



St Mark's Church Bedford



Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Mark



Annual Parochial Church Meeting

19 May 2021

Leadership Team Report

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Annual Report on behalf of the Leadership Team
Jim Williams

I don't think that any of us would have imagined that we would have needed to hold the first online APCM let alone a second but here we are, thanks to the computer skills of Charlie and Corinne. Throughout this past year we have been so fortunate to have the ministerial team that we have. Thank you sincerely to Charlie, Corinne, Sam, Wendy, Richard and Alan who have maintained our worship and outreach each week, using technology many of us didn't even know about 15 months ago.

This does seem a bit like groundhog day from Mike's last report, in that not too much has changed through this latest restriction period. But the most important thing is that we have all been able to continue to worship and our work within the community has carried on, all be it in a restricted way.

The Pastoral Support Team have maintained contact through weekly Telecare calls, with any concerns arising being passed on to Charlie or Wendy. It is hoped that as restrictions are gradually lifted, and when safe to do so, home visits, home communions, delivery of flowers and Bereavement Coffee Mornings will be able to resume.

The delivery of St Mark's Christmas cards and Votive candles were very much appreciated by those unable to attend our services. The Easter cards were also greatly appreciated. Wendy has decided to stand down as co-ordinator after 7 years but will still be part of the team. Our thanks go out to Wendy, Jean Bank, Sally Gunning, Val Capon, Mike Warren and Richard Ledger for the very import work they undertake on behalf of St Mark's.

All of our fund raising activities have been stopped over the past year and our premises letting income came to a standstill. This clearly had an impact on our resources. However, with Ian's financial skills, his work in putting together successful grant applications for government funding, and with the ongoing generous support of the entire congregation, we have continued to meet all of our commitments to the Diocese. So thank you to everyone and especially to Ian for keeping such detailed control of our finances.

Another very important aspect of our place in the community is our Church Preschool, and our sincerest thanks go to Helen, Sue and all the staff for continuing to work under very difficult circumstances. For opening to look after the children of key workers at the start of the pandemic to compiling risk assessments, and having to work with PPE restriction with very young children is a real credit to them all.

Working with children involves a lot of responsibility for us all, but keeping this formally in place, and ensuring we meet all of our legal requirements in terms of training and DBS clearances is a very important roll. Our thanks go to Janet Day, who as our Safeguarding Officer makes sure that we fully meet our legal commitments. Janet has decided to step back from the training record side of the roll, which will be taken up by Mike Cooper. So our grateful thanks, Janet, for putting

all of the measures we have in place and for continuing to play such a large part in this important work.

With the premises having been closed for lettings, our many volunteers were put on “stand by” but Wendy, our Centre Manager, used the down time to schedule a complete redecoration of the premises - until she too was furloughed! Contact still needed to be maintained, however, and Elizabeth Bean generously volunteered to have the church phone transferred to home. This was really so helpful in enabling the public to still have a contact point. In addition, Linda and Edward have continued to mail out copies of Parish News and maintain the GOR fountain. A huge thank you to Wendy, Elizabeth, Linda and Edward and all the volunteers, for your continued support. And it is great to report that two key groups have already returned and others are looking to follow.

Our thanks also go to Marion and the flower volunteers, whose floral arrangements reappeared as soon as our services resumed. Although we have all missed being able to sing hymns, we have still been able to enjoy the music of Clive and Mike and the singing of Keira and John – and perhaps mime secretly under our masks! So a big thank you to them. Thanks too to the chair movers, grass cutters, PA mixers and recordists. We all thank Charlie and Corinne for the hours of work which went in to creating the online services.....including the international link to Hong Kong!!

We also thank the Craft Group, who continued production with a very successful “online” sales effort at the end of the year.

Another important area of our outreach that has had to keep functioning is the Garden of Remembrance. Over the past year there have been 18 interments with another 12 coming shortly, which had been delayed due to Covid restrictions. There have been early discussions on planning out an additional area. Jean & Malcom do a fantastic job keeping the Garden tidy, and our sincere thanks go to them for maintaining the garden so well. Visitors always comment on what a beautiful and peaceful area it is.

In the background to all of the adjustments which have been necessary is our Leadership Team. As situations changed, everyone adapted accordingly, from taking part in service recordings when numbers had to be limited, to fogging the premises. I would like to give my personal thanks to them for their support and guidance – a real Team effort.

During this time when we have had to rethink how things are done, stop doing some things altogether and postpone others, it has given us an opportunity to look more closely at everything we do.

Our ministers and the Leadership Team will continue to look at the very best ways in which we can continue our worship and all the activities we undertake through the coming months. Thank you to everyone for what has been achieved through these difficult times, and we thank God for his guidance and support for us all.