



St. Mark's Church Parochial Church Council

Minutes of PCC Meeting 5 March 2019



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

Margaret Appleton, Janet Day, Vince Holloway, Marion Prior, Mick Ovenden, Wendy Rider, Wendy Waters

Minutes of the previous Minutes of 13 November were agreed., subject to an amendment that in Storybox Valerie had been helped by Margaret Forecast

Church Leadership Report Edward gave details of the 12 February Leadership Team meeting.

- **Finance** – Ian Farthing delivered a detailed report as to the position of the Church, Pre-School & Churchyard accounts. The replacement of the car park lighting had been completed with the area now being well lit. Other specific items covered include a new card payment machine & Treasurer's computer.
- **Items from Ministers** – the situation concerning Putnoe & the Partnership was discussed further at length, and the matter had now come to a conclusion. A review meeting had taken place, which included all involved, plus the Bishop and the Chairman of the District. Following the Leadership Team meeting, a statement was drawn up to act as a record of the circumstances surrounding the conclusion of the Partnership (see appendix). It had been noted that a number of people from the Partnership had settled at St. Mark's.
- **Centre Management** – report to follow, but pleased to note that a small number of new regular bookings have taken place. 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** – In Sam Cappleman's absence from the meeting Charlie confirmed that a number of Vicars have been recently inducted. We are very pleased to note that Sam has been appointed to the post of Chaplain to the Bishop of Bedford. We wish him well in this new post and we are confident he will bring his own unique style to this phase of his ministry.
- **Garden of Remembrance/Churchyards** – a report will be given later but basically all is going well. A decision was taken to proceed with the establishment of a water feature between the two new columbaria, near the flower tower. This will greatly enhance the look of the Garden and will no doubt increase its popularity. It was also agreed that we would offer the opportunity for people to make donations towards this feature.
- **Woodland Burial** – The Woodland continues to be very busy with 15 burials & 3 interments in the first two months of 2019. We are pleased to report that Sam Ware has settled in very well to the challenging role as the new Administrator. She has established an office next to the Biffa Room which provides a welcoming environment in which to discuss matters with family members at a difficult time. There continues to be an on-going period of handover and support to Sam from all the Trustees and in particular from Janet Day re financial matters and Linda Parry re administration.
- **Worship issues** – There were a number of topics discussed under this heading
 - Service timing** – should we change this to a different time? It was considered that we should continue as we are.
 - Welcoming** – discussed at length and we must ensure that "new" people should be made to feel most welcome at all times and engaged in conversation at the appropriate time.
 - Intercessions** – guidance from the Ministers can be given as to content & timing. Uniformed organisations to be encouraged to attend in greater numbers at the appropriate services.
 - Junior church** – going well and we should encourage Linda & the Children to come into church towards the end of the service to show what they have been doing and achieved.
 - Coffee** - After service coffee & biscuits – continues to be popular and gives everyone an opportunity to talk/discuss matters.
 - Offering** - The suggestion that was made that when the offering is taken on baptism days, the collection should start from the back of the church – this appears to be working well so far.
- **Mothering Sunday** – Marion Prior/Flower Group to be approached re daffodils for this service (EP confirmed OK & in hand)
- **Preschool** – report later by those involved. There was a staffing & safeguarding issue that came

about but has been successfully resolved by everyone involved following the laid down procedures. Further management support/resource is to be put into place which has also being recognized by OFSTED as the correct way forward. The Leadership team continues to support Helen & all her staff whenever & wherever possible.

- **Open House** – continues to be well supported. A safeguarding incident had been reported and is being dealt with accordingly. Donations have been received for this new charity which has helped secure staffing costs for two years.
- **Messy Church**. 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 was discussed at some length but we could not come to any firm proposals. However, we continue to reflect & consider what the best way forward is for the future for this activity.
- **Storybox** – Numbers attending continue to fluctuate but the team of volunteers were always supportive & appreciated.
- **Diocesan Resources** – the Diocese has asked for the resources stored in the cupboards in the Chapel to be distributed to schools & worthy organisations. This will free some storage space for groups who use the church premises.
- **Mission Weekend** – We are looking at putting on a similar event in September this year as took place in the same month last year. To this end different guest speakers have contacted and confirmed as Phil & Di Stone (from the Scargill organization) and the same caterers from last year have already been booked.
- **Social activities** – We intend to hold a quiz in October and Mike Cooper has kindly agreed to head this up.
- **Easter** – Lent course arranged = details in Parish News. Stations of the Cross – EP to organize the readers. Holy week – Services both morning & evening arranged. Ian F arranging the supply of the Mother’s Day cake. Margaret Appleton has agreed to organize the supply of hot cross buns for the Easter service.

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 very much appreciated for all your support. Thank you.

Centre Management

In a written report, Wendy confirmed the completion of the car park lighting and that many comments had been received on how much better it was. Decoration of the office had been deferred, and a revised date will be arranged. The lift in the Wren / Biffa building and the automatic doors have both been serviced. The wooden fencing around the church premises has been scheduled to be repainted. Bookings are going well. Although a monthly yoga group has had to cancel, a new art group has made a weekly booking. In addition, a group who previously met two weekly have now made a weekly booking. The new card payment system is fully up and running. I am happy to say that Linda is now back as part of the volunteer team. My thanks go to all the volunteers for their continued commitment and support.

Finance

Ian presented details of the Church finances for the year to the end of January. All areas were in line with budget. Quarter 1 Parish Share payment has been made in full. Final share from Putnoe is due this month. Currently compliant with our reserves policy. Card payment system and lighting project now completed and a laptop, for Church finances has been purchased. Preschool numbers have been increasing which has led to an improved surplus on the Preschool account. However, income and expenditure continue to be closely monitored. Registration with the government tax free childcare scheme has been completed. From the new tax year in April, the work place pension contributions will increase further. The relevant employees have been advised. A project to raise funds for the extension to the Garden of Remembrance has been launched. Monies raised will fund the new fountain, seating, pergola and planting. Further payments have been received against the outstanding debt and this will continue to be monitored.

Preschool

Helen gave details of the current numbers on the roll: 40, 2 year olds, 19, 3 year olds and 17, 4 year olds. One child is currently under child protection monitoring. Pupil Premium support is in place for 9 children. There are currently 15 staff members, but advertising is under way to replace one member who is leaving. Some parents have requested partial care, with the balance of time at the Nursery at Scott Primary. This does cause disruption for the children and is an added responsibility for the staff to deal with. Staff appraisals have been carried out for all members of the team, and training is place to support additional responsibilities as required. Helen thanked volunteers who had helped serve lunches to the

children of the past few weeks.

Thanks were recorded by council members to Helen and the team for their commitment in caring for and guiding the children in their care.

Open House

Morag advised members that the trustees had met on two occasions. At the second meeting the volunteers had also joined for an informal chat. All was running well. Since charitable status had been accepted, one grant had already been received, and it was hoped that more would follow as a result of the grant applications which have been made. This would enable the group to run independently from a financial point of view. The trustees were thanked for the work in supporting Open House.

Storybox

Numbers were averaging 18 to 20 per week. Children, mums and carer's enjoy the sessions and sharing time together. Lunches are served by the team of volunteers. Thanks to Jaana and Valerie Capon for continuing to arrange the group.

Chat and Play

Numbers continue at a high level with everyone participating in the sessions organized so well by Janine and her Mum. Many stay on for Storybox.

Junior Church

All going well. The children are always keen to participate in the activities. Thanks were recorded to Linda for all the time spent in preparing and running the Junior Church.

Messy Church

Numbers averaged 35 to 40. All is running well but, as reported at the last PCC meeting, new organisers were needed from the summer break.

Pastoral Support

It was reported that all was continuing to run well and that no changes had been made following the end of the sharing agreement. A new phone had also been purchased.

Garden of Remembrance

Again, all running well. There had been 3 interments since the start of the year with a further 3 planned in the coming month. The project to raise funds for the new area of the garden had been launched, and a number of donations had already been made.

Woodland

There have been a number of interments since the start of the year and the number of enquiries are continuing at a high level. Sam has settled in very well and Linda and Edward continue to support her each week during the transition.

Safeguarding

Members discussed and adopted the Domestic Abuse Policy, issued to all churches. Discussion continued on the responsibilities of all trustees to ensure that our church is a safe environment for all who visit. On line training is available for new members and DBS checks continue to be updated and maintained through the church Safeguarding Trustee, Janet Day. Contact details for anyone needing to report any form of safeguarding issue is displayed on the noticeboard.

Deanery Matters

At the last meeting there had been a presentation from the police. This had been very interesting and recognised the part which the church can play in building strong communities. As part of the presentation, an open invitation was made for any PCC member to spend a shift with a police officer, to help understand all of the areas in which the police respond.

Renhold was the only church in the Deanery currently without a minister, which was a great achievement.

Dates of next meetings

To be set as part of the Annual Congregational Meeting on 28 April 2019.

With no further business the meeting closed with The Grace.

Suggested Dates of next meetings

Leadership Team 16 May at Farthingss

PCC Meetings 22 May, 26 September, 21 November

Annual Parochial Congregational Meeting 19 April 2019

With no further business the meeting closed with The Grace.

Appendix

Statement to Bedford Deanery regarding Putnoe Heights

Many of you will already be aware of the changed situation regarding the ecumenical relationship between St Mark's Church and Putnoe Heights. The note below gives some of the background to these changes and outlines how the churches will worship and operate moving forward, especially with regard to Anglican involvement in worship at Putnoe Heights, which I would ask you to note.

St Mark's and Putnoe Heights have each operated as Anglican / Methodist ecumenical churches for many decades during which time the churches enjoyed joint common liturgies and worship as authorised by the Sponsoring Body. Over the past few years the Methodist Circuit has considered it important to implement changes to ministry and worship in order to differentiate the Methodist tradition from their Anglican partners. This was a very different model of ecumenism to that which has existed in the past. In response to the changes and model of partnership St Mark's Church decided three years ago that it wished to withdraw from the ecumenical agreement and has since then been operating separately as an Anglican Parish Church.

At Putnoe Heights, for the past two years there has remained an ecumenical partnership, however the denominational segregation insisted upon by our Methodist partners became increasingly unwelcome for the majority of the congregation. The Anglican clergy were asked to be absent from church services fortnightly to enable separate Methodist worship, and lay led worship to take place. Constitutional changes were also put in place in which the Anglican clergy had stated they would be unable to participate. As a consequence of the changes, the PCC of St Mark's Church agreed unanimously that there was no alternative but to formally withdraw the Anglican Church from the partnership and sharing agreement at Putnoe Heights.

Putnoe Heights Church is within the parish of St Mark and it has been agreed with the Chair of the Methodist District and the Bishop of Bedford that no Anglican involvement should take place at Putnoe Heights whilst it establishes itself as a solely Methodist place of worship. After an initial period of a year an invitation may be made for Anglican involvement in a service, however this may only take place with the agreement of the incumbent and PCC of St Mark's Church.

We continue to pray for all of those who have felt a sense of loss following these changes, especially members of Putnoe Heights Church. We continue to offer to them ongoing pastoral support and many have decided to worship at St Mark's. We recognise and share the feelings of sadness and loss of those who have been affected by the changes and the drawing to a close of a partnership which has existed for over forty years. We now look to the future and the flourishing and growth of both churches and congregations in their respective worship, mission and ministries.