



St. Mark's Church Parochial Church Council

Minutes of PCC Meeting 9 June 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 a reading from Revelation

Over 30 people attended the online meeting

Apologies

No apologies received

Minutes of the previous meeting Minutes of 27 February were agreed.

Worship Issues

Charlie reported that the open air Communion Services on 7 June, held under strict distancing and hygiene regulations, was greatly appreciated by the 30 people attending. 60 people have so far booked in to attend Communion on 15 June.

Church Leadership Report

Report from Mike Cooper. Before the "Lockdown" began on 23rd March, we were all aware of the spread of Covid19 and in the run up to that date, things had already begun to change at St. Mark's: hand sanitisers, disposable gloves for serving coffee, communion in one kind, deep cleaning. However I doubt if any of us were aware of the extent to which our lives would change in the way they have.

It comes as no surprise that our whole church community has rallied round, offering support in so many ways: helping someone with their shopping maybe, running errands or keeping in touch through Telecare or just a quick call to check if all is well; the list goes on.

Whilst we cannot meet in church together physically, we are still able to come together every Wednesday via Zoom for a short service of morning worship, Parish News still appears weekly, and you can catch up on Facebook too, there are meditations on YouTube and via email. From 7th June, with the easing of lockdown, we are able to celebrate Holy Communion in the Garden of Remembrance in groups of six.

Huge thanks to Charlie and Sam especially for leading St. Mark's in worship and pastoral care in these difficult times, and also to the pastoral support team and so many others who contribute to our church and community. Thank you as well to Mike and Janet Warren for guiding our prayers each week. I would also like to extend congratulations to Sam on his appointment as Area Dean for Bedford.

The Leadership Team has met regularly during lockdown via Zoom and we have considered the many ways in which Covid19 is affecting the life of the church and how we can mitigate its impact on worship, our finances, pre-school and what a post-lockdown church might be like. I am aware just how hard Ian Farthing and Jim Williams have worked, alongside Charlie and Sam to manage our finances, when we have lost all our income from hiring's, and also with Helen and Sue in Pre-school in order to allow the safe return of a small number of children as of 8th June.

Normally, by now, we would have held our APCM, but clearly this has not been able to happen; the earliest I can imagine this taking place would be in October. It's also worth mentioning that the annual "inspection" will not take place.

Hopefully our next PCC meeting will be in the chapel!!!

Centre Management

Premises

Since lockdown the following areas have been decorated:- both Halls including, stripping, washing and re-sealing the floors. Foyer, Chapel, Church Office, Toilets, Wren & Biffa room including entrance hall and stairs.

This now means the whole church has been decorated since Christmas.

Wendy recorded thanks to Mike Cooper who has cleaned the church and Vestry carpets during this period.

The gutters have been cleaned. The outside doors of the Church, Chapel & the extension building have been re

varnished. Over the next few weeks Dave & Janet will be cleaning/ decorating the flat and painting the spiral staircase up to the flat.

Bookings

Obviously, due to COVID19 we have had no groups in since we closed on Friday 20th March.

Wendy has made contact with all the groups during the shutdown, and reported that they have all confirmed they will be returning as and when lockdown allows them to.

Finance

Ian gave details of the Church finances for 8 months of the financial year, ending 31 May. Balances were as follows:

Main Account Income £123 169.89 Expenditure £124 687.23 Deficit of £1 517.34

Pre School Income £151 453.48 Expenditure £146 867.79 Surplus of £4 585.69

G.O.R Income £ 16 872.61 Expenditure £ 14 900.28 Surplus of £1 972.33

Although the Main Account was showing a deficit, the Diocesan Fees for Qtr 2 had been paid. We were currently maintaining our Reserves target, but the present restrictions affecting hire income will impact the finances.

Because groups pay in arrears, we have continued to receive income to date. However, June will see a complete change.

Regarding Pre School, 16 staff had been furloughed under the government programme. Our claim would be for the difference between Local Authority support and loss of parental fees. It had been agreed that St Mark's would make up the difference in payments between the government support and the full salaries of staff. Following the limited reopening 8 June, 13 staff were now furloughed. Ian reported that he had also applied for a Business Support grant through the Local Authority.

Ian had attended an online meeting of Treasurers in the Deanery. The Diocese were very supportive and fully aware of the difficulties churches were currently having.

Looking forward, an analysis had been made of all the groups hiring the premises and anticipating when they might return. Regarding offerings, 14 additional people had taken out Standing Orders to continue to be able to make their gifts. Also, Charlie had successfully created a Just Giving account – which had already been used. Gift Aid claims would be made quarterly to assist cash flow.

Ian was asked what our Year End outlook might be. As a worst case, we could have a £12/13 thousand deficit, which our reserves would cover. However, grant applications and the continued support of our congregation will reduce this.

Pre-school

Helen advised members of the arrangement that had been put in place since closing on 23 March. Week commencing 30 March Pre School reopened for key worker and vulnerable children. 5 children are attending with Helen and Sue staffing, for three days per week. Week commencing 8 June children from the Top Marks age group able to return. Seven parents agreed for their children to return and a second pod was set up, with two staff being brought back from furlough. A detailed Risk Assessment had been drawn up for everyone to follow and this was being regularly updated. Helen advised that it was impossible to operate social distancing with children of this age. The additional hourly cleaning had added to the difficulties, resulting in stress levels rising. Parents have all adhered to the social distancing measures when dropping children off. Two staff have agreed to be on standby to cover if there should be illness.

The current arrangements will continue through to 17 July and be reassessed during the summer break. However, if for any reason, the circumstances become difficult, it has been agreed that Pre-school will stop immediately.

Members were so grateful for the excellent response Helen, Sue and all the staff have shown at such a difficult and stressful time.

Storybox

Chat and Play

Junior Church

Pastoral Support

Wendy Waters gave an update to members. We were very fortunate to already have the Telecare team in place before the lockdown started. Jean Bank, Sally Gunning, Val Capon and Wendy were now making weekly calls to people. The regular contact was welcomed by all those contacted and people were managing to keep positive in

spite of the current difficulties. Three concerns had been referred to Charlie. Other members of the congregation were keeping in touch with people, and this was greatly appreciated by the Pastoral Support Team. Bereavement calls were being carried and team members had been advised how extra support could be given. Looking forward, the Commemoration Service in November will take on an extra dimension and consideration will be made on how best to put this service together. Members recorded their thanks to Wendy and the team for the very important work that they do in supporting people, particularly during the past months.

Garden of Remembrance

No interments have taken place since 23 March. Jean and Malcolm asked to come back to maintain the garden. By maintaining social distancing and other measures, for example the use of separate toilets, this has now been introduced. It is planned to contact all funeral directors regarding the reintroduction of interments. A draft letter will be circulated to the Leadership Team.

Safeguarding

All current measures continue. No issues had occurred since the 23 March closure.

Mission Matters

It was currently planned that our Mission weekend would still go ahead on 17 and 18 October. Bishop Alan has kindly agreed to attend. However, this would be kept under review and be dependent on the situation nearer the date. The caterers had been advised of the situation.

Deanery Matters

Charlie expressed his thanks and congratulations to Sam on his appointment as Area Dean. Members showed their appreciation too for all that Sam does to support St Mark's and the Deanery.

Sam advised that Jim Reveley from St Andrew's will be taking up a new position at Ely Cathedral. Nicola McIntosh will be standing down as Chaplain at Bedford Hospital in July.

A.O.B

The Chapel will be permitted to open for private prayer from 15 June. It was suggested that copies of Morning Worship, Midday Worship and Compline could be made available for visitors, and also display web links so that visitors can download daily prayers. Essential that seating is adjusted to meet social distancing rules.

Visitors to the Garden of Remembrance will be given directions to the other entrance if visiting while the open air communions were taking place – to ensure social distancing is maintained.

The Sunday Communion rota will be circulated to members of the Leadership Team so that a welcome timetable can be set up.

Dates of next meetings

Church Council Meeting: planned for 15 October 2020, to be confirmed

Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting: TBA

With no further business the meeting closed with The Grace.