



St Leonard's Church
chesham bois

PRESS RELEASE

THE FUTURE OF MARYLAND PRE-SCHOOL

Tuesday 25th July 2023

It is with great sadness that the trustees of Maryland, the Parochial Church Council of St Leonard's Church, have announced the planned closure of Maryland Pre-School in December 2023. The PCC recognises the immense contribution Maryland has made to the development of so many children and to the support of so many families over many years. It has provided a loving, caring and nurturing environment mainly due to the dedicated staff and excellent relationships with parents.

The PCC has been significantly underwriting Maryland for many years; without major one off grants in the last two years alone, the deficit would have been in excess of £23 000. Additionally, without large investment and changes to the present building, the provision of Maryland is unviable. The current and impending national funding model and requirements for adequate facilities are untenable for a small pre-school in an old parish hall.

Extending our current provision is not possible and the physical size of the parish centre restricts the numbers that can be taken. The demand for the shape of provision offered is clearly not extensive: while it suits our present families, our numbers remain low and are not generating enough income at present.

The PCC is planning to provide a purpose built early years venue for future local families, as can be seen in our active planning application. Further news about this will follow in the coming months.

Out of transparency, respect and care for the children, families and staff at the pre-school, the timing of this announcement is intended to help those most directly impacted to make the necessary transition.

The PCC acknowledges that this is a tough time for pre-school provision and that many providers have had to shut down in recent months, locally and nationally.

"The staff over the years have been amazing and have contributed to the life of Chesham Bois community in a way that cannot be measured. This decision has been painful to make but the management and the trustees are convinced that making this decision now offers the opportunity to re-imagine this aspect of community life, laying foundations for the re-expansion of the work within the new building."

Rev'd Laurie Clow (Rector),
Mrs Alison Greenhalgh and Mrs Samantha McEwen (Churchwardens)