

# Mark's Church Parochial Church Council

## Minutes of PCC Meeting 28 November 2019

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

Elizabeth Bean, Mick Ovenden, Marion Prior, Edward and Linda Parry, Margaret Appleton, John and Janet Day, Aleta Swaby – Kelly, Avril Williams

**Minutes of the previous meeting** Minutes of 26 September were agreed with one amendment under Pastoral Support. There had been 23 referrals to the team since November 2018.

#### Church Leadership Report

Mike Cooper gave details of the 4 November Leadership Team meeting.

- Sam suggested that we could ask Jean Kirk to make some falls for the lecterns. This was very well received and thanks were expressed to Jean.
- It was agreed that supporting the charity Justus provided an opportunity for St Mark's to make a positive difference to homelessness this Christmas.
- The visitation had gone well.
- Thanks to Morag for organising an excellent social evening.
- Thanks to Avril for all the organisation of the Christmas Fayre.
- Young people will do the prayers for the Gift Service.
- Christmas arrangements. Some early discussion.
- Arrangements were in hand for an Advent Course on 19 December. Bishop Richard had kindly agreed to speak.
- The Christmas tree would be ordered from Pell's this year.
- Readers and leadership for the Christmas services is in hand.

#### Centre Management

The timber fencing around the church premises and children's play area has all been repainted. Concrete bollards have been installed in front of the car park lamp posts to protect them. Work had been carried out to improve the soft play area in the children's playground. Plans are in hand to repair areas of block paving. Three protective covers on the stained glass windows have been replaced. Much of this work had been carried out by volunteers for which we were very grateful. Hiring charges will be increased by 50p per hour from January to reflect increased costs. All groups had been advised in September. Bookings are going very well with very few available slots.

A new volunteer, Diana Johnson, has joined the office team. It is planned to close the office over the Christmas period, from Christmas Eve through to 6 January. Wendy recorded her thanks to all the volunteers for their commitment and support.

#### Finance

Ian presented details of the Church finances for the first two months of the financial year. Although the main account was showing a deficit of £5 333, this was due to the on time payment of Q4 Anglican Ministry costs (Parish Share). The situation arises with our financial year running from Sep – Aug and the church year being Jan – Dec. We were one of only three churches in the Deanery to have fully paid our Parish Share by the end of October.

A breakdown of the Mission weekend costs was included. Plans had been put in place to ensure adequate supplies were available during the post-election period. Ian then reviewed the income and expense budgets for the first two months of the financial year. All areas were in line, and each account is compliant with our reserves policy. In regard to the Preschool Account, all was running well and close monitors are being maintained on costs. Members were advised that a settlement had been reached in respect to an ongoing staff issue. This had included a

non-disclosure agreement and, therefore, no details can be given for the minutes.

Ian confirmed that all aspects of the re-declaration on Workplace Pensions had been completed successfully. Staff cover for maternity leave would be in place from January.

The Churchyards Account is showing a small deficit of £1343.84, due to costs incurred in developing the new section of garden. Over £3 200 had been made in donations to the new area, with an additional £465 received in Gift Aid. Total Gift Aid payments received for the first half of the year were £6 182.

### **Preschool**

Sue Jones was welcomed to the meeting and updated members on Preschool activities. There are now 50 children on the roll with 40 attending each session. As reported under Centre Management, a section of the soft play area had been repaired. This formed part of regular risk assessments carried out by staff. A new member of staff had been employed, Sheila Franklin, and all was running very smoothly. An updated staff handbook was now in place. The staff and children continue to raise funds for other causes and Sue gave the following examples: £260 for McMillan, £311 raised on a toddle waddle, £24 for Children in Need and £211 at the Church Craft Fayre. Sue was asked to convey thanks to all the Preschool team for the important work that they do.

### **Storybox**

Although numbers had fallen, the sessions were enjoyed by those attending. Jaana and Valerie were thanked for their continued work in organising the group.

### **Chat and Play**

All going well. Numbers attending were now 30 plus. All the mums are involved, including doing the readings. Thanks were recorded to Janine and her Mum for all their hard work in running the group so successfully.

### **Junior Church**

All is going very well. The children continue to enjoy the activities and studies arranged by Linda Turner. Linda was thanked once again for all the time spent in preparing and running the Junior Church.

### **Messy Church**

The Leadership Team had agreed that no photography will take place during Messy Church, in order to comply with Church Policy on the Safe Use of Images.

Numbers have fallen a little over the past couple of sessions. It was not clear why this was happening, possibly some children moving up a school year. All is running well. Wendy thanked all volunteers for their help and new volunteers were always welcome.

### **Pastoral Support**

The Commemoration Service on 3 Nov had been well attend and thanks were recorded to Richard Ledger, who spoke at the service.

Telecare continues to run very well and is appreciated by all those who are contacted. The Pastoral Visiting policy has been updated, reflecting details from the Church of England National Safeguarding Team. 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.

The morning coffee and chat group, held on the first Wednesday of the month in the Chapel, continues.

Member recorded their thanks to the Pastoral team for the valuable work they undertake.

### **Garden of Remembrance**

All is running well. The new area, Willow, will be completed in the next week and enquiries are already being made.

### **Safeguarding**

Policies have been updated in line with Diocesan policies and we are compliant in each of the following areas;

Domestic Abuse, Serious Incident Reporting and Safe Use of Images (full details available at [www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/safeguarding-documents](http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/safeguarding-documents)).

Charlie and Sam are enrolled on the C3 Safeguarding training for Clergy and Readers.

### **Mission Matters**

This year's mission project will be the Bedford based charity Justus, which provides homeless people with advice and

support to use existing law to find a home. The project will be launched on Sunday 1 December and trustees will speak to us about their work during the service.

The Bishop of St Albans has kindly agreed to attend and speak during our mission weekend in 2020.

Sam reported that he has completed the online Mission Action Plan for St Mark's.

### **Deanery Matters**

Discussions are ongoing on how best to support the large housing development taking place in the south of the Deanery. The Vicar at St Martin's will be moving soon.

Wendy Waters outlined the "Big Conversation", which forms part of Living God's Love, and aims to explore ways in which churches can grow younger. Training sessions have been held throughout the Deanery.

### **Dates of next meetings**

Church Council Meeting: 27 February 2020, 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.