

Kiltiernan Church of Ireland Parish
Minutes of Annual Easter General Vestry Meeting
Tuesday 20th April 2021 at 8.00pm via Zoom

The meeting commenced with a short prayer service and House Rules set out by Rev. R. Clements

Attendance

Rev. R. Clements, Mrs. Mary White, Mr. Fintan Keogh, Mr. Neil Goolding, Mr. David Webb, Mr Gary Colclough, Mr. Christian Kraeft, Mr. Bruce Fitzsimons, Mrs. Ann Walsh, Mrs. Carol Hennessy, Mrs. Jackie Robinson, Mrs. Jackie Fitzpatrick, Mr. Stephen Newell, Mrs. Susan O'Toole, Mrs. Carol Barry, Mr. Jonathan Holt, Mrs. Dorothy Elliott, Mr. Philip McQueston, Mr. Kevin O'Sullivan, Mr. Irwin Johnston, Dr. Una McConville, Mrs. Caroline Kennedy, Mr. Nicholas Maxwell, Mr. Trevor Storey, Mr Norman Judge

Apologies

None

General Vestry Register

The list of Registered Vestry members was made available.

Minutes

The minutes of the Easter Vestry meeting of 1st September 2020 were circulated, approved and signed.

Report from the Rector - Living as the Church in Changing Times

“It has become a cliché to say that we are now ministering in a new reality. We have had to adjust to living with Covid-19; masks have become normative, and the smell of hand sanitizer has become all too familiar. We are all now tasked with imagining what a post Covid landscape might look like. The Archbishop of Canterbury drew our thoughts recently to words observed by the theologian Hans Kung: “To stay the same when everything else around you changes, is not to stay the same”.

The Church of Ireland has been a bedrock of faith, love, hope and compassion in this country for centuries through conflict, plagues, and pandemics - we still are, and we will go on being just that. We will have to change and adapt, but we have done this before, and we will do it again. The very reason the Church of Ireland has survived and flourished over centuries is because ministry has evolved. We call it living incarnationally. The church does not live outside of the world, or parallel to it. We live in the world, incarnate, in the messiness of time and reality.

During Eastertide we read the Acts of the Apostles, the story of the early church. The church then was fluid, adaptable and dynamic. It both responded, adjusted and in doing so it led. It set the foundations of a movement that would change the world. Likewise, in the power of the Spirit, it is important that we respond, adapt, and lead.

In Kiltiernan, we made the decision early in this pandemic, that we would not simply sit back and wait for our troubles to blow over, but we would act and adapt to meet the needs emerging using whatever tools were at our disposal. I am proud of the work that we have done over the last year, not just in

how we have engaged with technology, but in how we have safely facilitated 'in person' and face to face engagement within the parameters of our restrictions.

In the previous year we have uploaded 95 videos onto YouTube, including a weekly service with regularly hundreds of viewers. I still get comments and encouraging feedback from people who I would never have seen in church. As well as meeting the spiritual needs of our regular worshippers, our YouTube services have enabled us to minister to and reach people who may be dechurched or unchurched. A particular word of thanks goes to Kevin O'Sullivan who has risen to the technological challenges of our age with enthusiasm. I might also recognise the work of the choirs who have responded exceptionally to the virtual experience. If you have not already done so I might encourage you to look at the recent Stainer's Crucifixion, a service born in Kiltarnan that has been viewed 3,400 times.

Since the pandemic began, we have run two bible / theology series on YouTube, a Pilgrim course on zoom and a zoom Marriage Course. We have a weekly gathering for prayer on zoom every Wednesday, with as many as 20 people gathered to pray. We run weekly youth groups on zoom, a weekly play café and a thriving monthly Messy Church with often 40 to 50 families in virtual attendance.

We also seek opportunities for safe in person engagement. We have run chalk walks for families, as well as Muddy Church QR trails. The Gathering Grounds when permitted to do so has been opened for takeaway, and we have opened the church for private prayer every Wednesday. One of the programmes we have been delighted to offer is a weekly soup run around some of our senior members who we do not get to see so regularly. Since November we have been delivering as many as 40 bowls of soup every week.

We have continued to support charitable organisations, notably CRiTiCall who work with women who have experienced domestic violence during Covid.

We have not sat still regarding our own fabric needs. Significant work has been done on the church tower and are grateful for the donations we received from parishioners, raising around €15,000. Just recently we have purchased a defibrillator for the Kiltarnan Centre thanks to a donation by a parishioner.

I am grateful for the work and support of the Select Vestry and the office holders of the church for everything they have done. I would like to offer my thanks to all the staff and worship team for everything that they do. Annemarie, Brian, Lynn, Kevin, Carol, Alistair, and Julie have been wonderful examples of leadership and adaptability in their areas of expertise. Once again, I want to thank each one of them for everything they have done in a year that has pushed us all to the edge of our personal capacity. I might mention Alistair here who came to the parish during the pandemic. I'm mindful that he will be leaving us in June. We have been blessed by his ministry and we will miss him when he goes, but he will go with our prayers and blessing.

Of course, there have been difficult things in the last year. My mind goes to funerals with sometimes no more than 6 people in attendance, of weddings cancelled, of people struggling with loneliness and physical and mental ill health. We will continue to pray and to serve, as all of us live with the task of being a good neighbour.

I also want to recognise that Covid has brought significant financial struggles to the life of the parish, but we are not alone in this. Certainly one of the things we will need to do is to look hard at how we generate finance. I stand by the ministry that we offer as a church, and I truly believe that God's calling is for us to grow, but to do so we need to see our revenue increase. That is a piece of work for all of us as we move forward.

There is a sense that we have been living through history. As we move into a post Covid society, we will be looking once again at how we do ministry and mission. We will be looking at our own tri statement of building community, strengthening worship, and growing in service. What will be the same and what will be different? We have learned that we are perhaps more adaptable than we thought we were. We have learned that technology is a friend. We have learned that church can happen in lots of different shapes and sizes. We have learned that we need each other more than we thought, and that we should never take each other for granted. I hope we have learned to be more generous with each other.

Holy Spirit, lead us in the year ahead."

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Colclough went over the main highlights of the Vestry Accounts which show the income and expenses from the Parish's current account. The information is supplemented by Note 7 which shows the movements in funds and investments held by the RCB.

It was noted that these accounts have not been reviewed or audited. This is because a separate set of statutory accounts are being prepared which will be audited. These statutory accounts will be lodged with the Charities Regulator by the end of October. The 2019 statutory accounts have been audited with a clean audit report.

The accounts show a deficit for the year of €41,160, a large part of this being due to the impact of COVID.

Income

- subscriptions were down by €12,559 compared to 2019 with fall in plate collections making up €9,658 of this. While income from the envelope scheme fell significantly it was broadly balanced out by increased standing orders and online collections. Mr. Colclough thanked those in the envelope scheme who have dropped their envelopes into the parish office while there have been no church services and to thank those who have switched to standing order
- It was also noted that on page 3, where the amounts received by envelope are shown, this year we have also included standing orders and online donations.
- The tax reclaimed has fallen slightly to €27,024 but remains one of our most important sources of income.
- Income from the groups using the Parish Centre fell significantly due to COVID from €18,150 to €9,390. The letting of the Montessori brought in €22,680. The Montessori income has been broadly unaffected to date and again is an important source of income to the parish.
- With the refurbishment of the cottage, rental income in 2020 was €9,356 with a full year's rent likely to bring in just over €15,000.
- The Parish benefitted from dividend income of €23,303 from its investment in the RCB Unit Trust.

- The Gathering Grounds has been impacted by COVID with net income after expenses down from €33,005 in 2019 to €18,667 in 2020. 2021 is likely to see a similar impact.

Parish Fundraising & donations

- The Parish Fete was not run in 2020 due to COVID. In 2019 it brought in income of €11,345 to the Parish
- However, a number of other fundraising initiatives such as the Cookbook and an afternoon tea event raised €4,555 after expenses – Note 2 on page 6 gives more detail.
- In March 2020 we launched a Church Tower Appeal and despite it being cut short by the lockdown €14,776 was raised. Thanks to all who donated so generously.
- A further €17,649 was received in donations including a donation to cover the cost of the installation of the new sound system in the church.

Grants and transfer to RCB unit Trust

- We received grants in 2020 totalling €100,546 with the main one being the leader grant at €97,096
- On receipt of the leader grant, the Select Vestry decided to transfer €100,000 to the RCB unit trust as there was a sufficient amount held in our current account to cover the day-to-day running costs of the parish for the foreseeable future.

Expenditure

A few things to note:

- The running costs for the Parish Centre amounted to circa €50,000 in the year.
- Salary costs are similar to 2019 at €56,623.
- Insurance costs of €13,961 remain high again at the same level as 2019.
- In 2020 we made charitable donations of €9,650 compared to €12,500 in 2019. The 2020 donations included a significant donation to Criticall.

Note 7 on page 7 of the Accounts was highlighted which shows our cash funds with the RCB and our investment in the RCB unit trust. Our cash funds reduced by €81,631 with €18,585 being spent on the Cottage and €63,069 being spent on repairs to the Church Tower. The RCB unit trust increased by the €100,000 transferred from our current account but some of this was offset by a €31,692 fall in the overall value of the investment.

In summary, our Vestry Accounts show a deficit of €41,160 for 2020. With the impacts of COVID continuing into 2021, we are likely to see a further deficit in our Vestry accounts for 2021.

Mr. Colclough noted a big thank you to Annemarie who is the one who does all the real work in relation to the accounts.

Reverend Clements thanked Mr. Colclough, on behalf of the parish, for the work he has put into the accounts this year.

Election of Incoming Select Vestry

Churchwardens - The following appointments were proposed by Mrs. Ann Walsh and seconded by Mrs. Carol Barry and passed unanimously.

Rector's: Stephen Newell

People's: Mr. Fintan Keogh

Glebe Wardens - The following appointments were proposed by Mrs. Jackie Fitzpatrick and seconded by Dr. Una McConville and passed unanimously.

Rector's: Mr. Christian Kraeft

People's: Mr. Bruce Fitzsimons

Select Vestry

Mrs. Jackie Robinson was proposed to be appointed to the Select Vestry by Rev Clements and Mrs. Caroline Kennedy and passed unanimously.

The remaining select Vestry appointments were proposed by Mr. Bruce Fitzsimons and seconded by Mr. Stephen Newell and passed unanimously.

The new Select Vestry Members are therefore:-

Mrs. Jackie Fitzpatrick

Mrs. Ann Walsh

Mr David Webb

Mrs. Carol Barry

Mr. Philip McQuestion

Mrs. Susan O'Toole

Mr. Irwin Johnston

Dr. Una McConville

Mr. Neil Goolding

Mrs. Carol Henesesy

Mr. Gary Colclough

Mrs. Jackie Robinson

There followed some comments from General Vestry Members and the importance of keeping the Gathering Grounds open was highlighted together with compliments for and the recent musical performance.

The meeting closed with the Grace.

Immediately following the meeting, the new Select Vestry met briefly and elected Mr. Gary Colclough as Hon. Treasurer and Mr. David Webb as Hon. Secretary.

Approved:

Date: _____

Signed: _____