



St. Mark's Church Parochial Church Council

Minutes of PCC Meeting 27 February 2020



The PCC of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Mark, Bedford Charity Number 1164416.
All minutes are available on our website www.stmarkschurch.com

The meeting began with Compline

Apologies

Elizabeth Bean, Mick Ovenden, Mike Warren, Sam Cappleman, John Day, Avril Williams

Minutes of the previous meeting Minutes of 28 November were agreed with one amendment, apologies from Lynne Seymour had not been minuted.

Church Leadership Report

Mike Cooper gave details of the 11 February Leadership Team meeting. Details of a number of the areas such as Finance, Centre Management and Deanery will be reported separately at this meeting.

- We regularly discuss any worship issues; there was great appreciation for the new lectern falls, which Jean Kirk has made.
- As always, we mentioned the various church groups. We spent some considerable time talking about Children's Groups; the most significant issue was related to the future of Messy Church, which has been running for ten years. Wendy Waters will speak about this later.
- Safeguarding. Janet and I have met to discuss various matters to do with safeguarding, including the forthcoming need to refresh training. Janet, as Safeguarding Officer, will follow up on this with each individual.
- Lent and Easter. Parish News has flagged up the Lent Course evenings as well as our services on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Day; we discussed arrangements for these.
- The uniformed organisations have been invited to our Mothering Sunday service. Marion Prior would like to hear from anyone who has Grape Hyacinths, to be used in the flower posies.
- The APCM will be on 19th April and the next Leadership Team meeting will be on 30th April.

Centre Management

- In regard to the premises, the lift in the Wrenn Building has had its annual service.
- The church, vestry and kitchen have been decorated and the foyer and halls will follow. Also, the hall floors will be cleaned and resealed.
- An automatic timed lock system has been fitted to the Chapel outside door. This will improve security and stop the need for volunteers to open and close. There is a manual over ride should someone become locked in.
- The altar frontals have been relocated to a cupboard in the Chapel. This gives much easier access for the frontals and has created addition shelf space in the original location.
- Thanks were recorded to the volunteers who worked on sorting the loft area, pathways around the premises and steam cleaning the church chairs.
- Bookings are all running well with few vacant slots during the week. Two new volunteers have joined the office team.
- It was with great sadness to all that Milly Rollinson had passed away. She had been a hard working volunteer for many years and dedicated member of the church.

Finance

Ian presented details of the Church finances for the 5 month to the end of January. Although the main account was showing a deficit of £7 411.00, this was due to the advance payment of Q1 Parish Share. We remain one of a few churches in the Deanery to pay our Parish Share on time and this had been acknowledged by the Rural Dean. With this in mind, income and expenditure in line with the budget. There is an ongoing query regarding the church gas bill but it is expected that this will be resolved soon. We are compliant with our stated reserves policy.

A breakdown of the income at our Christmas services showed an increase of 16.8% over 2018. The Pre-school account was showing a deficit of £5,200 over the 5 months period. However, numbers had now increased and recruitment of an additional staff member was in progress. No major concerns in this area.

The Churchyards account was showing a surplus of £837.00, and this was after the expenses incurred in opening the new area, Willow. Additional donations had been received to support this project. Work is ongoing in resolving two payments.

The next Gift Aid claim will be submitted following the February month end.

Ian was thanked for his continued hard work in keeping the church finances in order.

Pre-school

With the closure of the Pre-school at Putnoe, numbers have risen. A staff recruitment plan is in place to meet the additional demand. Currently, Helen and Sue involved in sessions to ensure the correct staff to children ratios. There have been some behavior difficulties with one or two of the older children.

Storybox

Numbers have risen, with 17 attending a recent session. All best wishes were sent to Jaana, who is still in hospital. Valerie is continuing to arrange the sessions helped by volunteers, and Jaana's son Esa clears the table and chairs.

Chat and Play

All going well. Numbers are high. Thanks were recorded to Janine and her Mum for all their hard work in running the group so successfully.

Junior Church

All is running very well. Since the last meeting, Linda Turner has said she will be standing down as leader. Janine has agreed to take up the role and Linda will support her during the following Sundays. Thanks were recorded to Linda for all the time spent organising Junior Church over the past 4 years and to Janine for taking up the position from April.

Messy Church

Wendy Waters advised members that Messy Church would pause at Easter. Since advising members, previously, that she would stand down later in the year, it had not been possible to find a successor. Following long discussion also at the last Leadership meeting, the decision to pause from Easter was fully supported. Families will be advised of the decision at March Messy Church and emailed details of sessions held at Christ Church and St Andrew's Church.

All the team, past and present, were thanked for the support given over the past 98 sessions.

Pastoral Support

Members of the team, Wendy Waters, Jean Bank, Sally Gunning, Richard Ledger and Mike Warren will meet on 10 March to put in place the processes to follow the guidelines laid down by the Church of England National Safeguarding Team.

As reported at the last PCC meeting, this will include completion of a confidentiality declaration. In the majority of cases contact will only be by telephone. If visits to new people are made, two members of the Pastoral Team will attend. No gifts of any kind to be accepted. Record keeping is to be maintained. Cards will be left if there is no reply to the visit made. Telecare continues to run very well and is appreciated by all those who are contacted.

The Bereavement Support Group morning coffee and chat group, held on the first Wednesday of the month in the Chapel, continues. Wendy had recently attended a domestic abuse training course. Members recorded their thanks once again to the Pastoral team for the valuable work they undertake.

Garden of Remembrance

All is running well. The new area, Willow, is proving very popular. There have been 7 interments and 3 reservations since this area was opened. Five more interments have taken place in the other areas and four further interments are booked for March. Mick Ovenden is back preparing the plots and Sam Ware's son, George, will help in future.

Alan Kirk is officiating at a number of the interments, which had been an excellent support.

Charlie had been in correspondence with two families to restate our policy on memorial tributes in the garden.

Safeguarding

Janet Day advised that we are up to date and compliant with all our Safeguarding policies and that a constant watch is kept for any updates or revisions advised through the Diocese. She had spent time with Mike Cooper running through current DBS certification and members would be advised individually when their DBS certification needed to be renewed. There are instances when DBS certification can cover various roles. There is a £13 fee for this "portable" certification, and it is not relevant to most PCC members.

Janet was thanked for all the work she carries out in this most important area of our church activities.

Mission Matters

Charlie restated the fantastic result of the Just Us project and how the monies donated will have such a dramatic impact on those homeless people the charity supports. This was our largest ever fund raising with £4,555 donated.

Our Mission weekend this year will take place on Harvest weekend, 17 and 18 October. Bishop Alan has kindly agreed to attend.

Deanery Matters

Tim Wilkes reported that a presentation on Modern Day Slavery had been given at the last Deanery Synod meeting. This was a difficult but very important session for members. The helpline number for anyone to contact is 08000 121700.

Discussions continue on how best to support the large housing development taking place in the south of the Deanery.

Dates of next meetings

Church Council Meeting: 14 May 2020 and 15 October 2020

Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting: 19 April 2020

With no further business the meeting closed with The Grace.