**ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION**

**11 December 2022**

**MINUTES**

1. **In Memoriam:** Paul Martin, Charles Davies-Cole (deacon)
2. **Notification of any A.O.C.B.**

* Nothing from those in attendance

1. **Apologies for absence**

* Lesley Blackmore, John Beaton, David McLellan, Katherine Jourdan, Gavin McEwan

1. **Approval of Minutes of Annual meeting held on 12 December 2021**

* Correction to spelling: in memoriam 2021 – Ann Learmont
* AOCB had been raised by Maurice for the zoom link be available by browser
* Proposed by Andrew Kerr, seconded by Alan Thomson

1. **Elections to Vestry**:
2. Lay Representative

* David Stevens has agreed to continue in this role

1. Alternate Lay Representative

* David McLellan has agreed to do this in an occasional capacity

1. Constitutive members (x2)
   * John Beaton; proposed by Norma Walker, seconded by Simon Parsons
2. People’s warden:
   * 1 nomination – Lana Woolford (co-opted last 2021). Proposed by Jubin Santra, seconded by Therese Christie

Ex-officio members:

* + Treasurer: Malcolm Macrae is stepping down at the end of December and Alan Johnston has agreed to step into the role.
  + Convenor of property committee is still available

1. **Rector’s Report**

* It is my sense that this congregation has weathered the COVID storm as well as any and I would like to express my sincere thanks for all who helped us maintain our life of prayer and service through these most difficult times. Equally, I want to thank all who have worked so hard to restore as much as possible of our communal and social life as restrictions have eased through the year. I feel deeply grateful for these efforts and I am sure that you will join me in thanking the coffee teams and those who worked so hard to resume our parish lunches in these last few months, all of which has helped to rebuild our ties of community and welcome the many new members who have joined us recently.
* I would also like to thank once more our dedicated and creative musicians and servers who have not only maintained a pattern of inspiring and prayerful liturgy over these difficult months, but have continued to attract new members, try new things and keep us all focussed on what it is that we gather here to do – worship the living God.
* I thank Paul Lugton for his faithful and patient work in providing for our children and young people through these challenging times. And I welcome Aina, our new Administrator, whom we are delighted to welcome into the community in that role.
* I thank the ministry team, and especially Mother Jaime whose ordination to the priesthood this year marked a new phase of her attentive and inspiring ministry among us. In the new year, we will also be welcoming Fr David Todd back among us.
* This year has also seen an impressive commitment to resuming and extending our outward-focussed work, and that’s where I want to focus my thoughts this year. But first, let me give you a quick update on the pressing issue of our heating system. We are currently exploring the possibility of a shorter-term and cheaper solution which would see our current gas system replaced with a new version of the same mechanism. This would buy us a little more time to plan for a sustainable future which takes both electrically powered heating and insulation into account.
* We have begun to support two food initiatives and I am overwhelmed by your generosity in supporting those who are struggling most in these difficult economic times. Our newly founded Nazareth Community is exploring new ways of expressing that intimate link between contemplation and service. We are also beginning some shared work with our friends in the church of the Sacred Heart in the areas of spirituality and of justice and peace.
* It’s always a challenge for a gathered congregation to make strong connections into a locality when very few members live locally, but one of the aspects of our life and our history that attracts newcomers is a deep sense that we are here to serve the needs of those around us. Canon Laurie’s exceptional work in providing educational, medical and spiritual support to the Canongate community remains an inspiration to us all.
* Among the gifts we have to share are: a beautiful building which is a place of stillness in the city which invites the practice of silent prayer; a wide range of networks throughout our city and beyond and an ability to gather people together to address shared concerns; a recognition of the vital role the arts for our human flourishing; a visible commitment to inclusiveness; and an insistence that our human reality is fundamentally communal and not individualistic.
* The Vestry identified six priorities for action emerging from these gifts and from an awareness of the needs around us. They are:

• Making our Liturgy more welcoming: children; literacy (better explanation); neuro-divergency; newcomers

• Engaging with the arts: wider community (therapeutic arts); local galleries; music; Live Music Now (Asylum seekers); Big Noise

• Addressing Mental Health needs: offering space and stillness; needs of local workforce; making space more visible but still peaceful

• Being a gathered community that gathers people together: people who can make changes; mental health; environmental issues

• Community Lunch

• Engaging with our online community

* As a kind of symbol of these things, I would like to offer an image. It is well known to you. Alison Watt’s extraordinary painting in the War Memorial Chapel, Still, speaks powerfully to me of these priorities. It is an image of a stillness that can offer a deep healing. It speaks of a human creativity that transcends merely commercial, material or self-interested concerns. It invites a kind of abiding, a willingness to stay put when things around us are turbulent. You could say that it invites us to be still in the city, to counteract the noise of division and anger with the peace that comes when we are truly present to one another and to the mystery of life. You could say that it invites us to still be in the city, in the place of human interactions and human needs, committed to the long haul and to the patient work of bringing people together for the common good. Old St Paul’s – still in the city.

1. **Report and Accounts of the Vestry**

* Accounts previously circulated; overview by Malcolm MacRae
* Question from Carrie Gooch – the income is down but we have stopped passing the collection plate. Will that be re-instated? Encouraging online regular giving; will be encouraging open plate giving as a retiring collection
* Sheila Brock – is there a plan for a stewardship campaign? Fr John: it is being discussed and hopefully announced in the near future
* Carrie Gooch – with the organ work and heating delayed – what was the big spend? Paul Jourdan – the church wall
* Thanks to Malcom MacRae for all his hard work during his service

1. **Appointment of independent examiner**

* Proposal to continue as we are with Chiene & Tait
* Proposed by Sheila Brock, seconded by Kimberley Moore Ede

1. **Any other competent business**

* One online attendee asked: ‘Why is the White Rose not available on the website?’ Fr John: this is primarily intended as communication for the congregation. This may change in future.