

BALLYMACARRETT PARISH CHURCH

FIFTEENTH ANNUAL EASTER VESTRY

HELD ON TUESDAY, 08 APRIL 2025

PRESENT

Canon Dr Helene Steed
Catherine Bradley
Alex Cooke
Betty Duckett
John Holland
Kevin Holt
Edith Magill
Isobel McKendrick
Lilian Stokes
Philip Vance

Anne Allan
Brian Campbell
June Cooke
Brian Hilton
Pauline Holland
Jennifer Jemphrey
Geoffrey McConnell
Kathleen Rainey
Irene Vance
Roy Vance

OPENING

Canon Dr H Steed opened the meeting with prayer and a Bible reading.

APOLOGIES

Elaine Bickerstaff, Beverley Russell-Browne, Alice Scott

MINUTES OF THE 2023 ANNUAL EASTER VESTRY

The minutes were read by Canon Dr Steed. It was proposed by Alex Cooke, seconded by John Holland and unanimously agreed that they be adopted.

MATTERS ARISING

None

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

The past year has been an unusual year for the church with a permanent commission being called to audit the parish and concluding that the parish was not viable to appoint a new rector. The Bishop visited the parish and guaranteed that the church would not be closed and a traditional service would continue in St Patrick's for as long as it was required. Canon Russell was appointed by the Bishop to look after Church services and pastoral care in the interim.

The Bishop and a panel from the Diocese met with the Select Vestry and the Bishop announced that he envisioned turning Ballymacarrett into a resource church which would bring new life to the parish. This would be achieved in partnership with Holy Trinity Church, Brompton, and the Alpha Course. The Bishop would interview and appoint a new Rector for the church. As yet no one has been appointed.

Members of the team from Holy Trinity Brompton visited Ballymacarrett in 2024 and met with the Select Vestry and the Bishop. It was decided that structural work needed to be carried out on the church building to make it suitable as a new heating system, screens and seating are required. The Bishop appointed a Diocesan Steering Group and requested that the Select Vestry give authority to the committee for managing the property of the parish. The Rectory and Ascot Park were sold and

some of the money will be used to buy a new Rectory. The rest will be retained by the RCB in Dublin but it is hoped that the surplus from the property sales could be released to help refurbish the church building. Work has already begun on the refurbishment of the building with £10,000 from church funds being spent on the roof.

St Patrick's is no longer responsible for the upkeep of St Martin's and does not receive any rental for the building. The upkeep and maintenance of St Martin's has been passed over to The Gathering.

Canon Steed thanked the outgoing and incoming members of the Select Vestry for their service and all the 'unsung heroes' who carry out the work that is needed to keep the doors of the church open. Canon Russell and Rev. McCrea were thanked for taking the Sunday services and Alex Cooke and Brian Hilton also for taking prayers and services. Canon Steed concluded by asking those present to stand for a minutes silence to remember the members of the congregation who had died in the past year.

FINANCE

Copies of the Annual Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2024 were distributed to those present. The Hon Treasurer said they had been audited by Richard McClay of McCreery Turkington Stockman Ltd and approved by the Select Vestry.

The Hon Treasurer reported that the year ended with a balance of £96,765 which includes our Investments. The previous year (2023) ended with a balance of £54,150. The main reason for the increase on last year is due to not having to pay a Rector's salary and also receiving 2 years Gift Aid. FWO was down by nearly £6,000. Special collections were up due to a very generous bequest of £10,800 received in July from the Pelan estate.

Rental income from St Martin's from the Diocese regarding the Gathering will cease this June and all other rental income such as the Salvation Army and Drama Groups will, in future, be recouped by the Gathering. From the beginning of April we will no longer have income from Ascot Park. This property has now been sold for £425,000. The Rectory at 117 Upper Newtownards Road was sold back in December 2024 for £540,000. The proceeds from the sale of these two properties is with the RCB and will be used to purchase a new Rectory for the incoming Incumbent.

Employee costs are well down due to not having a Rector but we still pay the Diocese for Pastoral care and Church services throughout the year.

We are very fortunate we ended the year with £96,765 but I must point out that all work carried out on the Church in recent months has been paid by us, such as repairs to the roof, architects, fees, etc., as already stated by Canon Steed. All work on the Church this year will be paid from our funds. At the end of March 2025 our Bank balance was £45,698.

All records pertaining to Christ Church, St Patrick's, St Christopher's and St Martin's are now lodged with PRONI with the agreement of the RCB. PRONI was delighted to have these as they span over 200 years. Once catalogued by PRONI anyone seeking information on Church records can access the information. To this end and on behalf of the Vestry I wish to thank Catherine Bradley, Lilian Stokes, Kevin Holt and John Holland for helping me with this project.

I would like to finish by expressing my thanks to Gemma Hilton for all her work during the year and for her guidance in the preparation of the Accounts. Gemma asked me to express her thanks to the Vestry for allowing her to continue as bookkeeper for the coming year.

I would also like to thank our counters, Beverley, Betty, Edith, Irene, Cheryl, Kevin and John, who each week faithfully count our envelopes and do the lodgements.

Also, on behalf of the Select Vestry I would like to express our thanks to Canon Steed for her leadership and support. She has been looking after us for over a year now and her input has been invaluable. And, reiterating Canon Steed's comments, I would also like to thank Canon Russell, whose pastoral visits are now becoming the norm. To Alex for continuing to take Tuesday prayers and to Francy McCrea, David Jardine and Brian Hilton, for their continuing support.

And lastly, but by no means least, to our wonderful congregation (although few in number) who week by week support the Church physically as well as financially.

APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS

Canon Dr Steed appointed **Jennifer Jemphrey** as the Rector's Churchwarden and **Kevin Holt** as Rector's Glebewarden.

People's Churchwarden: Roy Vance: proposed by John Holland and seconded by Jennifer Jemphrey.

People's Glebewarden: John Holland, proposed by Kevin Holt and seconded by Anne Allan.

The following were proposed, seconded and unanimously elected to the Select Vestry:-

Anne Allan, Catherine Bradley, Brian Campbell, Alex Cooke, June Cooke, Betty Duckett, Brian Hilton, Pauline Holland, Edith Magill, Geoffrey McConnell, Irene Vance, Philip Vance

Auditor: Anne Allan proposed and Geoffrey McConnell seconded that **Richard McClay of McCreery, Turkington Stockman Ltd.** be reappointed auditor. This was agreed.

Closing:

There being no other business, the meeting was closed with The Grace.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____