



St. Mark's Church Parochial Church Council

Minutes of PCC Meeting - 12 October 2025



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.

Apologies Janet Ibberson, Judith Scott, John Scott, Avril Williams

Minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes of the 8 June 2025 meeting had been circulated and are available on the church website.

Matters Arising

No matters arising

Leadership Report

- Elizabeth gave details of the Leadership Meeting held on 5 October.
 - The Harvest weekend had been a great success, with a quiz night on the Saturday and Hog Roast following the Harvest Service on Sunday. Donations helped fund 254 Food Bank meals. Barry will contact a representative from the Food Bank to ask if they will speak at a future service to start our Christmas Appeal.
 - Ian gave details of the year end finances. Full report later.
 - There have been major problems with the Church boilers, and details had been included in Parish News. More later.
 - Enquiries for the Garden of Remembrance had been quiet during the summer.
 - Weekly numbers at Chat and Play were regularly around 20 -25 children, parents and carers and sometimes reached 35. Janine is to promote Junior Church at Chat and Play.
 - Flower vases, previously used by the Flower Group, will be sold. People who had donated them in the past will be able to claim them if required.
 - There had been no safeguarding issues.
 - The Commemoration Service will be held at 3.00pm on 9 November, speaker Richard Ledger. Readings and refreshments will be arranged by the Pastoral Support Team.
 - Remembrance Service will be at 9.30am on 9 November. Pam Kinselley will lay the wreath.
 - Deanery matters were covered by Sam.
 - The annual church visitation took place on 26 August by Archdeacon Dave Middlebrook. Report to come.
 - Discussion on the Church Fire Assembly Point - to be on the open area in front of The Vicarage. Follow up on the position of signage and advice on current processes will be made.
 - Further costings to replace the facias on the highest parts of the Church builds are being followed up. Dave Hobbs is in the process of repainting the facias at the lower levels.
 - The Craft Group will have Christmas Cards and crafts for sale in the foyer in the coming weeks, to raise funds for St Mark's. Also, Corinne and Laura will be organising the Grand Christmas Draw.
 - Dates for the Advent Course will be 4 and 11 December, 7.30pm for coffee and are being promoted in Parish News.
 - Arrangements for St Mark's 50th Anniversary celebrations are being discussed.
- The Leadership Team wished to thank everyone who gives their time freely to support our Church.

Finance

- Ian gave a detailed review of the church finances, both for the first month of 25/26 and for the full financial year, ending August 2025.
- The Main Account showed a deficit of £17 514.07 for the year. This was due mainly to lower rental receipts from Preschool, higher utility charges and a number of maintenance costs.
- Ian confirmed that we are compliant with our reserves policy at £81 978.
- The Gift Aid claim for May-Aug had been received. The total G.A. claim for the financial year had been £13 339.
- Thanks were recorded to all members of the congregation for their continuing generosity.
- Discussion followed on the urgent need to replace the heating boilers, which had become impossible to repair. A fund-raising campaign had been launched through Parish News to help support the cost involved, anticipated to be over £25 000.
- Preschool finances are showing a small surplus of £1 890.96 for the year, which may allow them to pay a small amount towards rent. Additional staffing costs, in all areas, have impacted the finances, whilst grant funding is running behind cost increases.
- Fees were increased in April 2025 to £54 per day.
- Di Johnson, advised members that HR matters were regularly monitored. A review of staffing hours is underway and a revised sickness policy is now in place.
- Regular management meetings are held to closely monitor income, operating costs and staffing.
- All was running well with the Churchyards account, with a year-end surplus of £13 405
- Members thanked Ian for all the hard work in keeping the Church finances under such tight control.

Centre Management

- Regular hirers remain stable and there are a growing number of one off bookings.
- The foyer, the large and small halls have all been repainted. The floors in the large and small halls have been resealed.
- The taps in the kitchen and toilets have been replaced with water saving push button units.
- Outside, some damaged guttering has been repaired, and broken paving repaired.
- The lower fascia boards are being repainted and old disused electrical units removed. Further quotes are being sought to replace the fascias where scaffolding is required with composite materials.
- Other maintenance items include, stabilising some of the railway sleepers, leak from hall window and replacing blown glass in The Wren Room
- Thanks to Wendy and all the volunteers for their work in ensuring the centre runs efficiently.

Preschool

- As reported above, a tight control is being maintained on both costs, and staffing levels and sickness.
- Numbers have improved and a number of children have been registered onto the books for future attendance.
- Chat and Play have a very good feed-in of children into Preschool.
- Thanks to Di, Ian and Charlie and Corinne who are the management committee who oversee Preschool on behalf of trustees.

Worship Arrangements

- All running well. Commemoration and Remembrance services have been publicised, also the Advent Couse.

Items from the Ministers

- All going well. Thanks were recorded to Alan for his continued ministerial support to Charlie and Sam.

Electoral Roll Arrangements

Changes to people's details, and any members of the congregation wishing to be added to the electoral roll, should complete one of the forms available in the foyer or email Avril (Electoral Roll Officer) on aj56@btinternet.com.

Pastoral Support

- All running well. The flower deliveries are always very much appreciated.
- Funeral numbers are now very low with more people opting for direct cremation or funeral directors preferring to use civil celebrants.
- Telecare numbers have dropped. Wendy reminded everyone that Telecare was open to all. Please let Wendy know of anyone who would welcome a regular call.
- Thanks to the team for the very important work they do for St Mark's.

Garden of Remembrance

All going well. Although enquiries reduced during the summer, the number have now started grow. There are 5 interments arranged for October. Ten of the kerbs in the area around the magnolia tree have now been taken up, and a further 7 kerbs have been reserved. Alan was again thanked for his support.

Safeguarding Update

- Mike Cooper confirmed to members 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.
- It was stressed that trustees must be fully up to date and compliant with safeguarding training at all times in order to continue. No person may be a trustee who does not hold necessary up to date training and if training lapses for any reason then trustees will automatically be suspended until training has been completed.
- Mike advised that he had attended a Zoom meeting, arranged by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for child protection, highlighting the safeguarding requirements organisations need to have in place.
- St Marks follows the Diocesan and national policies of the Church of England and we are fully compliant.

Mission Matters

- Bedford Foodbank will be our project again this year. It was considered that this was very well accepted by members of the congregation. Letters are being prepared and will run through until Advent.
- Arrangements are in hand to ask a member of the Foodbank team to speak at a Sunday service in the near future.

Deanery

- Sam updated members on changes taking place at churches in the Deanery. The Reverend Helen Stewart from St John's Church is the new Area Dean. Appointments have now been made at St Michaels and St Martins.
- An appointment at St Mary's Wotton is in process. All Saints Renhold will become vacant in the next two weeks.
- The next Deanery Synod will take place on 16 October 2025.
- Sam reported on the Diocesan Synod and that discussions had covered the possible reduction in Parish Share for churches.
- It was anticipated that a new Bishop would be appointed in the spring of 2026.

Dates of next meetings

- Leadership Team meeting 2 February 2026
- PCC Meeting 8 February 2026 after the 9.30 service
- APCM will be held at 11.00 on 26 April 2026

With no further business the meeting closed with The Grace.