



St. Mark's Church Parochial Church Council

Minutes of PCC Meeting - 22 October 2023



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 9.30 Communion
27 people attended the meeting

Apologies

Janet Ibberson, Janet Warren, Mike Warren

Minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes of the 5 June meeting have been circulated through the church website with no matters arising.

Leadership Report

- Laura gave an update of recent activities following the last Leadership meeting on 5 October.
- Ian, Charlie and Sam had recently had a presentation on contactless giving. Following their recommendations, it was agreed to order a Payaz device to take card donations. This would be in place for the Christmas services. The experience from other churches indicate costs being covered in 12 months.
- 20 chairs with arms have been ordered, which will be adapted from our existing chairs. This will be funded from the 50/50 Fundraiser Club.
- Preschool is full with a waiting list, and earlier funding support had been repaid.
- The main boilers had been overhauled and serviced. The heating company had given their services free of charge.
- An inspection, by a structural engineer, of the whole premises had shown that we had no RAAC present.
- The mission Hog Roast in September had been very well attended. Bishop Richard joined us for the 9.30 service and the celebrations after. The 2024 date has been of 8 September is booked.
- The Race Night on 21 October had raised over £500, which was excellent.
- The Commemoration Service will take place at 3.00pm on 5 November. Speaker, The Reverend Alan Kirk.
- This year's Advent Course will be held on 30 November and 7 December, 7.30 for coffee.
- There will be no Christingle service this year.
- There had been no Safeguarding incidents or issues.
- The next Leadership meeting will be on 29 January 2024.

Finance

- Ian reported on the Church finances for the financial year ending 31 August 2023 and for the first month of the new financial year. On the Main Account, income for the year totalled £189 948 and Expenditure £196 575. However, expenditure included an advance payment of £23 396 for Sep – Dec in Diocesan and ministerial fees.
- The Reserves Policy is being met.
- The issue with our gas supplier, OSSO Energy, has been resolved. An anticipated payment of £17 000 had been included in the budget, but the actual amount will be in the region of £12 000, which is excellent. Also, an equivalent domestic rate had been agreed for the church business electricity supply which reduced the tariffs. The highest rate currently is 89p per unit, which would reduce to 32p. This was still double our previous rate before the pandemic however.
- The Parish Share for 2024 for St Mark's will be £72 880.
- The Preschool Account was showing a surplus of £29 553 for the financial year. Rental payments are up to date, and a previous loan, to ensure that the redundancy reserves were maintained, has been partially paid back to the main account. roll numbers are full, which is very good.
- Some work on the fixed play equipment and fencing has been carried out, as part of the planned refurbishment (cost £2 900). A successful grant application will help fund a permanent shade / sheltered area, with further grant applications planned.

- The Garden of Remembrance Account was showing a deficit for the financial year of £1 934. This was due to payments made for the additional kerbs and stone plaques. Income expected over the coming months will return the account into surplus. All was running well.
- Ian was again thanked for all the hard work involved in maintaining the church finances.

Centre Management

- Wendy reported that hire bookings are being maintained each month.
- Boilers in the main building have been serviced and are working very efficiently. The Wren Room boiler needed repairs and the parts have been ordered.
- All window repairs have been completed, but one of the motorised Velux windows is still not working fully.
- The motor on the main entrance door has failed. Additional companies have been contacted to see if it can be repaired, and avoid a costly replacement.
- The hand dryer in the gentleman's toilet is to be repaired.
- Wendy again thanked all the volunteers for their hard work in running the church centre so well.

Preschool

- As previously advised, all places are currently taken.
- All was running well and HR Reviews have been completed for each member of staff.

Junior Church

All was going well.

Chat and Play

All is going well.

Worship Arrangements

Arrangements all working well.

Pastoral Support

- Telecare continues to play a very important part in keeping in touch with church members who are not able to attend regular services.
- Church flowers are delivered to members of the church and wider community each Monday. Please advise names to the office.
- There have been no bereavement referrals since February. The monthly Bereavement Group had stopped as no one had attended for a number of Wednesdays.
- It was not planned to re-introduce the warm space area, but the Chapel continues to be open during the day and all are welcome.

Garden of Remembrance

- A further 30 granite plaques have now been delivered, which will be installed to the left of the Arbour in the new area, Birch, in the next few weeks.
- Five additional kerbs have been received, which will complete the area near to the circular bench around the Magnolia tree.
- Thanks were recorded to Alan for all his help, it is really appreciated. Thanks also to Edward who maintains the fountain in Willow. Families and visitors really appreciate the garden and how it is looked after by our gardener John.

Safeguarding Update

It was confirmed that there had been no Serious Incidents or Safeguarding issues.

Mission Matters

This year's Mission project, to help fund refurbishment of the chapel at Emmaus, had been extremely well received. It was thought that the project would remain open for donations until the end of November.

Deanery Matters

- All is running well. Sam advised that there were now no vacancies in the Deanery.
- Andrew Pike has been appointed as chaplain for Bedford NHS Hospital Trust.
- The recent Deanery Synod had been held at the Church of the Transfiguration. The young people gave a very interesting presentation to members, and it was good that they stayed for full meeting. Peter Gardini demonstrated his magical skills as a means of communicating the Gospels, also very good. Roy Lambert was appointed Lay Vice Chair.

Dates of next meeting

February 2024, date to be confirmed.

With no further business the meeting closed with The Grace.