



St. Mark's Church Parochial Church Council

Minutes of PCC Meeting - 29 January 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 the 9.30 Communion Service
26 people attended the meeting

Apologies Margaret Appleton, Janet Ibberson

Minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes of the 14 June 2022 meeting were agreed with no matters arising. It was agreed that the Bishop's visit meeting on 18 October 2022 should also be minuted and added to the online minutes file.

• **Leadership Report**

- The Leadership Team had met in November, with the next meeting set for 23 February.
- Reviews have continued on the latest Church and Public Health guidance on COVID, which has become a feature of all our meetings. The Leadership Team consider what are felt safe and sensible guidelines for us to follow to make sure the needs of all the congregation are considered. Since the last PCC meeting the LT have agreed the resumption of both Junior Church and the Bereavement Support Group and also standing when singing.
- Reviews of the Church Finances and budgets are ongoing, particularly the increasing challenge of utility costs. Ian will give more details.
- Our Harvest Mission Event - The Hog Roast in September was really well supported and we are grateful to all who worked hard to make the event a success and thanks to Rod Jones for baking our very own Harvest Loaf which was delicious. The Harvest Mission date for this year is 10 September.
- At PCC meeting in October we were joined by the Bishop of Bedford. This to be minuted on the Church website.
- The Commemoration Service was well attended and special thanks to the speaker the Rev Guy Buckler.
- Our Christmas services were well attended and numbers certainly had picked up from the previous year. It was great to have the Town Band with us again at Carols in the Car Park and Carols by Candlelight services. Band members felt it was the best venue they perform at during the festive season.
- Thanks were recorded to the talented Music Group in church on a Sunday mornings, which it was felt complements our worship.
- It had been agreed to purchase 12 chairs with arms for those who require a little more assistance. We are trying to source these from the same supplier as our existing church chairs.
- The chapel is now a designated "warm space" and we hope it will offer a source of comfort and of care to those who use it. Thanks to everyone who has helped make it such a warm and welcoming place.
- We have discussed options for future fundraising and we have the Quiz arranged for 25th of February we will have a Raffle and sale of Craft items at Easter and we are looking to arrange a race evening for May/June time. Ian will also cover off today a plan for a longer term fundraiser.
- We are so grateful to all who contribute to the church fund raising efforts and I would like to give a special mention to Corinne and The Craft Team who raised the amazing sum of £1400 at Christmas through their hard work and effort. 50% of the raffle proceeds were sent to Bedford Foodbank.
- Safeguarding – Mike Cooper had confirmed there have been no Safeguarding incidents to report.
- The Leadership Team continue to be so grateful to everyone who helps keep St Marks and our Church life ticking along in spite of ever changing challenges in the world and our daily lives at the moment, so thank you from all Leadership Team for all you do.

Finance

Ian gave details of the Church finances for the period Sep - Dec 2022. On the Main Account, income totalled £64 838 and Expenditure £59 318. Income for the period included successful grant applications of £4 700, to cover converting lighting to LED, £500 to support our Warm Space area and £1 279 from the Diocese towards increased utility costs.

- Utility costs continue to be a major concern with one month's charges under the new tariffs being almost £3000.
- Reviewing the YTD Budget, Ian advised that Preschool were now in a position to pay £5000 of redundancy reserve provision underwritten back to church and is now in a position to fully pay its current hire charges. The return to full numbers was really good news.
- St Mark's had fully met the Parish Share request for 2022 to the Diocese.
- As covered in the Leadership Report, fundraising over the Christmas period had been very successful and there are plans for other fundraising activities to help with the rising costs.
- The continuing generosity of church members through Sunday offerings was a vital part of meeting our commitments, with most gifts being Gift Aided. The Gift Aid claim received for Sep - Dec 2022 had been £4 200.
- The Preschool Account was showing a surplus of £15 733 for the period, reflecting that numbers were full. Thanks were recorded to all the staff and to Di Johnson, Rosemary McNeillage and Fiona Cooke who support the personnel, salaries and finance aspects of Preschool.
- The Garden of Remembrance Account had a current surplus of £4 182. Addition kerbs had been ordered and arborist work agreed at £1 400. This work had now been completed.
- Ian gave details of a new fund raising project to be called the St Mark's 50/50 Fund Raiser Club. Fund Raiser numbers would be available at a subscription of £2 each, with payment made for 12 months (£24 minimum). On the first of each month 50% of funds raised going to the church and the other 50% divided will a 1st prize of 50% of the monthly prize fund, 2nd prize of 30% of the monthly prize fund and 3rd prize of 20% of the monthly prize fund. This type of fund raiser was being used successfully by a number of churches in the diocese including a 100's Club at St Albans Cathedral. Members approved the proposal that the fund raiser be introduced.
- Jim gave an update on the latest receipt from Gift Aid which was well received
- Charlie thanked Ian and Jim for all of the work involved in maintaining the church finances so efficiently.

Centre Management

- Wendy reported that bookings were now back to pre-covid levels with 48 different groups meeting each month.
All lighting has been replaced with LED units/ bulbs. Following discussion, it was agreed that the brighter light from the new units was important, and a real benefit to some members of the congregation. Every effort is being made to ensure lighting is turned off when not needed and the heating is turned off at points in the day to ensure energy savings.
- A burst pipe running over the roof had been repaired and is now fully lagged. Quotes are being obtained to repair leaks in the roof light in the flat.
- Wendy wished to record her thanks to all the volunteers and members of the church who assist in ensuring the smooth running of the office and premises.
- Charlie also thanked Wendy for all her hard work in managing a busy church centre.

Preschool

- As previously mentioned, all places are currently taken. All was running well. A member of staff was currently on maternity leave but this was being covered by existing members of staff with no impact on pupil ratios.

Junior Church

As previously mentioned, Junior Church had now restarted and all was going well.

Chat and Play

All is going well with good attendance

Worship Arrangements

The current arrangements were working well.

Pastoral Support

The Bereavement Group is to restart and will be held on the first Wednesday of each month at 11.00am.

Garden of Remembrance

- Avril reported that there had been 29 interments during 2022. There were a further 7 interments due in the coming weeks.
- Only 4 plots remained in Oak and 1 in Alder. The newest area, Willow, was already fully taken up with either interments or reservations.
- A new area, opposite Willow, will be introduced as soon as the plaques are delivered. In addition, it is planned to add kerbs around the magnolia tree and seat.
- John, our gardener is doing a good job. The trees and large hedging have been cut back. Avril thanked everyone who helped to clear the Christmas floral tributes.
- Thanks were also recorded to Alan, who has assisted Charlie with interments through the past months and to Edward who maintains the water feature in Willow.

Safeguarding Update

- There had been no Serious Incidents or Safeguarding issues.
- Mike gave instruction details requesting PCC members to grant access to their online training record on the Diocesan portal. This will assist greatly in ensuring that Mike can check that members are all up to date with Safeguarding Training. Janet confirmed that all PCC members' DBS records were up to date. Members thanked Mike and Janet for making sure all safeguarding matters are covered.

Mission Matters

Sam confirmed the date of the 10 September for the Harvest Festival Hog Roast. Further details nearer the date.

Deanery Matters

All was running well. It was hoped that an appointment would be made soon to cover the Elstow group of churches.

Dates of next meetings

PCC Meetings 3 April 2023 starting at 7.30pm for 7.45pm in Church.

APCM 16 April 2023 after the 9.30 Communion Service

With no further business the meeting closed with The Grace.