



St Leonard's Church

Chesham Bois

Annual General Meeting

To include Vestry meeting and
Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2023

The Parish Centre, Glebe Way, Chesham Bois, HP6 5ND



Agenda & Minutes

Reports from Parish Organisations
For the Year Ended 31st December 2022

Rev'd Laurie Clow

Choi Mei van Rest – Cathy Baldwin – Katie Flory

Registered Charity Number 1134113





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VESTRY MEETING AGENDA

1. Welcome and Opening Worship
2. Apologies
3. Confirmation of 2022 Vestry Minutes
4. Election of Church Wardens: Sam McEwen and Ali Greenhalgh

MINUTES OF THE VESTRY MEETING HELD ON 11th APRIL 2022

Present: Laurie Clow

17 members on the electoral roll

Apologies: Silvia Dolemore, Lance Hale, Bekki Hadley, Ruth and Chris Leach, Steve and Juliet Brown, Alan and Jane Lewis, Fred and Jeanne Clayton, Paul Evans, Owen Melville-Thomas, Chris and Ali Clare, Marian Chiapetti, Denise Kolb

- 1. Welcome and Opening Worship:** Jonny opened in worship, then Laurie spoke on Jer 17: 5-8. Both the cursed man and the blessed man end up in the hot and lovely desert. As Christians we are not immune to difficult times. If we trust in man we will not see prosperity, but if we trust in God we will have our roots in the river, our leaves will always be green, and we don't just carry life, we give life. We will bear fruit! Never hunker down and be inward-looking – we must be fruitful.
- 2. Present and Apologies:** as above.
- 3. Minutes of Vestry Meeting held on 12th April 2021:** Taken as read and approved.
Proposed: Jenny Robinson **Seconded:** Jackie Lambert **Unanimous**
Abstentions: 2 as not present last year
- 4. Election of Church Wardens:**

Nominee	Proposed by	Seconded by
Cathy Baldwin	Alice Somervell	Paul Evans
Choi Mei van Rest	Jonny Somervell	Alice Somervell

Cathy and Choi were elected by **unanimous** decision to serve as Church Wardens for the next 12 months.
- 5. Thanks to the Church Wardens:** Laurie thanked the church wardens for all their support over the past year.
- 6.** The vestry meeting was closed.



ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. PCC Member only vote to pass revised policies
3. Confirmation of 2022 APCM minutes
4. Correspondence
5. PCC reports:
Wardens' Report and presentation of Log Book of Fabric and Ornaments
6. Reception of Independently Examined Accounts
 - 5.1 Honorary Treasurer's report, as attached
 - 5.2 Present accounts as an accurate record of PCC activity
 - 5.3 Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2023
7. PCC Elections for 2023
 - 6.1 Electoral Roll Officer's Report and Election of Electoral Roll Officer for 2023
 - 6.2 Election of PCC members in addition to ex officio members and church wardens
Following to continue:
Katie Flory, Jenny Robinson, Malcolm Hafner, Marion Campbell-Brown
In line with APCM 2015 resolution, Peter Flory and Jackie Lambert act as ex-officio posts for qualified LLM's
To be elected for 3 years: 5 persons: Jenni Sawyer, Tom Brewer, Gilly Hafner (PCC Secretary), Stephen Pimenta & Paul Evans
To be elected for 1 year: 1 Person (Youth Rep): Charlotte Langrish
8. Reception of Reports from Parish Organisations, as attached
9. Any other business of general Parish interest to be submitted to the Churchwardens or the PCC Secretary before **Sunday 3rd April 2023**

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING HELD ON 11th APRIL 2022

1. **Present and Apologies:** as above
2. **Minutes of APCM held on 12th April 2021:** Taken as read and approved
Proposed: Choi van Rest **Seconded:** Cathay Baldwin **Unanimous**
Abstentions: 2 abstentions as not present last year
3. **Correspondence:** None had been received
4. **Parochial Church Council Reports**
Reports from the PCC and its various sub-committees were reported in the TAR. The Log Book was made available for perusal and Laurie thanked the staff team and members of the various committees for all the work they carried out.
5. **Presentation of the Independently Examined Accounts**
 - 5.1. Katie Flory reported that the PCC have accepted the accounts which have been fully audited, and Katie presented them to all present
 - 5.2. Katie thanked Petr Flory, John Ogle, Alice Somervell and Ruth Leach for their assistance throughout the year
 - 5.3. Katie officially presented the independently examined accounts.



5.4. Katie proposed Nicola Anderson as the Independent Examiner for 2022.

Proposed: Katie Flory **Seconded:** Martin Jennings

Unanimous decision and there were no abstentions

5.5. Laurie thanked Peter and Katie for all their work and presented them with gifts as a token of appreciation and asked that everyone look at the accounts.

6. PCC Elections for 2022

6.1. Electoral Roll and Electoral Roll Officer

The updated Electoral Roll listed 175 members at April 20221

Marian Chiappetti (helped by Ruth Leach) was thanked for carrying out her role and agreed to continue in this capacity.

Proposed: Cathy Baldwin **Seconded:** Sam McEwen

Unanimous decision and there were no absentions

6.2 PCC Nominations

Laurie said that Andrew Silley has stepped down and that Alan Lewis had been asked and had accepted to stand for 3 years.

Nominee	Proposed by	Seconded by
Alan Lewis	Ruth Leach	Bekki Hadley

Unanimous decision and there were no abstentions.

Laurie also proposed that the role of Youth representative on PCC be deferred a year, as Owen had been unable to find a suitable candidate.

Proposed: Laurie Clow **Seconded:** Jonny Somervell

Unanimous decision and there were no absentions

7. Reception of the reports from Parish Organisations

Laurie encouraged everyone to read the reports on the activities that have taken place in the previous year. Laurie thanked Ruth Leach, John Ogle, Jackie Lambert, Owen Melville-Thomas, Denise Kolb, Jonny and Alice Somervell, Ade Dunn, Di Wright, Bekki Hadley and Paul Evans and Chris and Ali Clare for their support and help.

8. Any Other Business

Cathy Baldwin gave thanks for all that Laurie and Wendy have given to St Leonard's and its members.

9. In Conclusion

Choi closed the meeting in prayer.



FROM THE WARDENS

2022 saw the St Leonard's Church community joining together again as we left most pandemic restrictions behind. While Covid remains a reality, and we continue to seek to protect our more vulnerable members, it has been a joy to meet together in person regularly and without restrictions. The church weekend away was an important step forward in this regard. Almost our last gathering before the initial lockdown in March 2020 was our weekend away together, and to repeat this experience after the difficulties of the pandemic was significant in our growth as church family.

In April we received the frustrating news that the Planning Inspector had dismissed our appeal against Buckinghamshire Council's refusal of planning permission for the new Parish Centre in Glebe Way. None of the local objections were upheld, however, the site's position within the new Beechwood Special Area of Conservation meant that the appeal was dismissed on a condition that did not even exist when the appeal was lodged. The PCC discussed the appeal and took the decision to resubmit the plans with a minor alteration (the removal of the Keeper's Cottage) that would meet the requirements of the Beechwood SAC. These new plans were submitted in December 2022.

Bekki Hadley, our children and families worker, has done an excellent job as an evangelist this year, arranging several events during the summer holidays for children and their parents. These often included food as well as evangelism, and often the majority of families who attended were not members of St Leonard's church. Bekki's evangelism into the local community is natural and enthusiastic, and she continues to arrange events during school holidays as well as being responsible for teaching our children on Sundays: last year she also arranged a Light Party during October Half Term, and a Christmas Party in December.

In September we started a new pattern of services, with the 8 o'clock service online except for on feast days, a service in church at 9am which alternates between the Book of Common Prayer and Common Worship, and a service at 10.30am at the Beacon School with provision for children and young people's ministry. Changes in services, particularly service times, are never easy to make, as we become used to how and when we worship; we are very grateful to everyone for joining with us as these changes have been implemented. We must here acknowledge the huge contribution that John Ogle made to the 8 o'clock service; his pastoral care for that congregation was so warm and loving that everyone was made to feel special. It was very important to him that he knew and used everyone's name, and his love and wisdom are much missed.

In November, the core leadership team spent two days together, worshipping and praying for the St Leonard's church family, prior to Laurie and Wendy taking their sabbatical which started in December. We are very grateful to Laurie and Wendy, Chris and Ali, Denise, and Diana, for all their prayerful leadership during 2022. Thank you also to Ruth and Alice in the office, and to Jonny for leading us in worship. Jonny's health has been under attack during this year, and we pray for his full restoration in 2023; he continues to inspire us and to draw us into a deeper relationship with God through his leadership. Katie Flory has continued to keep a watchful eye on the church finances, ably supported by Peter who, with Jackie Lambert, has continued to lead the morning service in church. Peter also represents us on the Deanery Synod.



The PCC has taken time to prayerfully consider many issues during the year, and we are grateful for the unity it represents. We are very grateful for everyone's support as we have sought to lead prayerfully and carefully, and we ask that you would continue to pray for your PCC members who have responsibility for the careful stewardship of our church.

We are also deeply grateful to Laurie for his leadership over the past year. He seeks to be guided by the Holy Spirit in all things, testing everything he hears prophetically against biblical truth. He encourages us all to practise the prophetic gifts, listening to God and praying for each other. After over 7 years of dedicated leadership, he is overdue his sabbatical rest, and we look forward to seeing him rested and restored after his stay in South Africa.

Choi Mei van Rest and Cathy Baldwin – Churchwardens

WARDENS' REPORT ON THE FABRIC AND CHURCH PROPERTIES

In the church, the fire extinguishers were serviced in March and the Fixed Electrical Survey was carried out in November, as part of the ongoing maintenance of the building and for the safety of users. The clock in the tower was serviced in September, and the stop block for the bell was repaired and reinstalled in December. In addition, the PCC voted to contribute to the resurfacing of the entrance to High Bois Lane from Bois Lane, and the levelling of the rest of the driveway up to the church car park, in April.

At the Parish Centre, ongoing maintenance to the boiler and heating system was required following teething problems after the installation of the new boiler in December 2021 (see last year's report). The gas cooker in the Parish Centre kitchen was also found to be unsafe and needed to be replaced in March. In December, a diseased tree was removed from near the entrance to the church office.

The church continues to use 19 Stubbs End Close (Amersham) under licence from the Chiltern Christian Trust.

Thank you to the property committee for overseeing these property matters.

Choi Mei van Rest and Cathy Baldwin – Churchwardens

PCC TREASURER'S REPORT

In 2022 income and expenditure increased, resulting in a net loss in the General Fund of £49,551.53. The giving to our Mission partners has been sustained and we have met all our costs.

We paid, in 2022, our full Parish Share to the Diocese based on our current clergy and the Beacon rent in 2022 was higher than last year.

The Parish Centre development project spend by the PCC in 2022 was £32,929.70 principally for the costs associated with the second planning application.



Other abnormal expenditure for 2022 included the Parish Weekend shortfall of £5,836.88 and the underwriting of the housing for Jesus Ministry of £4,445.30.

The PCC Maryland Fund showed a deficit of £2,998.23 at the close of the year due to low pupil numbers and the PCC Parish Centre Fund showed a deficit of £15,262.46 due to low rental income and rising fuel costs.

Our Lord and Father has been generous to us and many within the church family have continued to reflect that generosity in their giving. The budget for 2023 shows a deficit which we need to address as we go through the coming year.

Simplified accounts for the General Fund, the Parish Centre Development fund, Maryland, Mission and the Parish Centre are available as a separate appendix to this document.

Thank you to those who support me in my role over the last year, especially John Ogle, Ruth Leach, Alice Sommervell and Peter Flory.

Katie Flory – Treasurer

ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT

The Electoral Roll at the end of March 2023 stands at 144 members.

The changes are made up of the following:

23 members removed from the roll due to:

- 15 worshipping elsewhere
- 5 moved away
- 4 deaths

3 new members have been added to the roll.

Marian Chiappetti – Church Electoral Roll Officer

WORSHIP AT ST LEONARD'S

During the period covered by this report our worship services have moved to a new pattern in response to the revelation that we have received. Worship in all its various forms and variety remains a central and integral part of our corporate life in Christ. The core is always to “worship in Spirit and Truth” (Jn 4:24) because that is the worshippers that Father seeks. However we have different opportunities and expressions of that.

The main weekly service at the Beacon continues to develop with a worship team and openness and freedom to the Holy Spirit within the context of Family worship. We are blessed to have in Jonny an amazingly sensitive and skilled worship Pastor, and a small but spirit led team of musicians and singers. Our thanks to all of them! During a large part of the year Jonny has been unwell, and we are thankful to the Rector and others who have led us in his absence.



One of the advantages (and I guess that there had to be one!) of writing a report reflecting on the past year, is that it helps us to reflect on the progress we have made over the past year, and it is clear that the congregation at the Beacon are increasingly willing to engage in worship and to “push in”.

We also have continued with the Encounter Service every other week at 7pm in Church. This has much less pressure of time and form and so is a different opportunity to press into all that Father has for us. There is always bible teaching, and time for worship and ministry but in various forms! I would encourage you to come if you have not been before.

The 8am BCP Service has continued online and in person only on Festivals. This is also a worship service, though (usually) without music.

The service in the Church building is now at 9am. This service has a pastoral focus, with a variety of liturgy both BCP and Common Worship, and recorded music. This has settled to be a welcoming and warm conjugation, although we continue to encourage people to come to the main service when possible. A faithful team, based round our two wonderful LLMs, help to lead this service.

Please continue to pray for Jonny’s complete healing and his return to work. He is desperate to be back with us in full health and energy to lead us forward in worship. It is the heart of our corporate life and therefore most in the enemy’s sights for attack.

Chris Clare – Associate Minister

FREEDOM PRAYER AT ST LEONARD’S

This has been a busy year for the prayer team, being able to pray for people without restrictions. Over the past year there have been around 90 prayer appointments for Original Design prayer, Freedom Prayer and healing prayer all in person. Out of these appointments, 9 were for people from other churches with links to St Leonard’s. We also provided 8 individuals and 1 church with Original Design by email.

During January & February, we ran Living in Freedom 1 on a Wednesday evening with 19 people attending, 12 people hearing the teaching for the first time. The prayer team prayed for Original Design and Freedom Prayer for everyone attending the sessions. A small team also visited the Restore Hope Leadership Academy to provide Freedom Prayer.

In April, Laurie led a morning of online JM Prayer Team Training for Listeners and Captains for around 60 people in different churches. Ruth Leach and Adam Tams (St Jude’s Southsea) led a session each. It was the first training event able to take place since the Covid outbreak.

At the beginning of May, a small team went to Adam Tams’ church, St Jude’s Southsea, to lead some prayer team training and provide some Original Design and Freedom Prayer for the leadership team.

Towards the end of May, St Leonard’s hosted a JM1 Conference at St Andrew’s Chorleywood, with around 50 delegates attending. This was an amazing 3 days of teaching and ministry. St Leonard’s



Prayer Team joined with other churches prayer teams so that everyone attending received both Original Design and Freedom Prayer over the conference.

During August & September we ran Living in Freedom 1 for a small group of 4 people. During September to November we ran Living in Freedom 2 on a Wednesday evening and Thursday morning, with 60 people attending. The Prayer Team provided Freedom Prayer following the teaching sessions.

In October, a small team visited Mick Medrick at Christchurch Barking to provide Original Design prayer for those attending Living Free teaching.

Throughout the year, I have met with a number of team members as part of the ongoing pastoral oversight of the team. We have also trained 9 new Captains in April and welcomed 10 new listeners to the team in November.

This has been a year of walking in a part of our St Leonard's Original Design, being a resourcing church, providing training and prayer to a number of churches, organisations, church leaders and individuals - it is an amazing privilege to be part of and lead such an awesome team of people. Thank you all for your willingness to give up your time and to lavish God's love on others and see people set free and walk in who they are designed to be.

If you would like to book a prayer appointment at a time that suits you or discuss Freedom Prayer, then please contact me at prayer@stleonardscb.org.uk.

Ruth Leach – Prayer Team Coordinator

We offer other forms of Prayer Ministry as and when required

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Junior Church on Sunday

In Junior Church we regularly have between 7-10 children attend on Sundays. During each session the children have a catch up and snack time at the beginning. This is a great opportunity for the children and leaders to share what they have done during the week while enjoying a biscuit and sometimes cake if it's been anyone's birthday during the week. The birthday child also receives a card from the Junior Church leaders and a prize from the birthday box.

During Junior Church we do bible teachings where the children enjoy exploring the bible and like finding the bible verses themselves. This is a great way for the children to learn where to find the books in the Bible. We then read the Bible verse together, discuss its meaning, why the passage is important and how it can help us in our lives. This helps the children to learn the relevance of the bible passage for them in daily lives and how it can impact them. It also helps the children to know that bible verses can help them as they grow in their faith and how it can help them in different situations they face.



The children also enjoy doing creative prayer. This helps the children to engage in prayer more, know that prayer can be exciting and does not have to be just hands together and eyes closed. They enjoy exploring the many different ways they can talk to God. The children also enjoy doing a fun craft that links in with either prayer or the bible teaching to help the children remember what they have learnt in Junior Church.

At the end of the Junior Church session if we still have some time the children are given the opportunity to choose which games they would like to play. The children enjoy going to the sports hall and playing ball games during this time.

Creche on Sunday

In Creche we have 3 children who attend regularly. The children enjoy lots of free play time, a Bible story and a craft that is linked to the bible teaching. The children move up to Junior Church when they start full time school, so in preparation, the Creche children sometimes join in some Junior Church sessions which helps with the transition from Creche to Junior Church.

Family fun days

During the school holidays Junior Church has had lots of fundays which are aimed at children and their families. The fundays are a great opportunity for outreach as a lot of families who don't attend church come to the fun days. The fundays this year have been the following:

February half term

In February half term we had lots of fun looking at the bible teaching of creation. This was done through the popular game pass the parcel, where under each layer was a different day of creation. We also had pizza delivery which all the families loved and then had lots of fun playing some games and getting creative doing crafts that were all linked with creation. At this event we had around 28 children and adults attend.

Easter holidays

In the Easter holidays we had fun doing egg and spoon races and eating lots of party food. The children loved doing an easter egg hunt outside in the parish centre garden where they had to find plastic coloured eggs which contained mini chocolate eggs inside. We then explored the Easter story in a fun and engaging way, by having some special plastic eggs which revealed a part of the Easter story when each egg was opened. We then enjoyed doing lots of Easter related crafts. We had over 20 children and adults attend this event.

May half term

In May half term we celebrated the Queen's platinum jubilee with the children and families where we had fun playing games, having a party food lunch including scones. The children enjoyed doing junk modelling where they made a castle out of cardboard boxes. The bible teaching was done through the children acting out the Queen Esther story. We talked about why Queen Elizabeth was a good Queen, why Esther was a good Queen and how God enabled both of them to be a Good Queen. We also had lots of royal/Queen related crafts for the children to do at this event. We had over 15/20 children and adults attend this event.



Summer holidays

During the summer holidays there was a great opportunity to connect with our church families and families who don't attend church with different activities. For the first 4 weeks of the summer holidays Junior Church provided 4 different fun day events for children and their families. We were very fortunate with the lovely weather and were able to do all the events outside in the parish centre garden. The events we did were the following:

- *Schools out party*

This event was to celebrate the start of the summer holidays. We had fun crafts, games and a bouncy castle, bible teaching in a fun way and BBQ lunch. This was a great opportunity to connect with a lot of families and build relationships. At this event we had around 30/40 children and adults attend.

- *Picnic at the Park*

We had a picnic lunch together at the park together with a treasure hunt and lots of fun games including parachute games. The bible teaching was the feeding of the 5000 told by a puppet which the children loved - we had over 20 children and adults attend this event.

- *Chesham Bois Beach*

We made a beach in the parish centre garden with sand pits and paddling pools which the children loved playing in. We had breakfast together which worked well to connect the bible teaching to breakfast on the beach. We also had lots of fun doing beach themed crafts and games. This event was very popular and we had around 40/50 children and adults attend this event.

- *Messy play*

This was the last of the summer events where we had lots of messy activities for the children to engage with including: a paint walk where children could put their feet into paint and then walk on a roll of paper; a sensory barefoot walk where children walked through different messy materials including sand, water, shaving foam; and more messy activities. To make it more messy the children and adults made their sandwich for lunch and decorated a biscuit. We also did messy and fun bible teaching. We had over 25 children and adults attend this event.

October half term

In October half term Junior Church provided a light Party which focused on the opposite of halloween looking at the light of Jesus and how Jesus is light. We had games that connected with light and lots of light related craft. We had around 30 children and adults attend this event.

Christmas party

We had lots of fun exploring the true meaning of Christmas though Pass the Parcel with a different part of the nativity under each layer. We explained why each part of the nativity is important to Christmas and why we celebrate Christmas. They had lots of party food to enjoy and fun crafts that all linked to the real meaning of Christmas. We had around 30/35 children and adults attend this event.



All the fun days are free to attend and provide an enjoyable and fun place families can come to during the school holidays without worrying about the financial cost of the activity. At each event we always have parents asking what our next event is, which is great because it shows how much they enjoy the events and are interested in what we are doing in the future. At each fun day we advertise the next event and parents have signed up straight away putting the date straight into their diaries. At the end of each fun day we give all the children a goody bag which contains sweets, treats and a christian book which links to the bible teaching that was highlighted in the event. The adults also get a goody bag with sweets, at most events a booklet about God and a leaflet advising the next Junior Church Event.

Thank you to my amazing team of helpers, these events and Sunday's would not be possible without you. If you would like to join the team, help at a fun day or come along to chat with the parents, then please email children@stleonardscb.org.uk

Bekki Hadley – Families & Children's Worker

OPEN THE BOOK MINISTRY

With Covid and School Closures behind us we were able to start 2022 with an enthusiastic team and expectant children in the schools. We have just over 30 dedicated storytellers who come from seven different churches in the area. We started the year with three teams going into St George's, St Mary's and Chesham Bois Schools on a weekly basis and Heatherton House occasionally.

It is a delight to go into our local schools and share Bible stories with the children, who come from many different faiths. What makes it so special is that a few children each week have an opportunity to dress up and become a character within the story. The children are very eager to take part. The session also includes a time for reflection on the theme of the story and a prayer.

During the Autumn Term we were able to encourage new members to join the teams and so extended our story telling into Chalfont Valley School in Little Chalfont on a weekly basis.

We pray that in 2023 more members of our churches will wish to become part of Open the Book so that this work will be able to extend into more schools.

Jackie Lambert – Open the Book Coordinator

YOUTH MINISTRY

With highlights including two salvations and nine Baptisms / Renewal of Baptismal Vows, 2022 was a pretty great year for seeing God move in St Leonard's Youth!

By January 2022 we were well settled into our regular post-lockdown rhythm of Tuesday night Younger Youth Small Group at the Parish Centre followed by whole group social, then Thursday night Older Youth Small Group at Alice & Jonny's and Sunday morning Youth during the 10.30am service at



The Beacon. Owen was in his final year of his Student Placement and led most of the week to week content.

Our first big event was the Youth Weekend Away in January - taking 20 young people and 8 leaders to Rock UK Frontier Centre in Northamptonshire. The theme was Faith Unleashed and the weekend was a brilliant time of community, worship and fun - the highlight being one of our young people making a decision to follow Jesus!

The whole Church Weekend Away in April 2022 was also a highlight, with many of our young people joining with their families. The youth engaged with all the same teaching as the adults over the weekend and had a great time socialising (playing golf and going swimming together). Before the weekend we had been praying for more volunteers to join the Youth Team, and during the weekend James heard God speak to him about exactly that! James started joining us shortly after and has been a brilliant addition to the team. At the end of the weekend we decided to take some of our sixth formers home via Bristol to visit a University city church for their evening service. This was a brilliant opportunity for them to see a vibrant service full of students who had chosen to prioritise church during their university experience and hopefully inspired them to do the same later in the year, as 6 of them were heading to University. One of the conversations we had on the way back to the cars sticks in my memory, as two of our youth pointed out that the sermon that evening had been very similar to the teaching we'd heard over the course of the weekend, and commented "maybe God is trying to tell us something!".

In the lead up to Easter we had a visit from a youth group in Sweden who had links with Rise Nations. We hosted them in the Parish Centre and in a team members house, and helped organise some of their activities. One evening we hosted a Worship Night, which we invited other local youth groups to join us for. Unfortunately Jonny (who was supposed to be leading the evening) tested positive for Covid at 6pm that night, but it turned out to be a great opportunity for one of the Swedish youth leaders and one of their youth to lead us in worship. Seven local churches were joined together in worship that night and this unity is something we would love to build on.

Easter Sunday was another highlight of our year, as 9 of our young people took the plunge and chose to get baptised or renew their baptismal vows! It was especially exciting to see multiple sets of siblings making this decision together, including the young person who had just become a Christian at the Weekend Away.

This summer, for the first time in a long time, we were able to take a group of young people away for a week to a summer festival, Limitless. They (and we!) were so excited that live events were finally back - we took 14 youth and 5 leaders, and this was to be Owen's last event with us. The festival was incredible - as a team we were very impressed by the attitude of the leadership and the teaching and focus they shared. Most of our young people had never experienced a live summer festival like this so weren't sure what to expect, but were soon throwing themselves into everything with enthusiasm and joy - from the fun (foam parties, water fights, giant inflatable obstacle courses and silent disco's) to the serious (engaging in both the teaching and the worship). It was a joy to watch together as a team as our teenagers encouraged each other, had fun together and celebrated together as we saw one of our group healed and another give their lives to Jesus for the first time. The sense of



community that was built has continued into our weekly events at home and the enthusiasm for worship and to continue growing in faith has been clear.

As well as saying goodbye to Owen, we had seven A-Level leavers this summer. We managed to take them all out for a drink before they headed away from home, six to University and one on a gap year in Poland. Many of them still keep in touch, and we saw most of them back at Christmas.

At the start of the new school year the role of Youth Pastor was to be handed over to Jonny Somervell, however at this point Jonny had been very unwell for two months and was signed off work. In the interim I (Alice) took on the role within my working hours, with the support of our wonderful volunteers Paul Evans and James Callicott. We have since been joined by David Phillips, and always have the support of Denise Kolb and Chris Clare when we need it. I'm so thankful to all of them for everything they do for the team, and the difference they make in the lives of our young people week on week.

In September we started running Youth Alpha on a Tuesday night with the younger group and The Alpha Film Series on a Thursday night with the older group - this has been a brilliant way of getting back to the basics of faith and has resulted in some fantastic conversations. We also started Youth Breakfast - a fortnightly youth group during the 10.30am service at The Beacon, where we share breakfast and study the Bible. One Sunday in November we switched it up and had Youth Supper in church before an Encounter service - ordering in pizza and encouraging the teenagers to stay for the service. This was a brilliant opportunity for our young people to both socialise and worship together again - our hope is to build on this next year.

In December we led the Family Christmas Celebration, with our teenagers hosting, dancing, leading games and being in the band as well as contributing to the video talk. They really enjoyed this and we had lots of wonderful feedback. We finished the year with a Christmas Party and headed into the school holidays with a real sense of fellowship and joy.

In 2023 we are prayerfully expectant that Jonny will make a full recovery and be able to take on leading the team. We are looking forward to our Youth Weekend Away, heading back to Limitless this summer and creating more opportunities for our teenagers to worship together and grow in faith.

Alice Somervell – Youth Leader

HOMEGROUPS

We are a group of mixed ages, life experience and length of faith but come together every week to study the gospel and pray for each other. There have been some difficult times for everyone in the group at different points and we offer prayer and encouragement to each other through those times. If anyone in our group is unable to attend some weeks, they are still very much part of the group in that we pray for them and keep in touch until they return.

With some of our group still being careful about covid through much of 2022 we have been meeting in a variety of ways - over zoom calls, in church and in our homes. This seems to work and means



that we have a high attendance most weeks. We have a whatsapp group by which we communicate prayers and any words/pictures we have for one another.

Occasionally, usually once a term, we come together for a social – in the summer we had a BBQ at the Brewers house and at Christmas we had carols and canapes at our house . We always invite other family members to join in and make them welcome.

We feel that Homegroup is an important part of our church. We have become a close group where everyone feels safe to be honest and we believe we very much value the unity we have before the Lord.

Gilly and Malcolm Hafner – Homegroup Leaders

SENIORS' MINISTRY

We were delighted to host over 40 people at our Easter Celebration in April, our first get-together at that time since 2019. We had a short service with Laurie leading us in a Thought for the Day, followed by tea and hot cross buns. It was wonderful to share fellowship together once again.

For our summer event in July we welcomed Cedars, the seniors' group from King's Church, Amersham. Over 50 of us enjoyed a quiz followed by afternoon tea. Ruth Boughton then led us in a time of singing before sharing a Gospel message with us.

At Christmas we celebrated with a service of Carols and Readings and a message from Laurie. This was followed by tea and mince pies. There was a lovely atmosphere and our guests were in no hurry to leave!

We have been sad this year to say farewell to a number of our St Leonard's seniors. Joyce Silley, Ian Nicholson, Joyce Flory (founder member of Holiday Club), John Ogle and Dorothy Hearn all faithfully attended the church and supported the seniors' events over many years.

We are very grateful to our many helpers without whom these events would not take place.

Jo Jennings and Barbara Williams – Seniors' Leaders

KINGDOM PARTNERS

During the past year we have continued to support a range of partners both locally and abroad. We continued to provide personal support to:

Steve Poulson working with CMS in Honduras
Jack and Claire working with Frontiers in North Africa
Jonathan and Helen working with Frontiers in Tunisia
Tom and Verity working with CMS in Uganda
The work of The Lunchbowl Network in Kenya
Pete and Sarah working in Cape Town



Adam Prior working at Oak Church in Stevenage

We also continue to support 3 charities: Tearfund, Restore Hope and Food Bank with occasional gifts and regular prayer support and updates.

We have supported the Mason's for over 25 years, but that support ended at the end of 2022 as they are now back in the UK. A small reduction in our funding last year has meant that we have not yet looked for any direct replacement for them.

We had a very encouraging Mission Sunday in October, where Jon and Helen joined us in person and 4 others via video link.

We ran a successful Quiz night in the Autumn ("The Big Quiz Night") in support of Tearfund.

Chris Clare – Chair Mission Committee

MARYLAND PRE SCHOOL NURSERY

January 2022 saw us much more like pre covid days with more children (24 by February), a new boiler in the parish centre and keen staff.

We welcomed children from their second birthday (it was 2 years and 6 months previously) and are now offering the facility to use some of the government 30 hours of care, along with most other settings. The staff have welcomed the younger children and found that they have integrated well with the older ones. We were thrilled to have confirmation of our full sustainability grant (thanks to hard work by Katie and Bekki) which will make a big difference to our ability to offer resources and bolster our funds.

Generally, our financial situation has improved due to the 2yr olds, the 30hr initiative and a decision to charge for consumables in line with other pre-schools; this has been possible with advice and support from the Bucks County financial advisor Jodie. We are pleased to also have a new County advisor Tara Puni.

Our social media presence has continued to be positive and is managed with great efficiency by Jane. She has also produced exciting and engaging 'learning journey' displays with pictures and short comments (often from our children). Do come and have a look!

We saw some changes in the committee with Jo Clare standing down as secretary (thanks to her for all she did) and replaced by Lucy Hussey. Margaret Mee agreed to be our committee representative for safeguarding and completed her online training in May. The Maryland management committee report regularly to the PCC and are grateful for their support.

Activities in the Spring included 'communications week', a county wide initiative to encourage speech and language in Early years following the period of lockdown, with lots of fun elements designed by Bekki and her staff. World Book Day was another success and brought in some donations as well!



Staff and committee organised the Easter egg hunt, which is always enjoyed. We were able to have our Easter service in church with an audience this year, again orchestrated by Henny and staff.

Forest school and gardening were again enjoyed by all children and as ever we are grateful for the huge input from Henny, ably abetted this year with voluntary help from Amy Lofthouse, Dawn and a couple of willing and able parent volunteers. The benefit for our children seeing the life cycle of plants in the garden and having space and creative opportunities at Forest school is priceless.

Chesham Bois fete was able to go ahead in June and Maryland had a stall with games and prizes; we are pleased to have a presence at such events.

Our Sports day and leavers' ceremony returned to normal, and in glorious weather. It is always lovely to welcome parents and grandparents to events like this! We also said farewell to Orfana after a second stint with us! She has been involved as a parent and subsequently excellent member of staff for many years but felt she really did need to move on!

Throughout this year Bekki has been involved with 'Providers in partnership' (PIP) which has been extremely useful particularly looking at ways to help children that are disadvantaged, as well as other initiatives. It has also been the source of a little extra funding.

Autumn term began with a good number of pupils, unlike last September and a new enthusiastic committee member, Arabella; her stay on the committee may however be short lived as she is joining the staff in 2023. We have accepted a higher number of potentially SEN pupils in September and are particularly grateful to Dawn Gould this year, who has voluntarily given her skills to the development of these individuals. We applied for and were successful with our application for funding from the SEN inclusion fund for children with emerging needs. This amounted to £1,500 to cover 2 terms and will be used to fund an extra member of staff to facilitate the intervention support group. During this term Bekki initiated a lending library which has been popular with all.

We ran a stall at Chesham market at the end of November with donated childrens' clothes from our families and staff families. Takings amounted to around £120 and staff gave their time for free which meant that this amount went into funds for Maryland activities.

We were able to produce our nativity service at the end of term, in church, and many thanks go to Peter Flory for accompanying the children as they learned and performed the songs to a packed church. Daniel produced some stunning stills for the website yet again.

In challenging times for many families we are pleased to have sustained our numbers at around 24/25, and continue to give excellent care and opportunities to our charges. Do please continue to promote Maryland when you can and pray for us.

You are welcome to visit at any time!

Andrea Hayers – Chair Maryland Committee



CHESHAM BOIS CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

“Believing, Achieving and Caring Together. We place the child at the centre of all we do. We welcome all children and families. Our work is driven and inspired by our Christian values (love, thankfulness, integrity, aspiration, respect, and resilience) which are lived out on a daily basis by children and adults. Our caring, nurturing learning environment enables all children to achieve together.”

From the pandemic-related disruption of the previous year, 2022 thankfully saw the world moving to a ‘new normal’ of resilience to COVID. It is testament to the professionalism and strength of leadership, teaching and other staff that over 2022 no days were lost by classes having to close because of sickness. While the impact of the lockdowns of 2021 can be seen in the development stage of pupils in the Foundation and Key Stage 1, the teaching staff are addressing this head-on, with plans in place to provide support for ‘closing the gap’ where needed.

The annual wellbeing survey, carried out towards the end of the summer term, contained useful feedback as a basis for continuous improvement as well as a wide range of encouraging indicators and comments from the children, parents and teachers. The overall results show us that the children have a positive view of the school and the support they receive. From the parents there was a 100% positive response to the statement that *‘my child is happy, my child feels safe, my child is well looked after, my child experiences a variety of opportunities, school makes sure the pupils are well behaved, Staff are friendly and approachable, and I value the Christian ethos of the school’*. A comment from the staff, in turn, was on *‘The ethos of the school - the pupils are at the heart of all our decisions. The other members of staff, who are fantastic and make this place a happy and enjoyable place to work.’*

There have been some staff changes, but we are fortunate in not having any vacancies or having to spend significantly on supply. There were some changes in the team of governors, but the three Foundation Governors have remained in place for the full year and into 2023.

In time for launch at the start of the Autumn term, the Vision and Values for the school were adjusted and simplified. The key change was the substitution of ‘Aspiration’ in place of ‘Faith’, on the basis that the latter underpins all that we do at Chesham Bois School, as reflected in our vision. ‘Aspiration’ was also felt to represent a more tangible Christian value alongside the other five (love, thankfulness, integrity, respect and resilience) that remain unchanged. A commitment was made to review this annually at the start of each school year.

The wellbeing of pupils, staff and parents has been recognised and supported by governors through regular monitoring and advice being made available.

Over the year we had a visit by the Diocese covering collective worship. The key point of focus, though, was the Ofsted inspection that finally occurred at the end of November. This rated the overall effectiveness of the school as ‘Good’, with behaviours and attitudes plus personal development all ‘Outstanding’. In their formal report the inspectors stated that *‘pupils really enjoy attending this friendly school ...the values of the school run like a golden thread through all that it does’*. This reflects huge effort, professionalism and genuine care by everyone involved, particularly the school leadership and the teaching staff. The latter were particularly recognised by the inspectors who reported that *‘Leaders are ambitious for all pupils (who) ...thrive because their interests and*



talents are nurtured. Staff are proud to work at Chesham Bois because they know they provide excellent support for the pupils'. It was also pleasing to see the commentary that 'Governors understand their roles and bring a range of experiences to their work with the school. They ensure that the vision and values of the school are prioritised in all strategic developments to promote the achievement of all'. The school leadership, supported by the governors, are now working on a number of continuous improvement opportunities identified by the inspectors – to help take the school's performance improve beyond even the high bar of the assessment.

**Peter Flory - Joint Vice Chair and Foundation Governor
with Jackie Lambert and Donald Campbell-Brown – Foundation Governors**

DEANERY SYNOD

Amersham Deanery Synod, a group of representatives from Church of England churches in an area extending beyond Amersham itself which meets four times a year. St Leonard's elected lay members are Peter Flory and Jackie Lambert. The clergy are automatically members.

There are two working sub-committees, the standing committee and the Mission and Pastoral committee which Peter sits on. This gathers and prays for each parish and its current needs and ensures parishes are supported during interregnums. Full details are available on the Amersham Deanery website: amershamdeanery.org.uk

Our March meeting was in person and we made preparations for Bishop Stephen's visit to the Deanery in May. Synod processed the formalities of the Amersham Deanery Trust AGM including the approval of the accounts and the budget for 2022.

A presentation by Charlotte Lawson on The Wycombe Deanery Discipleship Training Centre was made to synod who explained that this was designed for 18-24 year olds, and can be used as a gap year programme. She explained that there were currently 10 placements, which included Wycombe, Aylesbury and Marlow, and were principally based on children and youth work, but could be used for mission or other items. All trainees do one day a week teaching that is linked to New Wine Discipleship – investing in our young leaders. The aim is to have fun and enjoyment during the year.

Synod were introduced to Living in Love and Faith (LLF) by Doral Hayes, LLF Advocate and we then split into discussion groups. Feedback was received for input into the LLF processes.

Our May meeting was not held as we were all invited to the events organised for Bishop Stephen's visit.

In September, the main focus for the meeting was considering environmental matters. Hannah Mann from the diocese presented how churches can practically respond to the current challenges, and what the diocese can do to help? We heard about inspirational case studies from different churches, new resources, and practical next steps we can all take. This was followed by Keith Wood-Smith of St Giles with Seer Green and Jordans Benefice explaining their Rocha Eco Church Silver Award and how they engaged with the processes involved.



At our November meeting the Parish Share for 2023 was presented. Mrs Julie Dziegiel, Deanery Treasurer, identified the various formulaic changes including to the data sources used. Revd Jeremy Moodey gave a full General Synod Report and an update presentation on the Deanery's mission link Steve and Lindsey Poulson was received.

Needless to say we received our usual regular Area Dean's reports, the financial accounts, Parish Share allocation and budgets throughout the year along with regular Diocesan and General Synod reports. All papers and minutes can be readily seen on the website amershamdeanery.org.uk

Peter Flory & Jackie Lambert – Deanery Synod Representative

PARISH CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT

We received the disappointing news on 29th April that the Planning Appeal was 'dismissed'. Whilst this was unexpected, particularly given the Local Authority support that had been shown towards the development plans by Officers prior to the refusal at Committee in January 2021, the content of the report is well worth reading.

Our summary is that the Planning Inspector was **fully supportive** of the redevelopment proposals at every level. It was very encouraging to receive this kind of validation of the design. However, the only reason for dismissal was because "the scheme doesn't preserve the integrity of the Chilterns Beechwood SAC". Just towards the end of the appeal period, Natural England issued new advice regarding significant recreational pressure upon Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC). This meant that the Planning Inspector was unable to uphold the planning appeal from St Leonard's, since there was no statutory mitigation strategy in place to cover off the risks presented. It resulted in all planning applications which have a net increase in residential units, (even 1 unit as is the case with our redevelopment) being put on hold until a mitigation approach is decided on.

The PCC decided that it would review options and the favoured approach was to resubmit the redevelopment plans, removing 'Keeper's Cottage' which was the additional staff home proposed. This then removes the conflict with the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC. However, to do this several reports and all the drawings needed to be updated. This included the ecology surveys which were deemed to be out-of-date. We remain committed to seeing a great quality new building achieve planning, and now hope that all barriers to this have been successfully removed to allow for a positive decision with the new Planning Application. We submitted the plans in November, and they are now on the planning portal so the public can view them. You can comment on the application online during the statutory consultation period. We would highlight that the scheme is unchanged since the previous application, except for the removal of the Keeper's Cottage. That is why no further community consultation has taken place since the planning appeal decision in April.

Our thanks go to all the people who have encouraged and supported us in this ambitious venture. We continue to believe it will be a blessing for St Leonard's church and for the community of Chesham Bois.

David Clare – Project Manager for Habitat for Humanity