**PPC May 2025 **

**Meeting Minutes**

[OFFICIAL]

Present (20):

Fr. Willie Boyd, Douglas Hutchison, Gail Taylor, Caroline Macdonald, John M. Conville, Sadie Chalmers, Rona McAvenna, Kathleen Hutchison, Tom Gilligan, Marion Paterson, Suzanne Maxton, Elizabeth Williams, Andrew Johnston, Liz Denny, Chris Denny, Maria Brown, Peter Convery, Helen Convery, Jamie Allen, Hair McEvoy

Apologies (6):

Eileen Brown, Claire Scott, Gerard Smith, Carol Smith, Hans Pieper, Philippa Whitford

Preliminary Date of Next Meeting: Monday 23rd June, 7pm

1. **Opening Prayer and Reflection: Gospel of the Day** - Gail Taylor
2. **Introduction and welcome** - Douglas Hutchison
3. **Minutes and Matters Arising**

Updates on outstanding actions from Caroline Macdonald re: Parish Directory and Parish List. Caroline to set up emails for all church groups, and all agreed to the Parish List communication.

1. **Reflections on Lent**
2. **Praying with Scripture Programme feedback**

Those who attended felt it was a positive experience and provided a useful point of focus amongst the busyness of life. It was also useful as part of the RCIA preparations.Some found it eye-opening (not as expected), wonderful, relaxing and each person got something different from it on an individual level. All four leaders of the groups (Fr. Willie, Gail, Douglas and Kathleen) enjoyed it. Agreed that current groups can keep going monthly and we will look to re-run again during Lent next year. There was a sense of bonding,prayer became more mature and it carried throughout the week.

1. **Stations of the Cross**

Numbers ranged from 6 the first week to between 20 and 30 the following weeks. Sentiment was that it was appreciated that it was led by different people each week. We discussed whether a more suitable time (Sunday at 3pm) was needed. Agreed that the time was actually fine, but more notice was needed. Considering a potential Christmas Programme Calendar and Lenten Programme Calendar.

1. **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament**

More attendees after morning mass than on a Thursday night. Felt this was because people were already out at church instead of having to find time to come. Fr.Willie confirmed numbers were much the same at St. Quivox.

1. **What Next?**

Fr. Willie advised there may be an opportunity to take part in ‘Integrating Faith and Life’ towards the end of the year. It's usually done ecumenically so the Church of Scotland, Episcopalian and ourselves. (8 places each). More information to come.

1. **Updates from various groups**
2. **RCIA - Kathleen Hutchison**

It's been a great two years for the RCIA programme with rising numbers. The question was asked how much the parish actually knows about it? People see the initials in the bulletin but do they know what it is? We need to think about how we continue to hold the door open for others and also how we help those newly received into the parish integrate?

1. **Finance - Suzanne Maxton**

* We’re now on top of the day to day running. We are moving utilities to IDF as we get a better deal - prices accepted last week so move is imminent - thanks to Ray and John for their help.
* Applied for a council tax reduction for house; awaiting outcome.
* Applied for a VAT reduction on house gas bill; awaiting outcome (asked for a 10 year backdate!)
* Gift Aid Claim for FY24/25 being worked on by Jamie
* Suzanne and John prepared a presentation for parish. Will be discussed and finalised at the next finance meeting.
* Working with the diocese on some fairly large year-end accruals due to delays in billing.
* Next Finance Group meeting - 15th May, 7pm, Parish House.

1. **Fabric Committee - John Conville**

A Building Survey has been undertaken by D M Hall Chartered Surveyors and we are in receipt of their substantial report (see below for more information).

* A Fire Risk Assessment of both the Church and Church Hall has been undertaken by Donald McMaster, Fire Risk Engineer, at a much more favourable cost of £400. We are in receipt of both reports (see below for more information).
* After the PPC meeting in February, Suzanne Maxton was able to locate an Asbestos Management Report undertaken in 2016. This report covered the Church, Church House and Church Hall (see below for more information).
* Since the last PPC we have used two separate landscape contractors on an informal basis to help with some of the heavier and more labour-intensive tasks (see below for more information).
* The Fabric Committee continues to undertake smaller repairs and use specialist contractors to help with more complicated tasks (see below for more information).

1. The Buildings Sub-Group

The Buildings Sub-Group continues to look for various ‘compliance’ documents such as Fire Evacuation Plans, Fixed Electrical Wiring Certificates, Gas Soundness Certificates etc. We will continue searching for these documents but in the meantime, I can report on progress in respect of the following issues;

(i) Fire Risk Assessments

A Fire Risk Assessment of both the Church and Church Hall has been undertaken by Donald McMaster, Fire Risk Engineer. His reports advise that currently the hazard from fire (or the likelihood of fire) is ‘low’ with respect to the Church and ‘medium’ with respect to the Hall. He makes several recommendations with respect to both buildings and helpfully prioritises these.

The Fabric Committee is currently working their way through those recommendations following the priority scores allocated to them. Some have already been attended to, such as having all small electrical items PAT tested, but others will require more time and resources. Examples include;

* developing a Fire Safety Policy for both buildings
* undertake fire safety training for all persons with responsibility
* consider installing fire alarm systems
* review emergency lighting provisions
* introduce additional fire extinguishers

The recommendations in both reports are forming the basis of a ‘Fire Risk Assessment Action Plan’ which is being developed by the Fabric Committee and will be used to further identify and prioritise tasks.

(ii) Asbestos Survey Report

An asbestos survey report was undertaken in June 2016 by Carymar Construction Services. It appears to be part of a wider exercise organised by the Diocese. It covers the Church, Church House, Church Hall and Garage.

Asbestos containing materials (ACMs) were identified in two locations and suspected in one other location. ACMs were found in the floor tiles in the link corridor between the House and the Church and in the roof of the garage. These areas will be properly identified, highlighted and monitored on a regular basis.

As indicated previously, the Fabric Committee will take on the responsibility of maintaining an Asbestos Register, carefully monitoring any areas where asbestos containing materials are known to exist and thereafter taking any appropriate and necessary action.

(iii) The Hall Building Condition Survey

A very detailed and comprehensive Building Condition Survey was recently undertaken by D M Hall Chartered Surveyors. Not surprisingly, it has highlighted a number of issues with the main fabric and services associated with the Hall. Some of those issues include.

* Cracking to the wet dash render
* Pitched roof coverings in poor condition
* Flat roof above kitchen/meeting room in poor condition
* Rainwater goods in poor condition
* Rotted joist end in stage right ante room
* Woodworm infestation below the stage
* High moisture readings throughout
* Timber fascias and soffits in poor condition
* No fire alarm installation
* Boundary wall in poor condition

The report also included indicative costs to address some of the repairs highlighted. Having recently received this report, the Fabric Committee is still in the process of considering its findings, meeting with Fr Willie and co-chairs Gail and Douglas to agree a way forward.

The report also included an indicative cost of £1.1 million inclusive of Professional Fees but excluding VAT and Statutory Approvals if it was decided that demolition and re-building of the hall was the preferred option. Advice was also given if it is decided to demolish the current building and build a smaller replacement hall.

This is clearly a significant project that will require more input from the PPC, specialist advisors and parishioners. It also has many, and very serious, cost implications and will therefore require a considered and carefully managed plan and future course of action.

(iv) General Repairs

The Fabric Committee continues to undertake, or arrange for contractors to undertake, ongoing repairs and renewals.

We are hoping to engage soon with a specialist cleaning contractor to clean the elevated areas within the Church and Church Hall.

We have also received a quote from a stonemason to undertake certain repairs, these include.

(i) to the stone and pointing around the right-hand window behind the altar

(ii) to the left of the main entrance door to the Church

(iii) to the stonework around the window in the Altar Loft

(iv) Investigate possible penetrating dampness around the second window on the right-hand aisle

These repairs are estimated to cost £1,400 and it is the Fabric Committee’s recommendation that we proceed with this work. Your approval of this course of action is requested.

1. The Hall Management Sub-Group

The Fabric Committee continues to meet and liaise with the Hall Management Sub-Group. All agree that until we have all safety and compliance documents in place, it is advisable not to let the Hall on a commercial basis. However, parishioners and parish groups can continue to use the Hall. In the meantime, the Fabric Committee have taken certain measures to minimise any risk of breaching health & safety and fire regulations, these measures include erecting additional emergency exit signage and checking fire extinguishers.

The Hall Management Sub-Group continues to look at a number of issues, including.

* future letting policies
* heating controls
* engaging with a permanent cleaner or professional cleaning company
* confirming what is required in the kitchen to ensure it complies with health & safety regulations and hygiene & environmental health regulations
* Licensing laws
* Emergency lighting at the rear fire exit door
* Building capacities
* security of the building

The Hall Management Group are due to meet the Fabric Committee on Wednesday 7th May where each of these issues will be discussed and taken forward.

1. The Gardens Sub-Group

The Gardens Group met on Saturday 29th March and allocated an area of the garden to each member to look after and maintain. Following this meeting, lawn areas were also allocated to each grass-cutter. A WhatsApp Group ensures we keep in touch with each other, and we provide cover for each other when necessary.

We have engaged the services of two landscape contractors to help with certain areas that are particularly overgrown and/or in need of specialist tools and equipment. The area to the front of the house and the two shrub beds on either side of the drive have been cut back and work will now start on weeding and edging of those beds. The very overgrown and unkempt area from the double gates on St Meddan’s street to the side of the garage will hopefully be cut back and tidied up on Wednesday 30th April. The wild meadow area at the corner of Morven Drive and Cessnock Road has also been tidied up.

A number of new hand tools and PPE have been purchased, this will save current gardeners from having to bring their own tools and will hopefully allow more parishioners to get involved. We are also grateful to those parishioners who very kindly donated spare gardening tools, lawnmowers etc

On Sunday 6th April we tried to encourage more parishioners to get involved in looking after the grounds. We arranged a morning of gardening together with tea/coffee/ home baking (thank you to those who organised the refreshments). Unfortunately, the response was disappointing with only a couple of additional helpers. Maintenance of the garden grounds is a huge undertaking and we desperately need more help, therefore, we will have another attempt at encouraging more parishioners to get involved, perhaps in the form of communal gardening with a social and fun element to any activity. Look out for further information in the Bulletin.

**d. Welcome Group - Rona McAvenna**

All going well and have had many positive reports. There is now a waiting list for the next rota! It is achieving what it set out to achieve.

**e. Altar Servers - Caoline Macdonald**

Lovely feedback received regarding the Altar Servers during Holy Week. We’re aware of a couple of servers looking to hang up their albs and so Caroline and Niamh (altar server) plan to go into St. Patricks after First Holy Communion is complete to recruit some new members (already had interest from three children)

f. **Tea & Toast Group - Sadie Chalmers**

First session last Thursday. We had 5 helpers and 4 attendees but was lovely. Expect numbers to pick up over time.

1. **Re-introduction of Collection**

It has been noted that weekly collections totals are down. This could be due to more people submitting by bank transfer or using the machines. Other parishes have re-introduced collection baskets and so a vote was taken on whether we should do likewise. Agreement was reached and a note will be added to the bulletin. Welcomers/Passkeepers to take up collection.

1. **Mass for the sick - Gail Taylor**

Considering re-introducing a Mass for the sick - we need to consider timing of this to enable transport. Relies on parishioners able to help with transport or we need to think about Community Transport buses. Consider having a box at the back of the church for people to notify us of potential sick/housebound that may be interested. Caroline to also add information to parish list survey. There was discussion on whether we tie this Mass into a specific event e.g. Our Lady’s birthday. Smaller group to discuss, Gail to lead.

1. **AOB and Date of Next Meeting**

* Discussion around whether more bulletins are needed. We have already increased the weekly print run from 180 to 250 and will increase again for Christmas and Easter.
* More volunteers needed to help with online streaming. Fr. Willie advised some students in other parishes get involved as part of the Caritas programme so something to consider. Full training given.

Preliminary Date of Next Meeting: Monday 23rd June, 7pm.

**Closing Prayer - Fr. Willie**

Thanks to all who attended and for another lively discussion. We look forward to seeing you next time and welcome any new members.

**Action Log**

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| **Date** | **Topic** | **Decision** | **Action / By Whom** |
| 25 Jan | Sick and Housebound Outreach | Reach out to local Care Homes regarding visits | Fr. Willie / Gail Taylor  ONGOING |
| 01 May | Mass for the sick | Meet with smaller group to discuss possible dates | Gail Taylor |
| 01 May | Altar Servers | Visit St. Patricks P.S. and see if there is any interest | Caroline Macdonald |
| ~~25 Jan~~ | ~~Structure and Groups~~ | ~~Directory and parish group email addresses.~~ | ~~Fr. Willie / Caroline Macdonald~~ |
| ~~27 Feb~~ | ~~Parish List~~ | ~~Create process for data collection~~ | ~~Caroline Macdonald~~ |
| ~~25 Jan~~ | ~~Structure and Groups~~ | ~~Update on progress (if any) to be given at next meeting~~ | ~~All Group Leaders~~ |
| ~~25 Jan~~ | ~~St. Patricks Primary School~~ | ~~Parish Facebook Page to be extended to school~~ | ~~Carol Smith / Lynsey May~~ |