

## **Minutes of the meeting of St Mark's Church Council 10 April 2013**

The meeting opened with a reading, meditation and prayer taken from The Methodist Church website.

**Apologies:** Janet Day, Janet Ibberson, Marion Prior, Morag Stewart, Mary Stubbs, Sam Cappleman, Wendy Rider

**Minutes:** The minutes of the last meeting were accepted

### **Leadership:**

- Following the unanimous agreement by Church Council at the last meeting to use the flat for residential use, a tenant had been found and all was working well. It has been agreed that she can keep a small dog.
- Major energy saving improvements have been made as a result of a grant received through the Climate Change Fund.
- The Church chairs are now being stacked differently to minimise damage and regular repairs are made when necessary.
- The 2012 Kisiizi mission's project totalled £2,559, which has been sent to support the valuable work of the hospital in Uganda.
- The Leadership Team has agreed that £125 should be given to Messy Church to cover any expenses incurred.
- It was felt that Sunday worship had been greatly enhanced with the use of the projector for the hymns.
- Open House is going extremely well under the direction of Cheryl Green, and numbers continue to grow. It was understood that one member, who travelled from Rushden, would no longer be able to attend because her carer was leaving. The situation would be reviewed to see if any alternative options existed.
- Messy Church continues to flourish with between 26 - 30 children regularly attending. The Christingle service went really well with many new face attending.
- The Crib and Carols by Candlelight Services were really well attended, and also Carols in the car park, despite the bad weather. The Town Band has been booked for 2013.
- It had been agreed to have a break from the Advent Course in 2013, because of poor attendance in 2012.
- The Italian social evening had gone well, although numbers were lower. A quiz night is being arranged for 8th June 2013.
- The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on 28 April 2013 after the morning service.
- Christian Aid week will take place between 12th and 18th May. Envelopes will be available.

### **Centre Management:**

- There are now 64 groups regularly hiring the premises, plus several occasional bookings each month. This was very good news and members thanked Wendy for the hard work involved in keep the bookings at a high level.
- We have now had the second Sunday booking of the stamp fayre, which has not caused any disruption to our services.
- As mentioned under the Leadership section, the flat has been let and the tenant is delighted with it.

- The Climate Fund grant has enabled us to install 3 new efficient heating boilers, wall insulation, low energy lighting, solar panels for hot water and energy efficient hand dryers. In addition to operating the premises in a much more eco efficient way, we will also make savings on our utility costs.
- A new photocopier has been installed which, again, will operate more efficiently and save costs.
- New bicycle stands have also been installed which are excellent.
- Thanks were recorded to Wendy and all the volunteers and helpers who assist in the efficient running of the Church premises.

### **Finance:**

- Ian ran through the audited Church accounts for the year ending 31 August 2012. These were accepted unanimously by council members and were signed off accordingly.
- It was proposed by Charlie and seconded by Laura to ask Andrew Upton to act as our auditor for the current financial year. Carried unanimously.
- Ian then reviewed the YTD accounts for the 7 months to March 2013.
- Funding from reserves had been used to support the climate change grant. As indicated above, this will result in savings on our utility costs in the future.
- Overall the accounts were running within budget. Sunday collections were, however, down. There were a number of reasons for this but, because offerings were a major part of the income needed to cover the total cost of church ministry, it was important that this area was regularly reviewed by us all.
- Jim advised members of an additional area where Gift Aid will be able to be claimed. From April 2013, we will be able to claim back tax on gifts of cash (under £20) totalling £5 000 per year. For us this will mainly be through the collection plate, and in addition to the yellow Gift Aid envelopes.
- Ian was thanked by everyone for his hard work in looking after the Church finances.

### **Pre-school:**

- The book s are full at the present time and going forward from September. This is a credit to all the staff.
- Regular planning meetings are held with the staff by Ian and Janet.
- It is planned to offer facilities for 2 year olds from September.
- The team are holding their own fund raising activities to help towards providing equipment and materials being used. Finances are running well.
- Janet Day and Ian Farthing were again thanked for the continuing support they give to the Pre School team on behalf of the Church Council.

### **Open House:**

- All is working very well and is really enjoyed by all the participants.
- Discussion took place on a lady who travels from Rushden and will no longer be able to attend because her carer has left. The group had made a tremendous difference to her, and it was felt we should look at the possible options available to ensure her progress was maintained.

### **Storybox:**

- The group continues to run extremely well under the organisation of Jaana.
- There were a number of new mothers and carers with their children attending.

### **Chat and Play:**

- All is going very well, with the numbers attending the Monday sessions improving. Thursday sessions are always well attended.
- Jo Garner was thanked for her continued hard work in running and organising the group.

### **Junior Church/Messy Church:**

- A number of new children have attended Junior Church recently. Thanks were given to Jaana and Debbie for the work they do each Sunday.
- Messy Church continues to be very well attended.
- 38 boxes had been collected for the Christmas Child/Shoebbox Appeal.
- The Easter Garden, created at the March Messy Church was very well received and was on display through the Easter period.
- Three sketches are to be performed at the April meeting.
- Wendy thanked all the helpers for their continued support, enabling Messy Church to work so well.

### **Pastoral Support:**

- The date of the next meeting is 7 May. The group is very well used and appreciated.
- Wendy had recently attended a course run by the Bedford Advice Forum on welfare reform and changes to the benefit system.
- Sunday flowers are regularly taken to people to show that they are in our thoughts. Margaret Appleton would welcome information on anyone who would benefit from a visit.
- Church members were reminded to speak to Charlie or a member of the Pastoral Support Team if they become aware of any cases of need.

### **Garden of Remembrance:**

- All is going well. In 2012 there were 40 interments and 8 reservations.
- A new area has been created and will be opened as soon as stones arrive. The area is situated close to area 1 of the original garden, and will provide up to 26 plots. The area will be known as Pine.
- There are 19 spaces remaining in Ash and 31 in Oak.
- A number of special edging stones are to be tried in order to increase the plots available.
- John Day advised that the current balance on the Churchyards Account was £18 500.
- Linda advised that six plaques had been taken on the Memorial Wall in 2012.
- Avril thanked Marion, Jean and Mick for all their support in making the garden so greatly appreciated by families and members of the community.

### **Woodland:**

- Total burials and interments to date have been 168. Reservations total 230.
- In 2012 there were 17 interments of ashes and 16 burials (Total 33). 2013 to date there have been 5 burials and 3 interments of ashes.
- Linda had attended a Climate Change Day, held at the Highways Agency in Bedford, to create awareness of the Woodland and to answer any questions.
- Owl boxes have been made and are awaiting installation.
- The Open Day will held on 20 July 2.00pm – 5.00pm.
- It was anticipated that we would take ownership of the additional land during wk comm. 15 April.
- At the next Deanery meeting Linda will ask members of take a Woodland “pop up” banner.
- It is hoped that Bishop Richard will visit the Woodland in the near future.
- Linda was thanked for all the hard work in running and creating awareness of the Woodland.

**Missions:**

- This year's autumn project will support the Bishops Harvest appeal, Sam to co-ordinate.

**Circuit:**

- Our Circuit representatives are Morag Stewart and Linda Parry, with Janet Day as reserve.
- At the last meeting there had been discussion on whether the employment of youth workers met the Continued Professional Development criteria.

**Date for future Church Council meetings:**

11th June 2013, 8th October. All 7.30 pm for 7.45

With no further business the meeting closed with the Grace.