



St Mark's Church

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE
ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF ST MARK, BEDFORD

Church Council Meeting 27 September 2016

The meeting began with compline

Apologies:

Elizabeth Bean, John and Janet Day, Janet Ibberson, Mick Ovenden, Wendy Rider, Wendy Waters

Minutes of the previous meeting: Minutes of 19 May 2016 were agreed with no matters arising.

Church Leadership Team Report: Written report was circulated and is attached. Key dates are, 2 Oct Harvest; 6 Nov Commemoration Service, 12 Nov Quiz Evening at Putnoe, 19 Nov Craft Fayre; 4 Dec Christingle; 17 Dec Carols in the Car Park; 24 Dec Crib Service, Carols by Candlelight, Midnight Service, and 25 Dec 8.30 and 9.30 Christmas Day Services. A news sheet will again be produced for circulation throughout the parish.

Centre Management: Written report was circulated and is attached. Additionally, it was reported that a grant of £7 000 had been received from the Steel Charitable Trust towards the roof repair project. Charlie thanked Wendy and all the volunteers for their hard work in ensuring that the Church runs efficiently.

Finance Report and Gift Aid:

Ian updated members on the year end out turn, which was in line with the budget. Rental income had increased due to the Parish Council now using the office area at the back of the church.

Work had been completed in transferring the Church banking arrangements to CAF and HSBC. Our existing account would remain open to ensure continuity of receipts. Existing standing orders had been transferred.

Our Gift Aid claims will be brought into line with the church financial year and the new bank details updated with HMRC. HMRC have started their process of verifying our charitable status.

Our staging date for the Workplace Pensions had been met, and all eligible staff were enrolled. One member of staff wished to opt in to the scheme, and this request had also been actioned.

Ian then gave details of the 2016/17 budget and Reserves Policy. The following proposals were made: Approve 2016/17 budget, copy attached (proposed by Jim Williams, seconded by Margaret Appleton) carried unanimously.

Approve Church Reserves Policy, as agreed with the auditors, copy attached (proposed by Margaret Appleton seconded by Avril Williams) carried unanimously.

The format of the Church accounts will change from the start of this financial year to meet Charity Commission requirements.

Ian was thanked for all the detailed work involved in making these changes and for the continued time spent in ensuring that the Church finances were managed correctly.

Pre-School:

Helen Harpin and Sue Jones were welcomed to the meeting. Helen and Sue gave a detailed review of Pre-School to Council members. Fifty two children are on the roll with more two year olds included; which required a higher staffing ratio. Up to six additional children were expected through to January. Being a

church preschool was a clear choice factor by parents. With the provision for two year olds and the new 7.30am start, there was a need to provide an area for the young ones to have a sleep. All was working well with the use of the back rooms of the Church and the large and small halls, but staff would monitor any potential safeguarding issues as a result of the upstairs office area now having been let out.

Council members have overall responsibility for Pre-School activities which, in addition to the educational and day to day care of the children, can include safeguarding issues, needing the involvement of Social Services. Specific training was available through the Borough Educational team, and members were encouraged to attend the courses that were available. In addition, Helen and Sue invited all members to visit Pre-school when they could, story readers were always welcome. Please contact Helen or Sue to arrange this. A news sheet, promoting all the Church children's groups, will be produced on the run up to Christmas.

Ian then reviewed the finances. It had been a difficult year with lower income from reduced numbers and higher costs because of increased staffing ratios. However, there were clear indications that the additional hours provision was helping to improve things and that the high reputation of St Mark's Pre-school played an important part in parental choice.

It was planned to use the Diocesan policy documents on safeguarding for Pre-school. Additionally, the staffing booklet is currently being updated with the help of the Borough HR Department. Proposed by Linda Parry, seconded by Ian Farthing, carried unanimously.

Helen, Sue and all the Pre-school team were thanked for the professional work they do on behalf of St Mark's.

Open House:

Luton Mentoring continue to provide staff cover for the group, although the leader has changed. Numbers remain high and it was felt that a very valuable service is provided for the members that attend.

Story Box:

Numbers remain high and all is running well.

Chat and Play:

Over 50 children now attend the Thursday sessions and numbers are growing at the Tuesday Chat and Make sessions. Although the number are high, all the children are supervised by parents and carers. It was important to obtain email addresses where ever possible in order to maintain contact with parents and carers about Church activities, for example Pre-School.

Junior Church:

All running well. The children clearly enjoy the activities and will be encouraged to bring their work into Church as part of the service.

Messy Church:

Numbers for the first session of the new term were 48. All had worked well and Gill and Rose were thanked for the hard work involved with the catering.

Pastoral Support:

A meeting held with the team at Putnoe Heights had helped to develop the valuable work carried out between the two churches. Distribution of church flowers will also be made to celebrate broader activities such as a special birthday, a specific land mark, as well as sadder moments. Telecare continues to provide very valuable support in the community with over 40 people now being contacted by the pastoral team.

Garden of Remembrance:

The garden continues to receive very good comments, and Jean and Malcolm were thanked for their work in looking after the area. Requests to donate plants and structural items have been received. Under consideration were a water feature/ fountain. Plans were also in place to build a seat and arbour in the same style as the lych-gate. The current balance on the Churchyard account is £40 800. Thanks were recorded to John Day for his work in looking after the Churchyard accounts over many years. These would now be included into the new banking arrangements.

Woodland:

The open day on 17 Sept. had been excellent. Over 100 people had visited and 14 plots had been sold. Thanks to everyone involved. There are currently 178 plots remaining. With over 40 plots being taken up each year, we will need to look to opening more glades. Based on 18 months application and preparation time, there will be a need to start the process before the end of the year.

Investigations have begun on building a lodge, which will provide an important addition to the area.

Linda and Edward were thanked for their continued hard work in running all aspects of the Woodland.

Mission:

Sam gave details of this year's Mission Appeal - to support Lee Abbey, which is a self-supporting charity, helping communities in urban areas. The project will be launched during the service on Sunday 9 October. The Mission Action Plan for the Deanery (last completed in 2012) is to be reviewed as part of the Deanery plan for 2017. Churches are being asked to gain input from PCC members and to include discussion on the plan in future PCC meetings. This will be an agenda item for the Leadership and PCC meetings in November.

Deanery Synod:

There had been a presentation on Parish Giving. Ian and Jim would look into this further once the changes in St Mark's bank accounts had been completed.

Bishop Richard will give a presentation on the next 5 years at a Deanery Meeting on 13 October, to be held at St Mark's at 7.30pm. If as many members as possible could help support this evening please.

There is to be a presentation and video on outreach at the following Deanery Meeting at St Andrew's on 24 November.

Any other business:

It was agreed by members that the Food Bank collection box should be retained for regular donations to be made.

Date of next meeting(s):

21 November 2016, 20 February 2017 Annual Congregational Meeting 23 April 2017

The meeting closed with The Grace.

Leadership Team Report to Church Council

The Leadership Team met this week to discuss the church and it was a very positive meeting with a lot to be thankful for and enthusiastic about.

We have formed a charity at St Marks and every member of the previous church council agreed to stand as a trustee. We are now the ecclesiastical parish of St Mark and although not a Methodist/Anglican Partnership, it is very positive to say that we are a church who welcomes all Christians and we no longer record the denomination of members separately, we will just be Christians worshipping together.

We have had well attended Christmas and Easter services since our last church council. During this week there are many church based activities which welcome people into the worshipping life of the church.

A particular event which the Leadership Team mentioned was the baptism of Emerson, who was welcomed into the church family after his family came to Messy Church. Wendy Waters became a godparent, which is a source of great encouragement and joy; seeing people welcomed to St Marks so positively.

The Church Team discussed many items which will be covered in the agenda concerning such things as finance, preschool, open house, the church centre, repairs to the building and social activities such as the Road to Rio Olympics event. There are lots of exciting things taking place to look forward to and which we know will be a way to welcome the wider community to St Marks.

Centre Manager's report - Church Council 27th September 2016

Building.

Since the last meeting the main and small hall have been re-decorated as well as the Chapel.

As reported last time we continue to have problems with both roofs concerning the ingress of water. The roof felting on the Hall roof needs replacing, which we know will be extremely expensive. Ian is saving money for this work, and we will be going out for grants. We estimate that the work required to repair both roofs could cost about £25,000.

Several of the double glazed windows around the building have blown. Quotes have been obtained and the cost to replace the windows will be £1,800, and Charlie is currently engaged in obtaining a grant.

In June the church and chapel carpets were professionally cleaned. At the last meeting I reported that we were considering changing the carpet for flotex in the chapel but this is on hold now, as the carpet looks much better following the clean.

Bookings:

Since our last meeting we have had the following new group start:-

U3A Play Reading

Lifers Gospel Fellowship – Weekly

Sewing Group – Monthly

U3A Play Reading - Weekly

The Brickhill Parish Council have now moved back into the upstairs office.

Office/Volunteers

There have been no changes regarding the office volunteers since the last meeting but Pam Seymour has volunteered to be a backup for when we need extra cover. Recently I had a meeting/training evening with all members of the office team. It was also an opportunity to share ideas.

Centre Manager

Wendy

The PCC of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Mark Bedford – Reserves Policy

The PCC aims to retain sufficient reserves to finance three months general running costs and three months income, to cover unforeseen circumstances.

It is also the PCC's policy to aim to hold an amount in reserves for the likely building works at the next quinquennial inspection.

PCC of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Mark Bedford Budget 2016/2017

Expenditure	Budget 2016/2017	Income	Budget 2016/2017
Church			
Cost of Ministry	56,035.00		
Ministry Expenses	2,500.00	Sunday Collection	38,681.00
Openhouse	3,120.00	Conventants/Gift Aid	7,300.00
Youth Workers	4,400.00	Purcuse Heighe	19,344.00
Organists	1,000.00		
	<u>69,055.00</u>		<u>65,325.00</u>
Community Centre			
Salary Clr Mgr	13,656.00	Centre Hire	58,000.00
Steeles Cross	21,000.00	Capitol Income	8,700.00
Printing	8,000.00	Bank Interest	200.00
Utilities	8,000.00		
Repairs/Maintenance	8,000.00		
	<u>56,656.00</u>		<u>66,900.00</u>
Mission			
Gifts from Income	2,500.00	Mission	2,600.00
	<u>2,500.00</u>	Fundraising	9,000.00
			<u>11,600.00</u>
Contingency/Projects			
Contingency	5,000.00		
Projects	10,000.00		
	<u>15,000.00</u>		
Totals	<u>143,311.00</u>		<u>141,825.00</u>