Minutes of the meeting of St Mark’s Church Council
12 October 2011

The meeting opened with the reading of Psalm 102 and prayers.

**Apologies:** Jane Mason, Sam Cappleman, Margaret Appleton, Audrey Elliott, Mike Elliott, Mary Stubbs, Janet Day, Wendy Waters, Jean Bank, Janet Ibberson, Avril Williams

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

**Leadership:**
- The new Circuit had been launched, and members from St Marks provided some of the refreshments after the service.
- Messy Church on the 21 Sept had again been very successful. More helpers will be very welcome.
- Chris Hilliard, Head of Children’s Services for the Borough, had visited Pre-School and was very complimentary about the staff and all that was happening with the children.
- The Archdeacon’s visitation had gone very well.
- The new organ had been purchased and installed.
- Members agreed to the purchase of a new dishwasher, following a number of major leaks in the kitchen from the existing unit.
- The Wild West social evening had gone very well, including a spectacular hog roast.
- Gifts from the Harvest Service had been taken to BeCHAR and staff were really grateful for the support given by the Partnership.
- Caroline Morris had agreed to co-ordinate the Christian Aid collect for the Partnership but a volunteer was need for St Mark’s.
- Some concern had been expressed at the number of services on Christmas Eve. However, the consensus was that we could cope with three services and that it would nice to have the candles from Carols by Candlelight at Midnight Mass.

**Single Congregational LEP:**
- Charlie gave members a detailed update on our position as an LEP in respect to our legal position to become a registered charity. Because of our individual turnovers, both Churches are required to register with the Charities Commission. The difficulty has been, however, how LEP’s should be treated, given that each participant has its own controlling body and regulations.

Members went through a Model Governing Document which has been drawn up to specifically give LEP’s a constitution to operate with (*please see copy attached*). The sections in red are the only areas which can be amended to suit individual needs. Under the changes, all members of the Church Council will become trustees and voting members. Some work had already been done towards this change, but it may be necessary to complete new documentation. Members agreed to go forward with the required changes, and the areas which could be amended will be reviewed by the Leadership Team and brought to the next Council Meeting.
**Centre Management:**
- Bookings were going well. Three groups have started since the last meeting; Pilates, a second Weightwatchers group and Zumba. Boot Camp circuit training starts in November. Also, one off bookings are good.
- Open House started at the beginning of October and members seem very happy at what is being offered.
- Unfortunately the regular painting work in the halls had to be postponed, but it is hoped that the redecoration will go ahead during the Christmas holidays.
- All of the pathways have been jet washed and resealed.
- The upgrade of the foyer area has been admired by all using the building.
- Unfortunately we have lost the Police from the flat as part of the general cut backs. This will mean a revenue loss of £200 per month to St Mark’s.
- Autism Bedfordshire will expand into the current Parish Council office but we will loose the Parish Council booking
- Rotas have been set up for grass cutting and setting the chairs out.

**Finance:**
- Ian reviewed the year end accounts and the budget for 2011/12.
  On the General Account year end income totalled 165,402.99, expenditure was 174,088.69. The shortfall of 8,685.70 did, however, include an advance payment of 10,000 for the extension to the foyer, which will be funded by grants.
  The Pre School Account income for the year was 175,245.07, expenditure was 155,131.60. Clubhouse income totalled 47,905.85 and expenditure was 66,156.90, which included redundancy payments to staff.
- For 2011/12 the General Account Income is budgeted to be 128,548 and expenditure 132,432.00, giving a budgeted surplus of 3,884.00. This will be very dependant on the strict containment of costs and continued support through Sunday collections and Centre hire, which are our only sources of income.
- Ian advised that St Mark’s would be unlikely to be involved in providing pension contributions for staff, at least until 2014.
- It was agreed to again appoint Andrew Upton as the Church auditor.
- Ian was thanked for his continued hard work in keeping the Church finances in good order.

**Pre-school:**
- All running well with the curriculum and the books are full. The Ofsted inspection had give a rating of outstanding, which reflected the hard work put in by all the team.
- Janet Day and Ian Farthing were thanked for their ongoing hard work in supporting the Pre School team on behalf of the Church Council.

**Open House:**
- The group will now meet once per week and have had their first meeting. It was clear that there is a real benefit for all participants and it is hoped that the group will flourish as it continues to develop.

**Storyboard:**
- Janna continues to do a fantastic job with the children. All is running well and the increased numbers have been maintained.
Chat and Play:
- Again, all is going very well. Jo Garner is continuing to have great success with continued high numbers of children, and parents are involved in helping.

Junior Church:
- Once again thanks were recorded for the work done by Janna with the young people.
- Numbers attending Messy Church continue to grow. Next week sees the first anniversary.
- Between Oct 2010 and Jun 2011, 49 children and 26 carers have attended.
- On 3 Aug Messy Church had a craft area at the Waveney Green Family Day.
- With the continued growing numbers, 15 to 20 helpers are required.
- Thanks were recorded to Penny Puttock, who will be moving away in November, for all her help providing the meals, supporting Gill Williams.

Pastoral Support:
- The fifteen members of the Pastoral Support Group provide a much valued roll on behalf of St Mark’s.
- Telecare continues to be well used and thanks go to Jean, Valerie and Wendy who run this.
- Home communions are taken by Charlie, Eric, Wendy and Richard.
- Monthly Holy Communion is taken by Charlie at Williams Harpur House.
- Jane keeps the team informed on activities at Anjulita Court and members from the Partnership give valuable voluntary help.
- Commemoration Services this year will be held on 6 November at The Crematorium and 13 November at St Mark’s.
- Wendy Waters will speak at the Commemoration Service.
- Members recorded their thanks to Mary and the team for all the work that they do.

Garden of Remembrance:
- All is going very well. The many visitors continues to show how much the garden is appreciated by the community.
- Volunteers led by Marion continue to keep the Garden look so well.
- Avril Williams has agreed to help Mary in the administration work of the garden.

Woodland:
- 122 interments have taken place since the Woodland opened.

- The new glade has been partially plotted and it is proposed to name it Goldcrest.
- It was felt that A4 sized advertising in publications such as the North Bedford magazine Rural Grunch had much greater visibility and would be used in future.
- The plans to purchase more land are going ahead and the planning approval process is progressing.

Missions:
- It had been agreed that the Partnership Missions project this year will be BeCHAR, the Prebend Street day centre.
- Charlie gave a detailed update on Living God’s Love, how St Mark’s had responded, and would continue to respond. Firstly, through Charlie, we had been involved in the launch service.
- In many respects the subjects covered at the meeting tonight were an illustration of how we try to Live God’s Love on a continuous basis.
- The Leadership Team had discussed a number of issues on how we review / audit how we meet the challenges given to us, and address any changes that are needed.
- The Lent Course had asked us to think about God’s people in God’s place.
- There was a need for reflection, both personal and together, and we were all encouraged to view the website to gain individual insight into the project.

**Circuit:**
- The enlarged Circuit was now up and running and we would get more feedback following the next Circuit meeting.

**Deanery:**
- The next meeting is to be held on 16 November.

With no further business the meeting closed with the Grace.

Dates of next meetings:

- 21 February 2012
- 19 June 2012
- 7.30 pm for 7.45 start