

PARISH FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MONDAY 05TH SEPTEMBER 2016

12.00 NOON IN ST COLUMBKILLE'S PRESBYTERY

MINUTES

Present:

Rev Fr Patrick A Hennessy
Rev Deacon William McMillan
Margaret McGrath (Chair)
Maureen McNamara
Paul McNeil
Monica Toner

Apologies

Patricia Kennedy

Item 1 – Opening Prayer

Father Hennessy opened the meeting with a prayer.

Item 2 – Welcome and Introduction

Margaret welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new Parish Finance Committee and thanked them for agreeing to membership of this group. She explained that the Diocese had now issued guidance on Parish Finance Committee, their duties and responsibilities. Although the issues covered by the guidance are all currently managed in St Columbkille's, this gives us the opportunity to pull together all of the different strands under the management of a single committee. Fr Hennessy has asked Margaret to Chair the Committee and other members have been invited due to their expertise in certain areas. Fr Hennessy advised the meeting that, in advance of the new guidance, Bishop Toal had written to all parishes concerning the proper management of parishes, it is therefore important that the Committee can help assure Fr Hennessy that all appropriate management controls are in place which ensure he meets his responsibilities in these areas.

Item 3 – Committee Responsibilities

Item 3 has been divided into four sections – with a short paper on each one having been sent out to Committee members setting out the issues for the Committee to consider:

(i) Lay Employees

Diocesan Guidance is that any lay staff employed by the Parish are paid a living wage and all civil laws relating to labour observed. In particular, tax and National Insurance must be deducted from wages and paid to the State authorities as necessary. The parish has two lay employees – the Housekeeper and the House

Cleaner. ***The Committee noted note that these conditions are being met for our two lay employees.***

The Guidance also states that employees should have a written contract. The Committee noted that neither employee currently has a written contract. Margaret explained that UK Government Department of Business Innovation and Skills advice is that a written contract is not required, but employees should have a written Statement of Employment Particular, and it provides guidance on this. ***The Committee agreed that, in consultation with the two employees, M McGrath will produce draft Statement of Employment Particulars for agreement by the Committee at our next meeting.*** Action: MMcGrath

(ii) *Health & Safety (including Security) Issues*

Diocesan guidance states that Committee shall ensure that parish complies with Diocesan guidance on health and safety through the online Safety toolbox management system. The Committee noted that although the Diocese has not yet made this toolbox available, there is much that can be done in the meantime. For example, we already have records of trained Fire Marshalls etc. Rev Bill McMillan has professional experience in this area and he agreed to take lead responsibility for ensuring the Parish complies with all Health & Safety issues. ***The Committee agreed that Rev McMillan report to the Committee at its next meeting on Health & Safety in the Parish.*** Action: Rev W McMillan

The Catholic Church Insurance Association has issued guidance on Security in Churches following recent events across Europe. ***The Committee agreed that Rev McMillan take lead responsibility for reviewing and maintaining Security awareness as part of his Health & Safety remit, using the Catholic Church Insurance Association guidance as a basis.*** Action: Rev W McMillan

The Diocesan Guidance also states that the Committee will confirm annually that the parish priest has appointed a Safeguarding representative. ***The Committee noted that at our Parish Safeguarding representative is Frances Watson.***

(iii) *Ongoing Maintenance of Church and House*

The Diocesan Guidance states that the Committee shall ensure that parish property is well maintained and safe, and due diligence is exercised over all parish assets. The Committee is responsible for re-assessing insurance valuations of property before renewal. A draft Maintenance Planner for 2017 was presented to the Committee which was discussed in some detail with the Committee agreeing the importance of recording details of all current contractors for various works and other parish groups currently undertaking some tasks (e.g. Church Cleaning Group). The Committee also agreed that a small Parish Maintenance Group should be established to assist with issues identified for local parish work (e.g. regular check of lighting and bulbs etc). Paul McNeil was able to advise the Committee regarding the upcoming session with

contractors on how the new central heating system operates and it would be at this point that decisions on who and how the annual maintenance checks of the new system would take place. **The Committee agreed that Paul McNeill take lead responsibility in finalising the Planner for 2017 and presenting to the Committee at its next meeting for agreement including a list of suggested volunteers to take forward appropriate checks etc. outlined on the Planner.**

Action : P McNeill

The Committee also asked noted that, in accordance with Diocesan Guidance, Insurance Valuations will be provided to the Committee for agreement prior to renewal of Insurance – following any advice from the Diocese if required.

(iv) Budget Preparation, Monitoring and Publication of Accounts

Margaret gave a brief outline of the management of the Parish Accounts and assured the Committee of the availability of all records for their inspection at any time. The Committee were provided with the latest monthly Income and Expenditure report and then agreed that the Budget for 2017 should be prepared based on this format. Although the budget can be based on income and expenditure for 2016 and finalised once the end of year account has been produced, a number of issues need to be taken into account – expenditure will not include the large sums currently being paid for the Church Refurbishment; we borrowed £120,000 from the Diocese – received in July 2016 and must be repaid in full by July 2018 – the budget needs to reflect regular repayments – the second collection for the Building Fund will therefore need to continue meantime. A number of issues were discussed – including increased efforts to increase the number of Parishioners Gift Aiding weekly offerings and the possibility of specific Gift Aid envelopes for use by visitors to the Church. Patricia Kennedy is our Parish Gift Aid specialist and she can take up these points following our next meeting. **The Committee agreed that a draft budget be prepared for the Committee to consider at the next meeting.** *Action: M McGrath*

The Committee also agreed that a draft of the published version of the Parish Annual Accounts be prepared for its consideration. It was agreed that it is important to provide Parishioners with information of income and expenditure etc. on an annual basis – but that it must be in an easy to read format and highlight how much has been given by parishioners to the parish as well as to special collections etc. It was also agreed that those who gift aid their offerings should be provided with details of the total amount paid and the total received from HMRC for their offering. *Action: M McGrath*

A copy of the Diocesan Accounts following completion and published should be obtained and made available to parishioners. *Action: M McGrath*

Item 4 – Future Meeting Dates

The Committee is required to meet at least every three months. The Committee agreed that, as there is so much work ongoing in terms of Church Refurbishment and the number of issues still to be fully considered by the Committee, we require to meet on a more regular

basis. The Parish Priest can call a meeting at any time giving seven days' notice – a quorum being the Parish Priest and three lay members. The next meeting should be arranged for 6 weeks from now and members will be contacted to agree date and time.

Action: M McGrath

Item 5 – Any other relevant business

The following issues were raised:

- A letter has been received from South Lanarkshire Council re the Building Warrant for the alteration to the Chapel House to form 2 bathrooms from an existing large bathroom. The warrant will expire on 20 January 2017, but we can apply for an extension. The Committee agree that, although we have no plans to undertake this work at the moment and it will depend upon budget constraints, an extension of the warrant should be applied for to ensure that we can have the work done should we wish to. **An application to be prepared for Fr Hennessy's signature for an extension to the building warrant.**
- Rev McMillan advised the Committee that Margaret Ferrier MP had attended a meeting here in the Parish recently and that he raised the issue of graffiti on the back wall with her. She has now advised that South Lanarkshire Council has agreed to take responsibility for its removal.
- Margaret advised that all Agenda and Minutes will be stored electronically and asked whether a page on the work of the Committee – including copies of agenda and minutes – should be available on the Parish Website. **The Committee agreed.**

Action: M McGrath

Action: M McGrath

Father Hennessy then closed the meeting with a Prayer.

September 2016