marie Thompson has offered to take over this role with immediate effect.

(f) It was noted that a Deputy Verger should be sought to help Margaret Johnson with some of her tasks.

(g) Several members of Vestry voiced their concerns that certain key offices had been vacant for some time and every effort must be made to fill these without further delay, particularly those that are a legal requirement. In the event of an incident arising from the failure of Vestry to have a Health & Safety Officer, Vestry could be collectively liable in law for the consequences.

14. Preparation for AGM

14.1 The date and time of this is confirmed for Sunday 12 December 2010 at 11.45 am following Morning Service which on this occasion will commence at 10.30 am

14.2 The Chairman may not be available for the AGM in which case Nick Cooke will be in the Chair. However, Mark Seymour will prepare his Annual Report as usual.

15. AOCB

Flower Festival

15.1 It was suggested that St Mary's should hold a Flower Festival. This could be considered once we have an 'Events' organiser and group.

15.2 *Young Church*

(a) This initiative reported in the Autumn 2010 issue of the Church Magazine was warmly welcomed by Vestry. However, some concern was expressed that this development had not been communicated to and discussed with Vestry at an earlier stage.

(b) The questions of the intended start date and the necessary Disclosure procedure were raised. The Rector reported that the Disclosure process was in hand for both Melanie Grosse and James Gardner and they were all aware that the target start date would be dependent upon that process first being completed.

(c) The Rector explained that the Young Church programme was carefully structured although some doubts were expressed as to how the interest and attention of a broad age range from 4 to 13 years might be achieved if this group was to meet all at the one time.

15.3 *Lunch for Bishop*

Referring to the Rector's report that Bishop David would be preaching at St Mary's on 16 January, the question of lunch was discussed. It was agreed there should be a Buffet Lunch in the Church Room following the service.

16 Dates of Vestry Meetings and AGM for 2011

These were agreed as follows:

19 January; 13 April; 20 July; 19 October (all Wednesdays)

AGM Sunday 11 December 2011

17. The meeting closed with prayer at 9.20 pm

Signed.....

Date.....

