



# St. Mark's Church Parochial Church Council

## Minutes of PCC Meeting 13 November 2018



The PCC of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Mark, Bedford Charity Number 1164416.  
All minutes are available on our website [www.stmarkschurch.com](http://www.stmarkschurch.com)

### The meeting began with Compline

### Apologies

Marion Prior, Elizabeth Bean and Linda Parry, John Day, Mike Cooper and Mick Ovenden

**Minutes of the previous** Minutes of 11 September 2018 were agreed.

**Church Leadership Report** Edward gave details of the 6 November Leadership Team meeting.

- Finance - Jim Williams gave a financial report which Ian had prepared. Further details will be covered later in the meeting.
- The replacement of the car park lights is progressing with the new cabling laid, further parts have been ordered and the projected will be completed in the near future.
- Items from Ministers - the on-going situation re Putnoe & the Partnership had been discussed at length. This would covered as a separate item
- St. Marks has seen a small but encouraging growth in the congregation.
- Centre Management – a report to follow, but pleased to note that a new tenant is in the Church flat.
- The stained glass window coverings (by the organ) on the outside of the church are to be cleaned or perhaps replaced sometime in the future.
- Deanery – Sam Cappleman advised that posts at St. Mary's, Transfiguration & All Saints have all been filled with only Renhold being vacant.
- Garden of Remembrance/Churchyards – a report will be given later, but all is going well.
- Woodland Burial – Avril W to give a report later. It continues to be very busy. We are pleased to report that Sam Ware has been appointed as the new Administrator and takes up the role this week. We will be offering her the office next to the Biffa Room and wish her all success in this challenging role. There will be a period of handover and support by Avril, Janet Day re financial matters and Linda who continues to recover from surgery.
- Worship issues – There continue to be problems with the laptop computer and radio mics used in our Sunday services and on other occasions. An approach is to be made to the Treasurer for funds to be made available to purchase new hardware.
- A suggestion was made that when the offering is taken on baptism days, the collection should start from the back of the church – this was warmly received.
- Preschool – report later. We were very pleased with the report from the OFSTED inspection which took place on 4<sup>th</sup> October this year. Pre-school is now rated as Good in all areas, which is a positive step forward from the previous inspection in October 2014. Helen & all the Staff should be rightly proud of this latest report. There are still some areas which need to be addressed but plans are in place to address these. Staff numbers is below where they should be, and temporary staff have been used. However, recruitment is underway. The Leadership team continues to support Helen & all her staff whenever & wherever possible.
- Open house – continues to be well supported. The application for separate charitable status from the church has now been confirmed.
- Ministry with Children, Pastoral Support group, Messy Church to be covered later. It is noted that there are specific challenges coming up for Messy Church where a number of the leaders are approaching “retirement” age in the near future. This could present a serious impact, and all of us need to reflect on the best possible way forward for all concerned.
- Social activities – The Partnership quiz held on Saturday 6 October at St. Marks went well and our thanks go to Mike Cooper & all the helpers on the night.
- The Church Mission held over the weekend of 15/16 September was a great success and brought together many people in a social atmosphere whilst at the same time listening to the life experiences of Adrian & Bridget Plass. We are looking to repeat this in September 2019 with a similar theme and new speakers.
- Archdeacon's visitation – this took place on 8 August and we now have the report and all was well.
- Christmas – all aspects of this are underway. We will be having a dedicated Christingle service for St. Marks and, therefore, any help in preparing the Christingles would be much appreciated.
- Remembrance Sunday – as always this was well attended but made more special as it celebrated

one hundred years of the Armistice of the Great War. Our grateful thanks to Brian Ibberson for laying the commemorative wreath.

- May I take this opportunity to offer my grateful thanks to all the members of the Leadership Team, the Ministers, Wendy the Centre Manager and all the helpers in the continuing success of our church. You are all appreciated more than you can imagine. Thank you - Edward.

### **Putnoe Heights Anglican Methodist Partnership**

Following Edward's report, under Items from Ministers, members discussed at length the very difficult situation regarding the partnership of Anglicans and Methodists at Putnoe Heights Church. The proposal made by the Diocesan Registrar and adopted by this PCC of St Mark's Church that it should be the Anglican participant in the proposed new constitution of Putnoe Heights as an unincorporated charity, represented by Charlie and Sam, had been rejected. The Ministers had been clear that they would not be trustees personally of an unincorporated charity given the personal liabilities involved. The regrettable consequences of this constitutional decision by Putnoe Heights Church were discussed in detail alongside widening disagreement over issues relating to ministry and worship at Putnoe Heights.

Many of the congregation of Putnoe Heights had expressed their view that they wished to return to the model of the Anglican Methodist ecumenical shared church which had been enjoyed in the partnership for many years. However the changes implemented by the Methodist Church had made this impossible since the services had now been separated into Anglican and Methodist services and the Anglican ministers were asked not to attend Methodist Services. The ministers explained how these changes made the important continuity of ministry difficult with significant detriment to pastoral oversight. It was recognized that these changes were important for Methodists who wished to see more Methodist worship, greater lay leadership of services and continuity of ministry provided not by the ministers but rather the congregation.

It was recognized that these tensions in ministry had been evident for many years. The close and integrated model of ecumenism operated when The Reverend Alan Kirk was Methodist Minister in the Partnership and Circuit Superintendent had been gradually eroded, together with the hopes for a wider national unity between the two parent denominations. St Mark's had already felt it necessary to terminate the ecumenical agreement with the Methodist Church.

Since there was already Anglican worship provided at St Mark's it was proposed that the future for ministry at Putnoe Heights would be best served without any Anglican involvement and that the sharing agreement should be terminated immediately. It was agreed that this decision should be passed to the Bishop and the Diocese.

Council members also agreed unanimously to give full authority to the St Mark's Leadership Team in deciding future involvement in any joint church activities. To this effect a formal declaration was drawn up and was unanimously agreed by PCC members.

- The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St Mark's regrets the decision of Putnoe Heights and The Methodist Church to reject the offer regarding membership of the PCC to Putnoe Heights proposed future unincorporated governing body, and recognises the unsatisfactory and difficult position in which the clergy of the parish have subsequently been placed.
- St Mark's Church Council is aware of the deep and growing dissatisfaction concerning ecumenical relations within the congregation at Putnoe Heights over the past two years.
- It is with sadness that St Mark's Church Council concludes that a new sharing agreement is not viable between the Anglican and Methodist Church within the parish.
- The Church Council gives full authority and support to the Leadership Team in deciding the specific aspects of our ongoing relationship with Putnoe Heights Church and the termination of the sharing agreement between the Anglican and Methodist Church at Putnoe Heights.

### **Centre Management**

Wendy gave further details on the car park lighting, which is in the process of being replaced by LED units on light poles. It was anticipated that the improved lighting would be installed before Christmas.

A new yoga group had started on Friday evenings in the Wren Room and total bookings are extremely good. Redecoration of the Vestry and Office will take place over the Christmas closure period. It is planned to close the office on Monday 24 December and re-open on Monday 7 January. Wendy thanked all the volunteers for their ongoing support. Best wishes were recorded to Linda who, in addition to handling all of the administration of The St Albans Woodland, also volunteered in the office. The administration of The St Albans Woodland Trust would operate from the office above the Wren Room.

## **Finance Report and Gift Aid**

Ian presented details of the Church finances for the year to date. All areas were in line with budget. Payment of the quarter four Diocesan Quota had been made. In regard to maintenance of the premises, the car park lighting was the last priority area at present. Income from the Craft Fayre would help fund the costs involved. Upgrading the children's play area and replacement of some items in the church audio visual unit would be reviewed. The Izettle card payment system had been ordered and would be used primarily for large payments to the church, such as Garden of Remembrance invoices and rental payments.

Preschool income is showing a small surplus currently, but income and expenditure will continue to be closely monitored. The latest Gift Aid credit had been received (£3392.07).

Thanks were again recorded to Ian for all the work in keeping the church finances in such good order.

## **Preschool**

Helen updated members on the recent Ofsted visit, which had gone extremely well. Staff had handled the inspection brilliantly and the children were excellent, with the result that the inspector had given a Good rating.

Numbers were growing again with 70 children on the books and new children due to join. Wendy Waters asked if there were specific reasons for the increase in numbers, which was due to an increase in two year old children joining and, also the recent Ofsted review had probably played a part. It was planned to send a note to parents regarding the Ofsted inspection. A student from Bedford College had joined the staff and also a volunteer member. Further interviews were planned.

Helen and Sue had recently attended Talk for All training, which covered a six week period. This was aimed at children with speech problems. This was particularly relevant with an increase in two year olds attending Preschool and, also, as there is currently only one speech therapist covering our area. Also, some of the children do not have English as their first language. However, we have the added benefit of our student being Polish. Two staff had also attended first aid training in respect to young children.

Helen reported that currently one child was under child protection attendance. This gave clear awareness of our full responsibility for safeguarding issues as trustees and that safeguarding will be a continuing part of the PCC agenda.

The will perform a play for parents and carers in the church on 14 December.

Members thanked Helen and the team on behalf of the whole Church for their commitment and dedication in supporting and guiding the children in their care.

## **Openhouse**

All running well. Members were planning a Children in Need event. The Charity Commissioners had now formally approved charitable status for Open House, which was good news, and would help secure the ongoing future of the group. Trustees were Laura Farthing, Jenny Cappleman, Morag Stewart, Lynne Seymour and Richard Ledger.

## **Story Box**

Numbers were up. Valerie Capon was organising the mornings while Jaana was recovering, and Janet Ibberson and Margaret Appleton were helping Valerie each week. Best wishes were sent to Jaana from everyone.

## **Chat and Play**

Numbers really good and many children stay on for Storybox. Thanks were recorded to Janine and her mum, for all the hard work in making the sessions so successful.

## **Junior Church**

Linda spoke to members about how well the children got on and, although they were all age groups, the older children were happy to help the younger ones. Special plans were in hand for the Harvest service. Thanks were once again recorded to Linda Turner for organising the children so enthusiastically.

## **Messy Church**

All running well but additional / new organisers were needed to continue the successes that have been achieved. Richard had advised that he would retire at the end of the summer term 2019. Wendy, Richard and all the volunteers were again thanked for organising and running the sessions so well.

## **Pastoral Support**

All is running well but concerns were raised regarding joint activities such as Telecare and Bereavement Support as a result of dissolving the sharing agreement. This would be considered by the Leadership Team, as there was no reason why parishioners should not be supported through these valued groups. It

was important that no one was overlooked.

The Commemoration Service had been well supported with 60 people attending. Thanks were recorded to Jenny Cappleman for leading the service so well.

An afternoon tea is to be arranged by Wendy on 18 May 2019.

### **Garden of Remembrance/Churchyards**

All running well. There had been four interments since the summer and one kerb stone had been purchased. Thanks to Jean and Malcolm who continue to do an excellent job in maintaining the garden and to Mick Ovenden for his work and support during the interments.

### **Woodland**

There have been 2 ashes interments and 7 burials since Linda has been convalescing, which clearly highlights the level of organisational work which goes into running the Woodland so efficiently. As reported earlier, Sam Ware has taken up the role of administrator and will continue the outstanding work Linda and Edward have carried out so well.

### **Mission Matters**

The mission weekend with Adrian and Bridget Plass had gone really well. The Leadership Team had agreed to run a similar event in 2019 and Sam would contact Ian and Gail Adams as speakers and fix a suitable date. The plan would be to have a BBQ on Saturday and Sunday lunch.

It was planned to consider a mission fundraiser near to Christmas this year, potentially for Emmaus.

### **Deanery Matters**

All working well. The Deanery had celebrated the completion of 30 years by Hanna Potter handling Deanery Finance and Charlie and Sam completing 30 years and 20 years respectively as priests.

### **Dates of next meetings**

Leadership Team 12 February 2019

PCC Meeting Tuesday 5 March 2019

Annual Parochial Congregational Meeting 28 April 2019

2019 PCC meeting dates to be advised.

With no further business the meeting closed with The Grace.