



St Leonard's Church

Chesham Bois

Annual General Meeting

To include Vestry meeting and
Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2025

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



Agenda & Minutes

Reports from Parish Organisations
For the Year Ended 31st December 2024

Rev'd Laurie Clow
Sam McEwen – Ali Greenhalgh – Katie Flory / Tom Brewer

Registered Charity Number 1134113





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VESTRY MEETING AGENDA

1. Welcome and Opening Worship
2. Apologies
3. Confirmation of 2024 Vestry Minutes
4. Election of Church Wardens

MINUTES OF THE VESTRY MEETING HELD ON 15th APRIL 2024

Present: Laurie Clow

25 members on the electoral roll

Apologies: Marion & Donald Campbell-Brown, Marian Chiappetti, Lance Hale, Richard Speakman

1. **Welcome and Opening Worship:** Laurie Clow opened the meeting in prayer and worship
2. **Present and Apologies:** as above.
3. **Minutes of Vestry Meeting held on 17th April 2023:** Taken as read and approved by those who were present last year.

Proposed: Henny Edward-Few **Seconded:** Cathy Baldwin **Unanimous**

Abstentions: None

4. **Election of Church Wardens:**

Nominee

Proposed by

Seconded by

Sam McEwen

Kirstie Brewer

Andrea Hayers

Alison Greenhalgh

Choi van Rest

Chris Leach

Sam and Alison were elected by **unanimous** decision to serve as Church Wardens for the next 12 months.

5. **Thanks to the Church Wardens:** Laurie thanked the Wardens for all their hard work.
6. The vestry meeting was closed.



ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Confirmation of 2024 APCM minutes
3. Correspondence
4. PCC reports:
Wardens' Report and presentation of Log Book of Fabric and Ornaments
5. 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 2025
6. PCC Elections for 2025
 - 6.1 Electoral Roll Officer's Report and Election of Electoral Roll Officer for 2025
 - 6.2 Election of PCC members in addition to ex officio members and church wardens
Following to continue:
Jenni Sawyer, Gilly Hafner, Stephen Pimenta, Paul Chiappetti
In line with APCM 2015 resolution, Jackie Lambert acts as ex-officio posts for qualified LLM's
To be elected for 3 years: 4 people
7. Reception of Reports from Parish Organisations, as attached
8. Any other business of general Parish interest to be submitted to the Churchwardens or the PCC Secretary before **Sunday 27th April 2025**

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING HELD ON 15th APRIL 2024

1. **Present and Apologies:** as above
2. **Minutes of APCM held on 17th April 2023:** Taken as read and approved by those who had attended that meeting
Proposed: Cathay Baldwin **Seconded:** Jenni Sawyer **Unanimous**
Abstentions: None
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 presented and made available to look at. The Wardens reports were read 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 everyone at the meeting
 - 5.2. Katie thanked Peter Flory and Ruth Leach for their help with the finances. It had been a challenging year financially but Katie reminded us that one thing that never changes is God.
 - 5.3. Laurie Clow thanked everyone for their generous giving and encouraged everyone to pray.
 - 5.4. Katie Flory presented the independently examined accounts.



- 5.5. Katie Flory explained that we were unable to appoint an independent examiner for 2024 at this meeting. Laurie Clow proposed a motion that the PCC be given permission to appoint an independent examiner at a later date.

Proposed: Laurie Clow **Seconded:** Katie Flory

Unanimous decision and with no abstentions

6. PCC Elections for 2024

6.1. Electoral Roll and Electoral Roll Officer

The published Electoral Roll at the church is 100. Marian Chiappetti has agreed to continue as Electoral Roll Officer.

Proposed: Neil Baldwin **Seconded:** Malcolm Hafner **Unanimous**

Marian Chiappetti was thanked for the work she does on behalf of St Leonard's in her capacity as Electoral Roll Officer

6.2 PCC Nominations

Two PCC members are stepping down, Malcolm Hafner and Marion Campbell-Brown.

Nominee	Proposed by	Seconded by
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Paul Chiappetti	Jane Lewis	Alan Lewis
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Unanimous decision and there were no abstentions.

7. Reception of the reports from Parish Organisations

Laurie Clow encouraged everyone to read the reports. He thanked everyone in the room and also asked everyone to pass on his thanks to everyone else in the congregation. Laurie thanked Gilly Hafner for her work as PCC Secretary and Jackie Lambert for all her hard work and support. Laurie Clow also thanked Ruth Leach for all her hard work. Laurie Clow thanked Jonny and Alice Somervell in their absence and invited us to pray for Jonny who was unwell. Laurie Clow thanked Bekki Hadley for doing a great job with families through outreach and with the children in the congregation at St Leonard's Church.

Laurie Clow gave special thanks to Katie Flory who has been Treasurer for 16 years and Peter Flory who was Treasurer for 3 years before that. He said they are "awesome" and noted that in addition to being Treasurers they have been sharing the Gospel in faith for a long time. Laurie Clow thanked them for being who they are in the Kingdom and at St Leonard's church.

8. Any Other Business

Ali Greenhalgh and Sam McEwen thanked Laurie and Wendy Clow for being our leaders, especially during a very challenging year.

9. In Conclusion

Peter and Katie Flory closed the meeting in prayer.



RECTOR'S REPORT

It has been a strange old year. The gospel doesn't change, Jesus' promises do not waiver, the truth is still the truth but the world around us appears to be oblivious to the spiritual reality and many of us are quite bewildered by the changes occurring. The Church of England has had a difficult time around safeguarding, historical errors and present practice; around Living in 9III⁹ liturgical provision and continues to struggle with its role in a multiethnic, post-Christian and increasingly anti-Christian society.

We haven't had it easy here at St Leonard's either. Our Parish Centre redevelopment has gone for another appeal, despite the local planning officers supporting our application. Relationships with the local community have not been easy. This has been exacerbated by the use of the local and national press to bad mouth and undermine our local reputation. The rollercoaster ride has been fuelled by misinformation and personal attacks, thus spreading confusion and bitterness. The Cultural audit that we agreed to at the end of the year has also undermined our corporate confidence in our message, our methods and our trust of the wider church. As a friend says - TRUST IS A MUST - but is a hard thing to do when the starting point for most people is suspicion.

We have lost too many friends this year. Some have passed to glory and some have moved away - we miss them all. A huge thanks to Peter and Katie Flory, who stayed with us despite their upset with the national church to ensure our 2024 accounts and TAR were completed. They have so much knowledge and experience. We will miss them.

The team we have at St Leonard's is amazing and they continue to deliver in circumstances that are not always easy. Jonny leads our worship with sensitivity and quality - a mature Christian couple joined us just before Christmas and were impacted by the worship. He is doing a great job as our youth leader and his team support him admirably. This all at the same time as being a new Dad! We welcomed Alice back to the office in November and this has taken some pressure off of Ruth. Ruth continues to work out her vocation. A placement in Denham was a helpful time for her, and I know they appreciated her going to them. Ruth continues to keep me in order and mostly on time and nearly always in the right place!! Though I still won't get to grips with ChurchSuite! Bekki works hard for and blesses our younger children - thank you to her team as well.

So much of what we do relies on volunteers - homegroups, seniors, hospitality etc. Thank you to you all - outsiders are often surprised at the proportion of our church family members who are also volunteers.

We continue to support our Kingdom Partners, who have all had really rough times this past year and I have been encouraged by the regular folk who come to the Watchman Prayer times. Prayer is key to all we do. The Swedes were with us just before Easter and our partnership with Rise Nations (Jared & Sharlene) continues as they use the UK as a stepping stone to many projects across the world.

We also took our final step in the reorganising of our worship times this summer. We have moved to one family service in church on a Sunday morning to emphasise our unity and our identity as a family. Thank you to all who have supported this.



For me there have been two distinct highlights of the year. The first was our Parish Weekend away with Simon Guillebaud from Great Lakes Outreach. He was challenging and encouraging in equal measure and there was a real sense of unity over the weekend. Let's embrace Wild Faith and press on.

The second highlight was the Overnight Worship time in the summer: praise and thanksgiving, worshipping for breakthrough. Jonny did the lion's share but a huge thank you to Marcus van Rest who did the post Midnight slot. I was delighted by the numbers who came to the event - not once but often several times in the night and then ALL turned up again as we moved seamlessly into corporate worship on the Sunday morning. When's the next one?

God is good all the time.

Circumstances change and challenge us about but we are hidden with Christ in the Father's love - how safe can we be?

Hold firm my friends. We are a courageous, lionhearted and prophetic community.

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go".

Joshua 1.9

"... he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus"

Philippians 1.6

With much love to you - as always.

Laurie Clow - Rector

RESPONSE FROM THE WARDENS

2024 remained a year of change and uncertainty at St Leonards.

Laurie continued to lead with the support of our two LLMs, Peter Flory and Jackie Lambert, who played a significant role, particularly in the 8:30am service. After much prayer and consideration, it became clear to the wider leadership that the Lord was calling us to unity and for the current season, it meant one main Sunday morning worship service for the whole church family together. The 8.30am services came to a finish in September 2024. We acknowledge that this transition was not easy for many members of the former 8:30am congregation, but we are deeply grateful for their openness to change. We especially appreciate the majority who have continued to attend regularly at 10:30am – your faithfulness is truly commendable.

We should also mention those who have stepped up to lead services to support Laurie including Denise, Sam and Jonny along with the home groups, who have very generously provided refreshments week in week out - your tea, coffee, delicious home bakes and biscuits are very much appreciated!



We also continue with the fortnightly evening Encounter services in the church.

We would like to especially thank Peter and Katie Flory for their endless service to St Leonards over many years. Their contributions go far beyond leading services, catering, preaching, sharing their musical talents, and taking on numerous other jobs. We are particularly grateful for the countless, often unseen hours they have dedicated to managing the church's financial affairs. You have done the most incredible job providing the PCC with financial information to make clear decisions and ensuring our financial affairs are in order. Having decided to step down after the APCM in preparation for leaving at the end of December, they even stepped back in to provide continuity during the latter part of the year until a new, more long term treasurer could be appointed and to make sure the end of year accounts are in order. We thank Tom Brewer for taking on the treasurer role at the APCM and fully appreciate the reasons why we needed to find an alternative option. We are sad that Peter and Katie have taken the decision to leave the Church of England, but we wish them well as they embark on their journey with their new church family.

We continue to be grateful for the time and energy given to the church by all those in leadership, in so many ways enabling our church life to function; our Elders for their prayer and prophetic guidance, the commitment and faithfulness of the PCC members who so prayerfully consider decisions large and small for the operation of the church is much appreciated, especially in the new slimmed down PCC and, of course, our fantastic staff team who keep everything in order!

Thank you to Ruth Leach who picked up extra work during Alice's maternity leave and those who volunteered to support her, especially those who took on organising yet another fabulous and expertly led church weekend away in April. We were delighted to be joined by Simon Guillebaud from Great Lakes Outreach who taught us from his extensive experience in Burundi. It was a challenging weekend from a spiritual point of view but also great fun to spend time together as family.

We were delighted to release Ruth during the autumn to a placement at St. Mary's, Denham as she explores ordination and we continue to pray for her journey.

We are grateful for the support of Chesham Bois School enabling us to use their facilities on Sunday mornings. Bekki has continued to lead regular Junior Church sessions supported by a team of dedicated volunteers who pour their faith and love of Jesus into our younger members. There have also been regular school holiday Fun Days attracting local families who are otherwise unconnected to St Leonards. This has been a wonderful outreach and we are thankful for Bekki and the volunteers that make these events possible and provide wonderful activities and such a warm welcome for the parents and carers.

We could not write this report without mentioning our amazing youth and their leaders! It is always a delight to see so many young people worshipping regularly and we know this does not happen by chance. Many thanks to Jonny and his team of youth leaders including Paul, James, David and Denise. Thank you for going the extra mile to share Jesus through your many activities including Sunday breakfasts, worship jams, midweek evening sessions, and your dedicated support of our young people throughout the year. A special thank you for giving your time for residential weekends and Limitless in August.



A second Planning Application for the Parish Centre was submitted during 2023 with the decision deferred until February 2024. Our application was again rejected by the Planning Committee at this stage. After some months of prayerful reflection, the PCC voted to go to appeal in the summer. At the time of writing we are still awaiting a final decision from the Planning Inspectorate.

Last and most importantly, we want to thank Laurie and Wendy for their witness and steadfast faith in what has been another difficult year for them personally and us as a church. They have given of themselves sacrificially and continued to preach the gospel no matter what. Please join the leadership in continuing to pray for them and uphold them as leaders and asking for God's protection over them. Leading a church in these times is an unenviable task.

Sam McEwen and Ali Greenhalgh – Churchwardens

WARDENS' REPORT ON THE FABRIC AND CHURCH PROPERTIES

In January 2024, a dead tree was felled in the churchyard in order to make the site safe.

During March, in both the Church and Parish Centre, the annual fire extinguisher service took place followed by the gas boiler servicing in May. In October the Church clock was serviced and a carbon monoxide monitor was installed in the vestry. PAT testing was carried out in the Church in December. A lightning conductor survey was carried out for the Church in November and we are still awaiting the report.

Pest control came to the church site in April 2024 to check for mice.

St Leonards underwent its Quinquennial Inspection in August 2024. No major urgent repairs were found but a number of recommendations were made such as inspecting and clearing gutters and checking roof condition. The Wardens and PCC are aware that work needs to be undertaken on the chimney above the vestry and are awaiting quotes for this work. Should we have scaffolding for that repair, inspections will take place at the same time. The church and PC gutters were cleared in December.

A fence post in the car park, which was knocked over, has been temporarily fixed whilst we await quotes for a permanent solution.

The Church continues to use 19 Stubbs End Close (Amersham) under Licence from the Chiltern Christian Trust. During the year, we redecorated one of the bedrooms in the house, as well as carried out a deep clean of the property.

Thank you to the Property and Fabric Committee and Office Manager for overseeing these property matters.

Sam McEwen and Ali Greenhalgh – Churchwardens



PCC TREASURER'S REPORT

In 2024 both income and expenditure in the General Fund increased, resulting in a net surplus in the General Fund. We received two legacies totalling £25,698.72 and a one-off gift of £100,000 which was split between the General and Parish Centre Build Funds. The giving to our Mission partners has been sustained.

In 2024 we paid our full Parish Share to the Diocese.

In 2024 the PCC spent £20,719.05 on the Parish Centre development project and received gifts of £7,474.40 for the project.

Our Lord and Father is abundantly generous to us, and many within our church family have continued to mirror that generosity through their giving. The budget for 2025 acknowledges a need to reduce our expenditure and calls us to pray for provision in support of His work here.

I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who has supported me in my new role as treasurer, especially Katie and Peter Flory, whose knowledge and guidance during the handover process have been invaluable. I also want to thank Ruth Leach and Alice Somervell for their ongoing assistance in the office.

Sam McEwen – Treasurer

SAFEGUARDING

St Leonard's is working in line with the Church of England's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance, and has a safeguarding team of 3 volunteers, led by Denise as the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Marion is the DBS and safeguarding training administrator, and Sam represents us at PCC meetings, where safeguarding is a standing item on the agenda. Our safeguarding procedures and training are supported by software from Oxford Diocese known as a Parish Dashboard that enables us to retain an overview of our mandatory requirements for staff and volunteers. We currently run at 94% progress. This is mainly down to the on-going hard work and diligence of Marion.

All roles at St Leonards require some level of safeguarding training, which can be done online, and we follow Church of England guidance to ensure that we ask people to complete the relevant modules for their roles. We fully recognise that a lot of people have already completed safeguarding training in different parts of their working or volunteer lives, but it is a C of E requirement that we complete their training programme, as it uses scenarios from church and Christian life as part of the learning involved.

At the time of writing, there are 52 people at St Leonards who have roles requiring at least one module of online training, and our records show that we are up to date with 88% of the training. We would like to thank all those who have spent time completing the modules, and we very much hope to be able to report a 100% completion rate next year.



In late 2024, St Leonard's was asked by the Oxford Diocese to take part in a cultural audit carried out by an interdependent safeguarding agency, thirtyone:eight. The interviews are to be carried out beginning 2025 and relevant outcomes will be reported in next year's APCM.

A big Thank You to staff and volunteers alike for their commitment to the training and administration required to keep a safer environment for all who attend our church and its activities.

For further information, relevant Safeguarding Policy, Guidance and Information can be found on the following websites:

St Leonard's Parish Safeguarding Policy

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nQNPVPBboLOYG60RcCSB-LyNlqgNlxQqJt37_a42rfs/edit?tab=t.0

St Leonard's Parish Social Media Policy

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TnssiwihAdvXdc_gLZ503yVKYfW9kZlij1wzgHdb9N0/edit?tab=t.0

Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook

<https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/61f2fd86f0ee5/content/pages/documents/20211011-doc-parish-safeguarding-handbook-aug-19.pdf>

Code of Safer Working Practice

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/code-of-safer-working-practice-02.07.2021.pdf>

Safer Environment and Activities

https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/safer-environment-and-activities-oct19_0.pdf

Denise Kolb - Parish Safeguarding Officer

ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT

The Electoral Roll was completely revised this year (i.e. the previous Electoral Roll is discarded and a new roll is created). At the beginning of April 2025 the Electoral Roll stands at 83 members.

Marian Chiappetti – Church Electoral Roll Officer

WORSHIP AT ST LEONARD'S

2024 was another encouraging year in the worship life of St Leonard's. Over the year we have seen increased engagement, unity, freedom and release in our times of worship. Highlights of the year include the Youth Weekend Away in March, the Church Weekend Away in April and the Night of Worship and Thanksgiving in July. We were also really encouraged to see a few more members of the congregation attending our evening service, Encounter, on a regular basis. The youth have also engaged more in worship, with a committed few of them regularly attending the Youth Worship Jam on Sunday afternoons. A couple of the youth started to learn an instrument from scratch at the beginning of the year and they improved considerably as the year progressed - so much so that two of them played in the worship band for the Kids and Youth Christmas Service.

Jonny Somervell – Worship Pastor



PRAYER AT ST LEONARD'S

I always find praying with people, either in an Original Design or freedom prayer appointment or on Sundays a real privilege. God always shows up and touches the person being prayed for, bringing his revelation, encouragement, healing and freedom.

Over 2024, the prayer team prayed for people on 55 occasions, including praying for some couples. The team also prayed for Original design by email for 22 people from St Jude's Southsea and for 34 Swedish Young People over on a Mission Trip with Rise nations. When the Original Design was given to the Swedish young people they were amazed at the accuracy of the revelation, which was a great encouragement to them and those that had prayed for the OD.

In November, Laurie ran some JM wide Prayer Team training which a number of St Leonard's prayer team attended. A number of people have commented how great the training was and the privilege of gathering together with other churches and praying for each other.

Watchman prayer has continued throughout the year, with a number of regular people attending, to pray for the life of St Leonard's and the community of Chesham Bois.

During Sunday services it has been amazing to see God move and bring healing through the healing wells and prayer ministry during extended times of worship.

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

Ruth Leach – Prayer Team Coordinator

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

We have 7 children (4-11 yrs old) who attend Junior Church on a Sunday regularly. Junior Church joins with the church family in worship before heading over to Chesham Bois School for their own worship time. We start with refreshments and catch up, followed by creative prayer using movement or a prayer dice. The children like the creative prayer and connecting with God. The children enjoy reading the bible passage, finding it in the children's bibles and discovering if the passage is Old or New Testament. They engage well during the discussion about the passage and how it relates to them in everyday life. Some children listen and engage better while colouring a picture or drawing. We also show a YouTube video called Superbook relevant to the Bible passage and also do some craft. Some weeks we play active games before rejoining the church family for hospitality back in church.

At Christmas, Junior Church joined with the youth to host the Christmas Family Celebration. The children enjoyed helping plan the service and I was really encouraged to see all those who wanted to participate be fully involved in the service.

During each of the school holidays we have Junior Church Fundays, which are attended mainly by non St Leonard's families. This is a great outreach into the community. During each fun day we have



games, bible teaching, food and crafts. Over the last year, we have introduced a time of worship, led by Jonny, which the children have enjoyed, a great addition to our fundays - thank you Jonny!

- For the February Half Term funday the theme was God's love and we had 28 children and parents/carers attend and they all enjoyed some pancakes and the puppet leading the bible teaching.
- For the Easter funday the theme was the real meaning of Easter, attended by 20 children and parents/carers. They all enjoyed an Easter Egg hunt and the Easter story told by a Palm Tree Puppet.
- For the May Half Term funday the theme was Jesus sleeps through the storm, attended by 16 children and parents/carers, who all enjoyed attending in their pyjamas.
- During the Summer Holidays we had 3 fundays.
 - Schools out party attended by 25 children and parents/carers who all enjoyed celebrating the end of the school year. The theme was the Lost Sheep and the children enjoyed finding the sheep hidden around the PC along with an ice cream station after lunch.
 - Chesham Bois Olympics was attended by 9 children and parents/carers in the PC garden.
 - Messy play was attended by 21 children and parents/carers, who all enjoyed a very messy afternoon including exploring the sensory walk, making their own sandwiches for lunch and even a messy bible teaching involving a cream pie!
- For the October Half Term we held a Light Party, sharing Jesus as the Light of the World. This was attended by 12 children and parents/carers.
- For the Christmas funday we focussed on the real meaning of Christmas, including a pass the parcel with a nativity character under each layer. We had 10 children and parents/carers attend.

I would like to thank the wonderful Sunday Morning team and the Funday Team for their commitment, passion for sharing Jesus and support over the last year. If you would like to join the Sunday team or help at a funday please let me know by emailing children@stleonardscb.org.uk.

Bekki Hadley – Families & Children's Worker

OPEN THE BIBLE MINISTRY

It is most pleasing to report that the church's involvement with Chesham Bois CE School includes Open the Bible assemblies. It is the children's favourite assembly of the week and much looked forward to. It is a delight to see the enthusiasm on the faces of the children as they come into school, realising it is Open the Bible day. They love to get involved in the story telling by being chosen to dress up as one of the characters or being part of the crowd. Thus making the Bible Stories come alive for the children.



This year the stories have been selected from these themes:

The Spring Term: The early life of Christ, his baptism and teachings.

The Summer Term: The resurrection appearances, the Early Church and Paul's missionary journeys.

Autumn Term: The Old Testament: Noah, Joseph and the Prophets leading into the Christmas Story.

The Open the Bible Team includes just nine participants from St Leonard's and The Kings Church. If you would like to become involved in this valuable work please do speak to me.

Jackie Lambert – Open the Bible Coordinator

YOUTH MINISTRY

2024 was an encouraging year for the youth ministry of St Leonard's. 10 youth attended the Youth Weekend Away in March at The Chellington Centre. We had an amazing time worshipping together as well as learning about how and why we worship. The afternoon session on the Saturday was a particular highlight as God moved so powerfully as we worshipped together and received words from each other.

A group of 20 youth went to Limitless Festival in August with a few of our youth inviting their friends to join us - we had 4 youth outside of St Leonard's with us this year! It was so encouraging to see our young peoples' faith bearing fruit. 2 of our youth made re-commitments to Jesus and 2 gave their lives to Jesus for the first time - including 1 from outside of our youth!

Another highlight of the year was the Kids and Youth Christmas Service. The youth worked so wonderfully with the kids in preparing for and acting out the sketch, which was rather humorous! 2 of the youth also played in the worship band for the service for the first time. Altogether, it was a very uplifting service!

Jonny Somervell – Youth Leader

HOMEGROUPS

In January 2024, home groups continued to meet to study the Living in Freedom materials, led by Laurie, Wendy and Ruth and Denise. This was a good opportunity to revisit some teaching for those who have been at St Leonard's for a few years, and to study it for the first time for those who haven't, alongside new material that was introduced in the "plus" course.

Groups had been combined for this series of teaching and in the summer the decision was made to combine the groups permanently going forward, reducing the number of groups to five. This has been hugely beneficial in our group, resulting in a wider leadership team and invigorating discussions each week.



Since September, home groups have been revisiting the teaching from the School of the Prophetic. We have had valuable times of worship, discussion and prayer, framed by short teaching videos from Laurie.

Home groups have also taken on hospitality after the 10:30am Sunday Service, which has been very enjoyable, enabling us to build relationships through team work and to talk to others in our church family that we might not ordinarily spend time with.

Home groups continue to be a time of blessing, where we are family together. I would encourage everyone to join one, even if circumstances mean you cannot attend regularly, so that others can pray for you and walk with you through the stuff of life.

Cathy Baldwin – Homegroup Leader

SENIORS' MINISTRY

This year we were invited to celebrate Easter at Kings Church, joining with Cedars their seniors' group. We were warmly welcomed and enjoyed a time of worship and a Bible quiz based on the Easter story. A delicious Afternoon Tea was served. We were blessed by this time of fellowship together.

At our summer event in July we reciprocated by inviting Cedars to join us. It was encouraging to see the Parish Centre so full. We were grateful to Laurie for beginning our afternoon with a short talk. A quiz tested our knowledge before we were served a Cream Tea with strawberries. Our afternoon was concluded with a time of singing led by Ruth Boughton, a retired minister and member of Kings Church. Coming together with Cedars was yet another opportunity for us to share fellowship and get to know our friends from Kings.

We celebrated Christmas with our traditional service of Readings and Carols. Jonny very kindly set up the PA system and ably accompanied us on the piano. We were joined by a number of guests who were invited by church members. Laurie challenged us about the real meaning of Christmas. We are grateful for Laurie's support and the engaging way in which he shares the Good News about Jesus. We are also grateful to Andrea Hayers and her team of servant-hearted members of St Leonard's who prepared and served everyone with tea and mince pies.

As well as events, team members have been involved in visiting and praying with a number of our seniors. These have included Ann and Gordon Williams and Margaret Axten who have been long standing members of St Leonard's and who have now gone to be with the Lord.

Thank you church family for all the help and support that you give so willingly to the ministry to seniors.

Barbara Williams – Seniors' Leaders



KINGDOM PARTNERS

The Mission Committee seeks to be led by the Lord to support others beyond the parish of St Leonard's. This includes regular giving, support in prayer, irregular and one-off giving.

Within the Mission Committee, we feel led by the Lord to support Kingdom Partners who have been St Leonard's congregation members or who have direct links with congregation members. This gives us a more intimate understanding of the blessings of the Holy Spirit and encourages both St Leonard's and our Kingdom Partners. We see unity and community manifest across continents.

During the past year we have regularly supported a range of partners abroad:

- Steve and Lindsey Poulson working with CMS in Honduras
- The Lunchbowl Network in Kenya
- Pete and Sarah working at Tree of Life in Mannenberg, Cape Town
- Jack and Claire working with Frontiers in North Africa

Jack & Claire returned to the UK in July for a year sabbatical, they are planning to return to their project in the summer 2025.

We showcased the work of all our Kingdom Partners during the Mission Sunday service in September.

The Lunchbowl Network in Kenya had to close Stepping Stones and have faced a lot of opposition and financial difficulties over the past year. We continue to support them both, financially and in prayers.

With the changes in Kingdom Partners, we have assigned more funds to existing partners to shield them from the effects of inflation over recent years. Chandra & Sekhar from Agape Alive India were invited to come and share in May at St Leonard's.

We also continued to support 3 charities: Tearfund, Foodbank and Restore Hope with occasional gifts, promotion of their work and appeals, prayer support and updates. As part of this ongoing support, we organised a quiz night (Big Quiz) in November in aid of Tearfund which raised £958.47.

Anna Rabindrakumar – Member of Mission Committee



CHESHAM BOIS CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

School's Vision

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 which are lived out on a daily basis by children and adults. Our caring, nurturing learning environment enables all children to achieve together.

Matthew 19.14 - "Let the little children come to me. Don't stop them, because this kingdom of heaven belongs to children like these."

Together we believe, achieve and care.

School's Values (Children's version in italics)

Love – Mark 12:30 – 31

The most important commandment of all is this – Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this – Love your neighbour as yourself.

I can show my love by sharing and being kind to everyone even if they are not my friend.

Thankfulness – Psalm 107 v.1

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good His love endures forever.

I will be thankful for what people do for me and the things I have.

Integrity –Proverbs 20:11

Even a child shows what he is by what he does, you can tell if he is honest and good.

I can be honest and take pride in all that I do and always try to make the right choices.

Aspiration- Jeremiah 29:11

'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.'

I always try my very best and have high aspirations for my future.

Respect – Genesis 1:28

I am putting you in charge of all the fish, the birds and all the wild animals.

I will value and celebrate the world and those around me.

Resilience – Philippians 4:8

Fill your minds with those things that are good and that deserve praise, things that are true, noble, right, lovely and honourable.

I can learn from when things go wrong and keep on trying.



We start this report with the vision and values of the school, which have been slightly changed from previous years, because one of the encouraging things we see in the school is the way the school values are so well embodied and lived out by children and adults. It is a delight to see how children thrive at school not only academically but in their uniqueness and in the gifts and talents that they each have.

One of the objectives in the school development plan this year, is to engage further with our ethos and for children to understand what spirituality is. We'll let you know next year how that works out!

An aspect of school life which the church was closely involved with was the Prayer Day, organised to coincide with the World Day of Prayer. Parents, members of St Leonard's and other churches manned six stations. The whole day was welcoming to children of all faiths and none, and children were able to explore different aspects of prayer or simply to reflect on the activities. In 2024, each activity was based on Ecology, stewardship and care of the planet.

Highlights and Lowlights

We heard that the trialling of the Junior Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award was progressing well, including plans to dig over the allotments and grow their own vegetables.

That the Eco-Club had been set up and was working towards achieving the Green Flag award.

The Gardening Club and the woodland area had been revamped and set up, with pupils loving their initial outdoor learning sessions.

The SEND (Children with special learning needs) provision had a boost with the ODBST agreeing to the school to use £62,000 from reserves to allow the SEND Co-ordinator to continue to deliver interventions outside of class. Sadly, funding for this could not continue into 2024/25 and as a result some staff had to be released and remaining staff duties and responsibilities redistributed.

One of the worst things for a school to manage was the tragic death of one of its pupils. This was handled very well by the leadership team with very good support from the ODBST and ODBE. It was pleasing to see the support provided by the community and for the school values to be exhibited amongst all through this difficult period.

In October we celebrated the 130th Birthday of the school being established on this site.

Spiritually, we recognise the great value of "Open the Bible" for the children that St Leonard's organises and also the significance the weekly prayer meeting of parents and governors has on the school each Friday morning. Its been great to see answered prayer and for the way our Lord is blessing so many aspects of this special school.

We also continue to be blessed with staff who care deeply about the children and who provide an inspirational and supportive learning environment. Our children are keen to learn, be kind and generous and our parents support the school in many different ways. Pupil attainment and progress continues to be very good. The school is increasingly popular and continues to be at capacity.



There are vacancies for foundation governors arising in 2025. Please do consider if you would like to join the board and be part of this excellent school team.

Peter Flory - 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.

The March meeting re-elected Mr Lawrence Tebboth as Lay Deanery Lay Chair for the remainder of the 2024 to 2026 triennium and also elected Canon Julie Dziegiel as the Deanery Treasurer and Dorothy Potter as Deanery Secretary. The Deanery Treasurer presented the budget for 2024. It was noted that the rundown of reserves below policy level had continued into 2024. This was a result both of a reduction in rebate from the Diocese following the Deanery not making its full Parish Share, and also the continuing demand to meet some ongoing issues within the Deanery.

We welcomed the Rev'd Asa Humphreys, the Parish Development Advisor (PDA) for the Buckinghamshire Archdeaconry. Asa's role is to work with parishes during their time of vacancies and working with them towards a new appointment. The PDA role has no direct authority, but has links to the many other skills and roles within the Diocesan team. We shared in group discussion where God had been recently present in individual and church lives. The Deanery Synod were asked to consider the new Diocesan Vision of: "Sharing God's love with children and young people: transforming our engagement and recommitting to our Diocesan strategy". The Diocesan Synod resolution that the Deanery would consider at our next meeting was 'That this Synod endorses the need to significantly increase our engagement with children, young people, families and schools building on Disciples Together, and to share the good news of Jesus Christ, and calls on every deanery and benefice in 2024 to develop plans and partnerships for growth'.

Our June meeting was held here in our Parish Centre. The bulk of the meeting was dedicated to a discussion of the Children and young people Diocesan resolution initially considered at the last meeting.

"What issues are stopping our churches flourishing as all age inter-generational communities?" under the headings of: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Break out groups were provided with flip charts to record views and would be collated and summarised for next synod. Between each breakout sessions there were individual contributions from Rev'd Laurie Clow and Rev'd Victoria Jones on their churches and individual experiences with Children and Young Families experiences. The Rev'd Phil Nightingale had been asked to provide a view of his work with chaplaincy



to the secondary school Chesham Academy. The breakout groups were finally asked to discuss and feedback on; “How can we best support each other across the Deanery? What Diocesan resources would help?

There was no September meeting.

In November, our main focus with lively discussion was on the revised Parish Share for 2024 and 2025. An encouraging presentation of how well the Estates Ministry was going at St George’s Little Chalfont by Rev’d David Whale, and the Rev’d Victoria Jones. It was enlightening to see the reality and needs of people that are living on the doorstep of St. Georges. Finally, an update was provided on the work of Deanery Link Mission Partners Steve and Lindsey Poulson.

Needless to say we received our usual regular Area Dean’s reports 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 and Jackie Lambert – Deanery Synod Representatives

PARISH CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT

Our second application was refused due to concerns about impacts on special areas of conservation. This decision was appealed against in the summer and we are awaiting the planning inspectors visit and decision.

PCC