

So what happens now?

We can't give exact timings - but we have drawn up a rough timetable and hope the process will look something like the following:

<i>Church graft into St Mark's agreed by PCCs of both St Peter's Church and St Mark's Church</i>	January 2021
<i>Vision of graft into St Mark's shared in both churches. Archdeacon attends St Marks to explain scheme.</i>	7 February 2021
<i>New Post of Associate Rector of St Peter's and Vicar Designate of St Mark's is openly advertised.</i>	March 2021
<i>Associate Rector of St Peter's and Vicar Designate of St Mark's is interviewed (and hopefully appointed!)</i>	April 2021
<i>Appointed person moves into St Mark's Vicarage and begins ministry as Associate at St Peter's Church</i>	July 2021
<i>Appointed person works at Peter's to identify graft team and builds relationship with St Mark's.</i>	July 2021 - March 2022
<i>Planting team have 'sending service' at St Peter's; Installation of new vicar at St Mark's with grafting team</i>	Easter 2022

What if I have more questions?

We anticipate there will be many more questions. I need to be honest that not all the answers will have been worked out yet. If, however, you have further questions, please speak to your churchwardens in the first instance. They are in regular contact with Libby Etherington (Rector of St Peters); Mark Hayton (Area Dean of Aldershot) and myself as Archdeacon. We are all very happy to answer further questions.

The Archdeacon of Surrey's Office
 Archdeacon's House, Lime Grove, West Clandon, Guildford, Surrey, GU4 7UT
 ☎ 01348 790366 ✉ archdeacon.surrey@cofguildford.org.uk



Archdeacon's Newsletter for the Parish of St Mark's, Farnborough

February 2021

Dear Friends

It is now over three months since the Revd Ian Hedges retired as your vicar. I'm pleased to report that, whilst conversations are never easy in a pandemic, I've been working very closely with your churchwardens and PCC in praying and reflecting upon the next chapter of ministry at St Mark's, Farnborough. When I came to preside at worship on the Sunday after Fr Ian's retirement, many of you were expressing concern about the challenges facing St Mark's at this time. These do not just relate to the pandemic. The last few years have seen a steady decline in worshippers; an increasingly elderly congregation; concerns about financial sustainability and a general concern about the future.

Bishop Andrew and I have been concerned that the task for any successor of Fr Ian will be too big without additional help. And so we've been in discussion with the PCCs of both St Mark's and St Peter's to suggest that there might be a partnership. The result of the discussions is that both PCCs have agreed that the new vicar of St Mark's will be installed with a graft team from St Peter's. This means that a number from the congregation in St Peter's will move to worship in St Mark's to help the congregation here grow and reach out to the significant number of people (especially young families) in this part of town.

Of course, this will bring both excitement and fear; excitement at the prospect of St Mark's growing and reaching out to its community; fear at the prospect of change. This newsletter sets out in more detail what this partnership will look like. Throughout the whole process, I will be alongside you in care and support.

*As ever,
Paul.*

Paul Davies, Archdeacon of Surrey

Questions you might be asking...

What exactly is a graft?

A graft is a partnership between two churches where a group of people from a larger church choose to move and become part of the family in a smaller church. It seeks to combine the wisdom and knowledge of one church with the energy and new ideas of another, to see regeneration of both worship and mission

Is church grafting a new idea?

The church has always sought to plant churches. St Mark's Church was, of course, a plant from St Peter's Church in the Victorian era. The church still seeks to plant in areas of new housing. It also seeks to graft when a church community has become quite small and vulnerable and could do with some additional help.

How many people will the graft team involve?

Once the new Associate Rector of St Peter's, and Vicar Designate of St Mark's has arrived and settled into St Peter's, s/he will ask people to consider and pray whether God might be calling them to be part of the graft. Whilst it's difficult to know the number at this stage, we hope it will be between 25 and 50 people.

How will the graft team be led?

Next month, St Peter's will advertise for an Associate Rector of St Peter's who will be the Vicar Designate of St Mark's. This person will be appointed to work at St Peter's and help to identify and get to know the graft team. After Easter 2022 they will move down with the team and be instituted as Vicar of St Mark's.

Will we get a voice in who our new vicar will be?

Absolutely - it wouldn't work otherwise. At the appropriate time, the PCC will decide who will represent St Mark's on the interview panel. The post will be funded by St Peter's until the move to St Mark's and so St Peter's will have an important input too: but the appointment will be made jointly and in partnership.

Who else will be on the interview panel?

In addition to representatives from St Mark's and St Peter's, the interview panel will also consist of the Bishop of Guildford, the Archdeacon of Surrey and the Rector of St Peter's. An appointment will not be made without all voices being properly heard and all these people working together to reach a consensus.

Who will look after St Marks until Easter 2022?

St Peter's have very kindly offered to help with the ministry of St Mark's between now and when a new vicar is appointed. This will be largely from their own clergy staff team and their Licensed Lay Ministers. There may, from time to time, be need to draw on other licensed people from the Deanery of Aldershot.

about this vision...

Who is formally in charge whilst we have no vicar?

Legally, during a vacancy in an incumbency, the Area Dean and Churchwardens are [what is legally known as] the sequestrators. In effect, that means they have responsibility for the running of the church. There will, however, be lots of support from our friends at St Peter's as well as others (not least myself!).

Will the graft team seek to change our church?

The graft team will celebrate the heritage of faith at St Marks and want to ensure its character is retained as part of the onward journey. When new people join a church, by definition it changes. They will bring gifts and skills which will enable the church to grow in depth, number and in expressions of worship and mission.

Will the Sunday services change when the graft team arrives?

The graft team will respect the St Mark's tradition - and especially the centrality of the Eucharist. In addition, a new and more informal expression of worship will be introduced alongside it. Making appropriate and relevant provision for others, different from us, is a significant way to facilitate growth in our church family.

What benefits will the graft team bring?

The graft team will bring the gift of new people, new energy, new commitments of time, talents and money; a younger demographic; a new vision to reach out into the parish of St Mark's with the good news of the Gospel, and a new confidence as we become more sustainable as a church family.

What will be expected of the St Mark's congregation?

Simply to continue your faithfulness to St Mark's; to welcome the new graft from St Peter's; and to work together with them in building God's church in this parish and reaching out to the hundreds (thousands even!) who know not and love not the Lord Jesus. In God's strength, evangelism and mission is a priority for us!

Will St Marks then revert to being a daughter church of St Peters?

No. We have decided that the parish of St Mark's will continue as a parish separate from St Peter's. Those in the graft team will transfer from St Peter's to St Mark's (and will not intend to return!). At the point at which the new priest and team will arrive, the priest will be inducted as vicar of the St Mark's parish.

What will happen to St Marks Vicarage?

The Vicarage will be retained and will be the place where the Associate Rector of St Peter's and Vicar Designate of St Mark's will live. S/he will move into this house as soon as they s/he has been appointed - hopefully around July 2021 (even if s/he will not actually be vicar of St Mark's until post-Easter 2022).