Dear Congregation,

The PCC is aware that some of you have concerns about the recent process to recruit a Vicar. We therefore thought it might be helpful to explain the recruitment process and how it will now continue in coming weeks.

The process is not one for the PCC alone. Ultimately, a Vicar will be appointed by the Bishop, who is represented here by the Archdeacon (Ven. Allie Kerr). St Mark’s Patron (the vicar of SS Peter & Paul, Bromley, Rev. James Harratt) has also been involved. By law, St Mark’s PCC has two elected Representatives in this process. The PCC unanimously chose Richard Collins who was Churchwarden and Ruth Russell, Safer Recruitment Officer. There were no other candidates put forward. The process obliges these Representatives to maintain confidentiality about aspects of the recruitment process.

Both the congregation and the PCC have been involved in defining the information given to possible candidates. On Sunday 18th August, 2024 St Mark’s held a “Visioning Event” led by the Archdeacon, to identify the needs and priorities of St Mark’s for recruiting a new priest. The input from the congregation was used in writing a Parish Profile. The Parish Profile was approved by PCC and made available to potential candidates from February 2025. A copy of the Profile can be obtained from Sherwyn Cupido-Weaich, the PCC Secretary, and it will also be posted on St Mark’s website, for your information.

The PCC unanimously decided to start the recruitment using Pathways, a web-based recruitment forum and the diocesan website, partly based on advice about where candidates would be looking, but partly because of the high cost of advertising in the Church Times. We agreed to reconsider if needed, and we are now advertising in the paper, and on its website.

A number of candidates applied. A short list for interview was agreed by the Archdeacon, the Patron and St Mark’s own Representatives. The short list was of three candidates who met the essential requirements of the role. Interviews were offered to complete the assessment of which (if any) candidates were appointable. Unfortunately one candidate withdrew from the process at that stage.

The two remaining applicants were interviewed on 18th June, by a panel of the Archdeacon, the Patron and the Representatives. Details of interview responses are confidential, but after interview the panel unanimously agreed to offer the role to one candidate but not to the other. Unfortunately again, the offer was refused by the preferred candidate.

The vacancy is now advertised again, including in the Church Times from 11th July. Two potential new candidates have already expressed an interest and an interview day has been scheduled for 1st September. Advertising will continue.

Any member of the PCC, or the Representatives (Ruth and Richard), will be happy to listen to any concerns you may wish to raise. The PCC continues to have confidence in the Representatives and in the process.

Please keep all concerned in your prayers as recruitment continues seeking the right person to lead, guide and nurture St Mark’s into the future.

Kind regards

All members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of Bromley, St Mark.