

**Minutes of the meeting of St Mark's Church Council
18 November 2008**

Welcome with opening prayers and reading

Apologies

Mike Elliott, Audrey Elliott, John Day, Janet Day, Delia Shephard, Mary Stubbs, John Stubbs
Minutes of the 18 June meeting were accepted with one amendment under Leadership:
Carolyn Morris had set up a database of hymns.

Leadership

- The recent quiz evening had gone very well; over £270 had been raised.
- Following discussion by the Leadership Team, it was confirmed that this year's mission project would be Mission Aviation Fellowship.
- Mike Cooper outlined the appointment process for a new minister for the Partnership. Ten candidates had been put forward, and a review committee would assess their suitability against the profile set by the Circuit Leadership. Liz Little would head the review committee, and it was planned that there would be full consultation with the Partnership Leadership Teams. The outcome would be known before Christmas.
- A representative from Clubhouse would be the next organisation to be invited to attend a future Leadership Team meeting.

Centre Management

- All was going very well and bookings were strong. As an example, although one group would be leaving in the New Year, three new groups would be starting. The new groups were also varied – photography, home craft and Indian dancing.
- The decorations and building work were well under way and expected to be finished by the end of the year.
- Elizabeth Bean had joined the team of volunteers
- The foyer would be closed for up to one week with temporary access to the Church via the Chapel. This would not affect Sunday services.
- All the groups had worked well around the refurbishment. The upgrading will give a strong and much improved look – in keeping with all that St Mark's stands for.

Finance

- Members were advised that St Mark's would need to register with the Charities Commission by May / June 2009. After some discussion, Ian Farthing agreed to undertake the necessary work to ensure that the timescale was met. His appointment was carried unanimously. It would be confirmed whether members of the Church Council would be required to act as trustees.
- It was understood that registered charities were to challenge any introduction of bank charges. So far St Mark's had not received any, thanks to the efforts of the treasurer.
- Account balances were as follows:
 - Churchyards £10 163
 - Church Reserves £39 000
 - Organ Fund £2 784, which included a recent bequestThe Reserve Account had recently been used to cover some of the hall refurbishment costs, and the objective was to build the balance back to the budgeted figure of £43 000.
- The year end accounts had been completed and were being audited by Andy Lupton. The income for the year had been £154 396 with expenditure at £169 497. Increased utility costs had made a major impact on the budget. All items of large expenditure items had been covered.
- Mission giving for the year was £2 608 versus the £2 500 budget.
- Income for Sep/Oct had been £15 464 versus £14 022 expenditure. Lettings continue to be a very important part of our total income, and thanks were expressed to Wendy and the volunteers for ensuring that the Church premises were fully utilised.
- Council members recorded thanks to Ian for his continuing hard work in looking after the Church finances.

Pre-School

- All was going well. Helen has started her degree course, which involves 1 study day per

week.

- New, revised, funding would begin in Jan 2009, which will mean that fees will have to be increased.
- Reviews were being made into the possibility of providing computers.

Chat and Play

- All was going well although the sessions were still running with lower numbers.
- No sessions would be taking place through the two main weeks of the refurbishment.

Junior Church

- Thanks were given for the ongoing hard work and time put in by Janna with the young children, and Debbie with the crèche.

Garden of Remembrance

- The upkeep of the garden was very important and thanks were recorded to Marion and all the volunteers for their work in ensuring the whole area is kept looking so well.
- The natural pond had been stocked with plants and fish and was proving to be a very attractive feature with visitors.
- A lot of flowers and plants were now being left, and it was felt that a better method should be considered. A series of outside shelves, under the Church window, was being looked at.
- Three more columbaria vaults have been booked. The Lime area is well used and it is planned to offer the Ash area soon. More plaques have been purchased for the Memorial Wall.
- The Commemoration Services had been well attended and were much appreciated by the congregations at both the Crematorium and at St Mark's. Around 150 people attended the service at St Mark's. Plans were in hand for the speaker for the 2009 services.
- Interment fees for 2009 will be increased in line with Diocesan charges. Fees for plots will be increased slightly in 2009.
- Thanks were given to Mary and the volunteers for taking care of this very important part of St Mark's outreach, on our behalf.

Woodland Trust

- Thirty two burials had taken place to date and a new glade was opened on 18 November. An area had been marked out for an additional glade. It was also planned to open a children area
- A bench had been installed and a second had been ordered.
- The roadway had now been paid for, with the Diocesan and Circuit loans half paid off with interest. Drainage of the area to be reviewed.
- Thanks were recorded to Linda and the team for all the hard work and time involved with the work of the Trust.

Pastoral Support

- Visits and contacts with bereaved people continue, also Home Communion when appropriate.
- Telecare is functioning well, with 40 to 50 people on the contact list.
- Bedford Care continuing until the New Year. The majority of people involved felt that it should then finish.
- Friends for Life project: a pilot scheme was being run for the Langsdale Home. Wendy Waters was our representative and Vera Pearson had also volunteered. This would be a part of the specification for the new minister.
- Prayer Support was available at Wednesday Communion at St Mark's and at Thursday Prayer Group at Putnoe.

Circuit

- Delia and Mike had attended the last meeting. £5 000 had been endorsed to rebuild the Church website, which received up to 1 300 hits per day.

Dates of the 2009 meetings: 2 February, 22 June, 9 November

