

**Parochial Church Council of the
Ecclesiastical Parish of St Mark
Annual Parochial Meeting 26 April 2026**

The meeting was held in Church after 9.30 Communion

37 church members attended.

Minutes of the last meeting held on 4 May 2025 were approved and are available via the Church website. Charlie ran through the agenda in detail.

Appointments

- The Rev. Cannon Charles Royden was appointed chair of the meeting
- Jim Williams was appointed as secretary
- Elizabeth Bean was appointed as Lay Vice Chair
- Safeguarding Officer Mr Mike Cooper
- Electoral Roll Officer Mrs Avril Williams
- Elizabeth Bean and Diana Johnson were elected and appointed as Church Wardens

Parochial Church Council Appointments

Standing Committee of PCC – (The Leadership Team) Charles Royden (Vicar), Sam Cappleman (Associate Priest), Alan Kirk (Assistant Minister) Elizabeth Bean and Diana Johnson (Church Wardens), Barry Southam, Lynne Seymour, Jean Kirk and Geraldine Jones, the incoming Leadership Team member, (Wardens in Waiting), Mr Ian Farthing (Treasurer) Mr Jim Williams (Assistant Treasurer & Church Secretary)

Ex Officio

Mike Cooper (Safeguarding Officer), Wendy Waters (Reader Emeritus), Elizabeth Bean, Diana Johnson (Church Wardens), Tim Wilkes and Lynne Seymour (Deanery Synod Reps).

Leadership Team - (Wardens in Waiting) Lynne Seymour, Barry Southam, Jean Kirk, Gerri Jones. All were accepted. Charlie thanked Janet Warren for her strong support as a member of the Leadership Team over the past 7 years.

Elected Representatives as trustees to the PCC (i.e. not ex officio) Janet Day, Vincent Holloway, Janet Warren, Mike Warren, Marion Prior, Janet Ibberson, Morag Stewart, Laura Farthing, John Scott, Judith Scott, Val Simmonds, Philip Whitlock

Charlie thanked everyone who had agreed to stand as trustees. Current Trustee names will be included on the Charity Commission website. He thanked everyone for their continued hard work in ensuring the smooth running and the continued safety of all those coming to St Mark's.

Members of staff who are able to attend PCC Meetings but not vote are Wendy Rider (Centre Manager), Helen Harpin and Sue Jones (Preschool).

Membership

136 members are on the Electoral Roll at the date of the meeting.

Finance Report

Copies of the completed church accounts for the year ending 31 August 2025 had been circulated to trustees ahead of the meeting. A copy is also kept in the church office.

Ian advised members that Collett Hulance have examined the accounts for us, and there have been no concerns raised. They agree they are a fair and accurate representation of our church owned activities for the period.

The unaudited Financial Statement shows net income following accrual adjustments of £10 741, which is in line with budget expectations. Our accountants, Collett Hulance, have also confirmed that they are willing to continue the provision of their services to us going forward, if we so wish. Proposed by Janet Day and seconded by Barry Southam, the proposal was carried unanimously.

Income streams have continued to be steady and we are grateful as always for the continuing commitment and generosity of our congregation in providing financial support for our mission and ministry at St Mark's whether by monthly or weekly giving or by participating in whatever way in the many Fundraising activities undertaken.

Proceeds from our monthly 50/50 fundraising draw, which was agreed would fund "nice to do" projects, has now paid for the new altar frontal, which everyone feels is superb. A generous donation has funded an additional mic for the audio visual equipment.

There was also outstanding generosity from the congregation in contributing to the cost of major repairs and refurbishment of the heating system. This should help with the continuing increases in utility costs. We have also recently settled a dispute with Wave over our water usage. We are very grateful to Sam, who has led the challenge on this, to win a settlement of £1 728 for past usage.

We had previously reported the possibility of moving some church funds to the Cambridgeshire and Counties bank, in order to spread and protect the funds in case of bank failures. However, the cover provided by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) has been increased to £120 000 per institution, and it is not now considered necessary to move any balances from CAF and the Monmouthshire Building Society.

Pre School operations, after accruals /adjustments, showed a small profit of £78. Hire and copying costs applied for the year were only £6 383 – as previously reported to PCC. It is pleasing to report improvements in the first seven months of the current financial year, in that £15 954 has already been made hire and copying payments.

From a funding perspective, Early Years continues to be challenging, with increases in NI and the National Living Wage not covered by Government funding. Preschool operations, including staff resources remain to be closely monitored by the Pre School Management Team.

The Garden of Remembrance has continued to operate largely to budget over the year. Increased income is now coming in, following the investment in new kerbs/plots during the last financial year.

Ian thanked all those involved with him in managing the Church finances. Having been Church Treasurer for 25 years, Ian had announced to the Leadership Team in March that he would be standing down at the end of the current financial year at the end of August 2027.

Charlie and all members present, thanked Ian for all the hard work in maintaining the Church finances so efficiently, and that it would be very difficult to replace him.

[Garden of Remembrance Report](#)

All running well. As reported in the PCC minutes, there are now 827 ashes interred in the Garden.

[Report on the fabric of the building, adoption of church policies](#)

All Church policy documents are up to date and available to view on the Church website.

[Safeguarding and Serious Incidents](#)

Charlie restated the detailed points from the agenda and confirmed that the PCC had fully complied with all Safeguarding measures, and have adopted all the Church of England and Diocesan policies.

Mike Cooper (Safeguarding Officer) restated to members that there had been no safeguarding or serious incidents. PCC members were up to date with their training, as were Pre School staff.

The PCC members at the APCM reviewed the St Mark's Charity Commission Delegation document. Delegated

responsibility for reporting Safeguarding and Serious Incident reporting to the Charity Commission was confirmed to be to the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) and current members of the Leadership Team.

Deanery Synod Report

Sam reported that all was going well. Lynne Seymour and Tim Wilkes will continue as representatives from St Mark's.

Annual Report

Elizabeth reported on the Church activities over the past year.

On behalf of the Leadership Team and the Congregation I would like to give our sincere thanks to Charlie, Sam & Alan for their spiritual leadership, inspiration, commitment and support here at St Mark's.

St Mark's continues to be an inclusive and welcoming Church. Our Holy Communion Sunday Services normally have 75 to 80 in the congregation, plus those who join us on You Tube. We also hold a Wednesday Morning Service on Zoom each week.

The Church is well served by our Treasurer, Ian Farthing, who is fully supported by Jim Williams. They both work tirelessly throughout the year. Thank you just doesn't seem enough, but your work is very much appreciated. The PAYZ machine, kept in the Chapel, is moved to the foyer, for special services.

This year we had have had major work carried out on the heating system and an extra microphone to add to our PA system which was replaced in 2024.

In August, the Archdeacons Visitation took place with Archdeacon Dave visiting us. The focus was mainly on buildings; to explore the Church and pray together. We received an excellent report.

This year the visitation will be solely based on safeguarding. We submitted the initial visitation enquiry form in February, the date for the visit will be confirmed later, it is normally held during the months of August/September.

We must thank Mike Cooper, our Safeguarding Officer, who ensures that all mandatory online training has been completed and that policies and reporting systems are in place. Also, thank you to Janet Day who deals with all the DBS checks.

Our Harvest Festival Service was held on 7 September last year when we launched our Mission Appeal for Bedford Food Bank. After the service we celebrated with a Hog Roast to which many of our congregation, family and friends attended. The Bishop of Bedford also joined us in this celebration.

In October, Marion Prior, who had been involved with the flower arranging for over 50 years, 25 of them as the flower organiser, stepped down and handed the reins over to Gerrie, although Marion will continue to arrange flowers as required. We would like to say thank you to them and all the flower team for the wonderful arrangements they produce each week.

Our Remembrance Service was held on 9 November at 9.30am with Pam Kinselley laying the wreath at the altar. The Commemoration Service was held in the afternoon at 3pm. The address was given by Richard Ledger. Both services were well received and the pastoral team served tea, biscuits and chocolates after the afternoon service.

The Advent course on 4 & 11 December was based on Paula Gooder's book "The Meaning in the Waiting". Both were very interesting and well attended. Wine, cheese and fellowship followed.

Carols in the Car Park and Carols by Candlelight, with Bedford Town Band, were well attended. Several people were saying how much they enjoyed these two services each year. All the Christmas Services went well, with numbers up on last year.

On 8 February we celebrated Charlie & Corinne's thirty-five years at St Mark's with a small presentation. Sam read a message from the Bishop of Bedford. What an outstanding achievement!

The Lent courses that were held on 5 & 12 March were very interesting and thought provoking. Numbers of around 35 attended each course. Thank you Charlie & Sam for presenting the Advent & Lent Courses, they were much appreciated.

The Easter Services were all well attended and slightly up on last year's numbers.

Our sincere thanks go to Wendy Rider and her team of volunteers. The office could not be maintained as it does, open five days a week, from 9am to 5pm without this dedicated team.

The Garden of Remembrance continues to thrive, a tranquil place to sit and reflect. We must thank Avril Williams, who is the administrator and oversees the garden, interments and meets with families. Also to Linda Parry who looks after the Memorial Wall, to Alan and to John, the gardener.

Helen Harpin & Sue Jones continue to lead the team of practitioners in Pre School supported by a management team of Charlie, Ian & Diana. We are so grateful to the team, who continue to make Pre School such a key part of St Mark's.

Chat and Play meet each Thursday, with between 25 and 30 attending with their parents, grandparents, carer's or child minders. We would like to thank Janine who organises this group and thank Lynne & Carolyn, who support her as and when required.

The Pastoral Support Group meet on a regular basis and support those who need it, they also continue to keep in touch with people through Telecare, who appreciate the phone calls. The flowers in Church are often taken by Wendy Waters to someone unwell or in need. Thank you Wendy, Charlie and all the Pastoral team for the support that you give.

We would like to thank Jim & Barry, who carry out all the fire & safety procedures.

Parish News is sent out each week enabling those who cannot attend Church to be part of the Church Family. We would like to thank Marilyn Bailey for the beautiful artwork that she produces weekly for Parish News. Several of her paintings are re-produced for our calendars that Marilyn organises. They are sold each year to raise funds for the Church.

Thank you to Mike & Janet Warren for "The Praying Together" section, in Parish News, it is well received. I look forward to reading it each week.

The **50/50** club continues to be a good fundraiser. We replaced the altar frontal recently from proceeds raised and would like to thank Janet Warren for organizing this. It is a beautiful, well-made and quality product, I think you will all agree.

The Craft Group continues to work all year round and have raised over £1160 from their Christmas and Easter gifts. We also have a team that produce cards all year round to raise funds. Many thanks to you all.

The Christmas & Easter Raffles were well supported. Our thanks go to Corinne who organises this, also to Laura, who helps pack the hampers and to everyone who either donated items for the raffle, bought tickets or helped in any way.

We held a Quiz night last September and are holding another on 2 May. Many thanks go to Diana Johnson and her daughter Laura for organising this. We raised £386 for the quiz and raffle in September.

Next year 2027 we will be celebrating the 50th Anniversary of St Mark's Church and will be

organising some events to celebrate this as we go through the year, watch this space!!!

I have thanked some people in this report but here are some more. Our thanks go to Clive, his musicians and John, Keira, Rebecca & Timothy for their singing.

Those who read the lessons and lead the intercessions. Our Communion stewards Lynne, Elizabeth and Jean. Our welcomer's and coffee makers. Our chair movers and grass cutters. My fellow members on the Leadership Team.

We thank Janet for her seven years on Leadership as she steps down today, we will all miss you. We would like to welcome Gerrie onto the Leadership Team.

I hope I have not missed anyone out but THANK YOU to everyone for their time and talents given so freely, we are truly blessed. We have so much to look forward to, but we must continue our work with God guiding us forward. I would like to finish by saying thank you to everyone for your support and thank God that we are all part of the Church we call St Mark's.

A copy of the full report is available on the Church website and a hard copy is included in the Church minutes file.

[Dates of future Church Council meetings](#)

PCC Meeting, date to be confirmed following the next Leadership Meeting.

Date of next APCM 11 April 2027

With no further the meeting closed with the Grace.