

St Mark's Church Parochial Church Council

Minutes of the PCC Meeting 26 April 2026

The PCC of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Mark, Bedford Charity Number 1164416.
All minutes are available on our website www.stmarkschurch.com

The meeting was held following the 9.30 Communion Service and opened with prayers.

Apologies

Alan and Jean Kirk, Morag Stewart

New PCC Members

Charlie welcomed Val Simmonds and Philip Whitlock as new PCC members.

Minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes of the 8 February 2026 meeting had been circulated and are available on the church website.

Matters Arising

No matters arising

Leadership Report

A full report will be made during the Annual Congregational Meeting.

Finance

- Ian gave a review of the church finances for the period 1 Sept 2025 to 31 March 2026.
- The Main Account had a surplus of £869.61 for the period.
- The notes on the accounts highlighted again, the generous donations towards the repairs to the Church heating system and the repairs, from funds, to the blocked drains.
- The new altar frontal deposit, from the 50/50 Club funds, had been paid during this period, with the balance paid in April. All agreed how superb it looks.
- The Gift Aid claim for the Jan- Apr period will be completed in the next two weeks.
- Ian confirmed that we are compliant with our reserves policy.
- The Pre-School account was showing a surplus of £23 045 for the period. This was an improved position, and had enabled a rental payment of £15 954 to be mad for the seven months. This compared to a deficit of £6 383 for the whole of the previous financial year. Close monitoring of the finances and staff working hours was ongoing. The redundancy reserves are being met.
- The Garden of Remembrance account was showing a surplus of 14 471. Past expenditure on additional kerbs and plaques was now generating additional income.

Centre Management

- Wendy advised that all was going well with bookings.
- Ongoing maintenance will include decoration of the toilets. Other projects include window glass blown in the Wren Room, renovating railway sleeper in the G.O.R., and a water leak from the roof area in the Large Hall. Replacement of some of the high fascia boards to be carried out as funds allow. Wendy recorded thanks to all the office volunteers for their assistance and support.
- Following the retirement of our previous architect, MT Architecture Limited have been asked to act for St Mark's and carry out our Quinquennial Inspection. They are current going through the approval process with the Diocese.

Preschool

- Numbers are currently good and there are new applications coming in.
- Members were advised that an employment law solicitor has now been engaged to support the HR aspects of Preschool. Di Johnson explained that, under changes to employment law, the Employment Rights Act involved new procedures which needed to be in place for our employees. This would involve updating employment contracts, and would ensure that we are always fully compliant with legislation, and any amendments that may arise in the future.
- Thanks to Di, Ian and Charlie, who oversee the management of Preschool on behalf of the trustees.

Worship Arrangements

- All running well.

Electoral Roll Arrangements

- Avril reported that there are 136 people on the Electoral Roll. The numbers will be included on the Electoral Roll Certificate and forwarded to the Deanery Secretary.

Pastoral Support

- Wendy reported that there were less people in need currently and that all was running well. Charlie thanked Wendy and all members of the team for the important work carried out on behalf of St Mark's.

Garden of Remembrance

- All going well and the Garden is looking lovely at this time of year.
- There have been 19 interments over the past year, with a further 5 shortly. This brings the total number to 827 ashes interred in the Garden.
- Thank were recorded to Alan for his great support.
- The area where the cedar tree was, in front of the Chapel door, has been replanted. Thanks to Charlie for that.
- Also thanks goes to John the Gardner, Edward for looking after the fountain in Willow, Linda for administrating the Memorial Wall and Fiona and Sue Southam for removing any dead flowers. Ian is also a great support and helps with the finances.

Safeguarding Update

- Mike Cooper confirmed that there had been no Serious Incidents or Safeguarding Issues.
- All trustees are up to date with their training.
- Preschool staff also meet all of the required training levels, including Domestic Abuse training.

Mission Matters

- The Mission project for 2026 was discussed. Sam advised that the Leadership Team had proposed supporting Bedford Foodbank again this year. It was a local project, in continuing need of financial support to operate, which everyone could relate to. If members had further suggestions, please let Sam know. Discussion continued on possibly supporting overseas projects. It was important to ensure that any funds raised went, as far as possible, directly to the cause rather than funding organisations with high admin costs. Again, members were asked to pass any proposals on overseas mission causes to Sam.

Deanery

- All was running well within the Deanery, with Helen Stewart the new Area Dean.
- The vacancy at All Saints Renhold includes the position of Chaplain at Bedford School.
- Charlie and Sam had attended a meeting where it was confirmed that the Rt. Rev. Andrew Rumsey is to be the new Bishop of St Albans.

Dates of next meetings.

Date of next PCC meeting to be advised.

The APCM will be held at 11.00 on 11 April 2027