

Minutes of the meeting of St Mark's Church Council 21 February 2012

The meeting opened with a service of Evening Worship.

Apologies: Sam Cappleman, Wendy Rider, Mary Stubbs

Minutes: The minutes of the last meeting were accepted.

Leadership Report

1. Laura recorded the thanks of the Leadership Team to all those who volunteer and give their time to support the work of St Mark's.
2. Lee Coley, solicitor to the Diocese, was advising us on establishing ourselves as a Registered Charity and a Limited Company, to ensure we have the correct levels of protection for the Church Council members who will be Trustees.
3. Jane will be taking her sabbatical next year and Margaret Appleton will sit on the panel from the Circuit to help Jane plan this.
4. Deanery discussions to establish 2012/13 Church Quotas are ongoing. It looks as though Partnership quota will be circa £53 000. Circuit Assessments are also under discussion.
5. The dedication concert for the new organ had been an excellent success and thanks were recorded to Clive Simmons for arranging the event. It was hoped to organise another concert, possibly around Harvest Festival. £490 was raised.
6. Storybox, Chat and Play and Junior Church were all progressing well. Thanks were given to Jaana, Jo, Debbie and all the many volunteers for all the hard work they do in supporting the young people.
7. Chat and Play have asked if we will agree to an addition session on Monday afternoons – probably from Easter. The Leadership Team were keen to support this and Avril has agreed to work with Jo to enable this to work. Agreed unanimously.
8. Messy Church was working very well and members recorded thanks to all those Church members involved.
9. Avril is now working with Mary on the administration side of the Garden of Remembrance.
10. A quiz night has been arranged for 10 March.
11. Services over Christmas had been our best ever in terms of attendance figures and it was good to see many new people. The 11.30 Holy Communion service by candlelight had been very well supported. Plans for 2012 are to have Carols in the Car Park on 22 Dec with Carols by Candlelight again on Christmas Eve.
12. Ash Wednesday Service would be at St Mark's
13. The Lent Course would start on 15 March and focus on Mission Action Planning, led by Charlie and Sam.
14. Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, 9.30 at St Mark's 11.00 at Putnoe.
15. Easter Day Sunrise service will be at 6.00am at St Mark's.
16. Mother Sunday 18 March will be a Parade Service. Marion and Wendy will prepare the flowers.
17. Harvest Festival will be 30 September
18. The Congregational Meeting will be held after the 9.30 service on 22 April.
19. Jean Bank has kindly agreed to co-ordinate Christian Aid collection this year.
20. The Mission Project for BeChar raised £2725.50, which was a fantastic result.
21. The Car Boot Sale on 4 June will have a Jubilee theme.

Centre Management

1. Since the last meeting hire income has fallen, due to the Police and Parish Council moving out. Also, Clubhouse and one Weightwatchers group no longer meet. However, Autism Bedfordshire has taken over the top office and four new groups are meeting on a weekly basis, which has recouped some of the shortfall.

2. Alternative uses for the flat is currently being considered.
3. Open House now has up to 17 regular weekly attendees and there is a great buzz throughout the day. Particular thanks were recorded to Cheryl Green and to all the helpers who make these sessions work so well.
4. Chat and Play are to start another session on Mondays, starting from the 23 April 1 – 3 pm.
5. Since Christmas the kitchen, small hall and large hall have been decorated and a new dishwasher installed.
6. Mike Ovenden is to fit shelving in the cupboard in the Church to improve this storage area.
7. It was agreed that the Management Team should look into the installation of solar thermal panels, which would be used generate hot water and provide up to 60% of our hot water from the sun. Outline cost would be around £4 000.
8. Wendy formally thanked all the volunteers who work so hard in the office and welcome Wendy Ovenden to the team.

Finance

1. Ian reviewed the draft year end accounts and Church budget details for the first five months of the financial year (Sep 2011- Jan 2012).
2. The year end accounts included one off expenditure payments for solar panels and the entrance extension.
3. All was running well for the first 5 months of the financial year with income running at 65% of budget and expenditure 54%.
4. The outlook will be very dependant on the continued strict containment of costs and support through Sunday collections and Centre hire income.
5. A new hot water tank has been installed, which will operate more efficiently off the heating system and has also created additional space in the kitchen. It was agreed to install solar thermal heating to the new tank to heat the water from solar energy. This was important for when the heating was not in use in summer months.
6. Work was ongoing to ensure that St Mark's was registered as a charity (PCC).
7. The Gift Aid claim for the period Apr - Sep 2011 = £2,885.65 and an additional £408.93 had been received for gifts made during the appeal to support BeChar.
8. Ian was thanked for all his hard work in looking after the Church finances.

Pre-school

1. All running well with the curriculum and the books are full.
2. Because of changes in Early Years Funding, Pre-School will receive £16 000 less in income. This is solely due to the timing of the census and the number of children aged below 3 years.
3. Janet Day and Ian Farthing were thanked for their continued work in supporting the
3. Pre School team on behalf of the Church Council.

Open House

1. The group continues to grow in numbers and it is clear that all those attending enjoy the varied activities and lively atmosphere. There is a real benefit for all participants.

Storybox

Janna is working hard to bring the mums together and is doing a fantastic job with the children. All is running well.

Chat and Play

1. 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.
2. An additional session will be introduced on Monday afternoons.

Junior Church/Mess Church

1. Thanks were recorded for the ongoing work done by Janna with the young people.
2. Messy church goes from strength to strength. 76 different children have now attended.
3. One of the dads has offered to help on a regular basis, which was very encouraging.
4. There have been two baptisms from Messy Church attendees.

Pastoral Support

1. The group is well used and appreciated. Contacts received from funerals via Charlie are contacted by telephone at first, followed by visits if appropriate.
2. 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 and Valerie to people who are housebound.
2. Monthly Holy Communion is taken by Charlie at William Harpur House.
3. Wendy Waters (north Bedford) and Vera Pearson (central Bedford) visit people through Friends for Life.
4. Jane keeps the team informed on activities at Anjulita Court and members from the Partnership give valuable voluntary help.
5. Commemoration Services this year will be held on 4th November at St Mark's. It is hoped that Nicola McIntosh will be the speaker.
6. Thanks were given to Margaret Standley who regularly visits Iris Swallow, also to other members of both Churches who regularly make visits.
7. Members recorded their thanks to Mary and the team for all the work that they do.

Garden of Remembrance

1. All is going very well. The many visitors over the Christmas period highlights how much the garden is appreciated by the community. Thanks to Mick and Wendy Ovenden for tidying the garden after Twelfth Night.
2. A number of the stones have been re-blackened and others will be cleaned and blackened over the coming weeks.
3. Work is ongoing to add the book of remembrance to the Church IT system.
4. Volunteers led by Marion continue to keep the Garden looking so well.
5. The Memorial Wall is being used more. Thanks to Linda for looking after this aspect.
6. The balance on the account is currently £14 000. Thanks to John Day for looking after the finances.
7. Thanks were recorded to Mary for all her work in co-ordinating the Pastoral and Garden of Remembrance teams.

Woodland

1. Total burials and interments to date have been 129.
2. Clients who have breached regulations regarding planting have been written to requesting that they maintain the woodland setting as it was intended to be.
3. Lettering on a number of plaques has deteriorated considerably. Edward Parry has found some low emission masonry paint which will be used as required.
4. Plans to purchase an additional 11.4 acres have now received planning approval. The next stage will be to begin the legal process to purchase the land.
5. The Open Day will be held this year on 12th May.
6. Date of the next trustees meeting is Sunday 13th May.

Missions

1. The Partnership Missions project for 2012 will be agreed through the Leadership Teams of both Churches.
2. Jean Bank and Caroline Morris have agreed to co-ordinate the Christian Aid collection for the Partnership this year. More collectors were needed.

Circuit

1. Treasurers will be meeting in March to discuss and agree Methodist Assessments for Churches in the enlarged Circuit.
2. Details of The Woodland are to be included in the Circuit Magazine.

Deanery

1. At the meeting on 1st February at St Michael's there had been a very good presentation on Parishes.
2. It was reported that 5 clergy will be leaving the Deanery over the coming months.

With no further business the meeting closed with the Grace.

Date of next meeting:

19 June 2012

7.30 pm for 7.45 start