

Annual Reports of Organisations for the Year 2023

To be presented at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 28th April 2024

Team Rector and Vicar of All Saints	Fr Anthony Searle (From 3 rd November 2023)
Associate Priest	The Revd. Jackie Lock
Licensed Lay Ministers	Derek Lancaster
Children & Families Minister	Robyn Connelly
Churchwardens	Elisabeth Burns Jennifer Cartledge
Hon. Treasurer	John Lord
Acting Director of Music	Philip Wayne
Parish Administrator	Elizabeth (Thistle) Martin
Church Operations:	Stephen Linger
Safeguarding officer	Jo Norman
PCC Secretary	Philip Hynard
Electoral Roll Officer	Errol Baker
Shared Leadership Team	
Mission & Evangelism	Vacant
Children, Youth & Families	Robyn Connelly
Pastoral	Jackie Lock
Worship & Liturgy	Derek Lancaster
Stewardship & Finance	John Lord
Education & Discipleship	Vacant
Buildings & Fabric	Jennifer Cartledge
Communication	Elisabeth Burns

All Saints - Review of the Year 2023

The first part of this report (January to October) has been prepared by Lis Burns, Churchwarden & Vice Chair of the PCC. The second part, (From November) has been prepared by Fr Anthony Searle, Team Rector.

January

We began 2023 in vacancy but determined to move forward in a positive way. Hosting a come and sing performance of excerpts from Mendelssohn's *Elijah* was a great start as were new floors in the church toilets!

February and March

Sunday soup lunches offered an opportunity for us to meet socially and reading recommendations from the ministry team helped our learning during Lent.

With guidance from the Diocese and Deanery teams, a small group worked on our parish profile to assist with the appointment of a new Team Rector. This incorporated feedback from parishioners and visitors to All Saints during Summer 2022 and input from the PCC who met to discern a developing vision for All Saints in terms of our church community, within High Wycombe and beyond along with the qualities we hoped to see in our new Team Rector.

We also saw the return of our resident pair of peregrine falcons who successfully bred a couple of chicks.

Holy Week and Easter

Holy week began with the anticipation of Palm Sunday with the rousing anthem *Lift up your Heads* by Matthias before an evening service of readings and music led us into the solemnity of Holy week. Following moving services on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, we saw a temporary change to the service pattern of recent years, with our First Eucharist of Easter held on the Saturday evening. This was a spirit-led occasion with the confirmation of four our regular congregational members by the late Bishop Alan and a good test of our smoke detection system thanks to a very enthusiastic Easter fire. The festivities continued with another uplifting baptism service on Easter Day.

May and June

On Sunday 7 May, we celebrated the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla by hosting the town's civic celebration at our Parish Eucharist. With bunting made by our craft group and congregation, our new flagpole installed and successful Ring and Sing for the King campaigns, our bells rang out and the church was filled with the truly glorious sound of Parry's anthem *I was Glad* sung by All Saints choir and members from other local music making organisations.

It was great to be able to support the town centre FrogFest event at the end of May and in June, we saw the return of the All Saints Quiz – a big thank you to Dawn, quiz master Mark and other PCC members for organising a fun evening. We were also delighted help Jackie, Thistle and Robyn from the All Saints team celebrate their significant birthdays with a "180" ceilidh with music and barn dancing in the church.

Interviews were held for the Team Rector position which was no small undertaking with a large panel representing All Saints, churches from the Wycombe Team Benefice, Deanery and Diocese and we were subsequently delighted to announce that Father Anthony had accepted the post.

July and August

In early July we said thank you and farewell to our curate Rev'd Gareth Morley as he left All Saints to take up the post of Rector of the Benefice of Easthampstead, Bracknell Deanery. It was lovely to gather as a church community to express our gratitude for Gareth's ministry and send him, Jenna, and the children on their way with a few gifts to show our appreciation.

Mid July saw the redecoration of the church toilets – thank you to the painting crew who took on this messy task.

During the school holiday, members of our congregation participated in Wycombe Lighthouse a non-residential holiday club for children run by local churches before the All Saints team led “Light at the end of the Summer” with games, arts and crafts and activities for all ages. We hope to offer a similar event in 2024.

On Saturday 19 August, we handed out hundreds of rainbow cupcakes at Wycombe Pride (thank you to all our bakers), offered support and encouragement, joined in the march through the town and offered a place of sanctuary for those who wanted a moment of peace away from the noisy celebrations.

September and October

The Autumn term started with an afternoon tea fundraiser in support of the South Porch appeal with homemade sandwiches, scones and cakes in a refreshingly cool building accompanied by our talented Director of Music Philip Wayne on the piano.

The following weekend we held our Big Autumn clean tackling high level dusting, sweeping and a deep clean of various areas within the building. As always despite the hard work involved, it was very enjoyable to spend time with fellow volunteers and reward ourselves with lunch together. We usually hold a Summer big clean but delayed the event this year to enable wood worm treatment of chairs and other items – thank you to Philip Hynard for his efficient organisation of this programme.

In October we celebrated Harvest with a beautiful floral display and food donations to support our local food banks. We also danced the night away with a 60/70s disco in the church – thank you to Lynda and Barry Titchen and their team for organising such a fun filled evening and successful fundraiser.

Final planning for Father Anthony’s institution, installation, induction service on 3 November took place and the church community pulled together once again to help paint rooms at the vicarage at the last minute. Thank you to all those involved in the appointment process, the preparations for Father Anthony’s arrival and to everyone for offering him such a warm welcome.

November and December

We began November with my Institution, Induction and Installation as Team Rector for High Wycombe. It was a joyous occasion, presided over by the late +Alan, and I was met by such a wonderful welcome in my new home of All Saints. The joy continued as we celebrated our Patronal Festival on All Saints Sunday. For both, and many services since, my thanks go to the ministry team, to Rev. Jackie Lock, Derek Lancaster, and Robyn Connelly; to the churchwardens, Lis Burns and Jenny Cartledge, and their sidespeople; to Pat Lea and Janet Pearson for the flowers; and to Philip Wayne, Ollie Roberts, and the choir; for all their hard work and dedication to All Saints. Thanks also go to Tricia Newton and her team of able Ringers who rang in these occasions.

A week later, we hosted the civic service of Remembrance and welcomed a packed church of uniformed organisations, at which The Rev. Sqn Ldr Andrew Chapman preached a well-balanced sermon of peace in a time when we are seeing much strife and war in our world.

At the end of the month and as we edged into Advent, we served those who had lost loved ones with the service of Light up a Life, organised by those affiliated to the Rennie Grove Peace Hospice Care.

December was a joyfully busy time with six schools and the Mayor holding their carol services at All Saints, and a number of All Saints’ people taking carols to BNU, alongside our own Advent Carols and service of Nine Lessons and Carols: at all, we witnessed to the birth of Jesus, our incarnate God, and invited all to share our joy. Thanks go to Robyn Connelly for all her work with the numerous schools and to Steve Linger for his organisation.

December was also a time of community and fundraising. The Christmas Craft Fayre, complete with string quartet, carols and hand bells, started the month, and thanks go to Helen Cousins, Jacqui Brearley and their team for organising this successful event; and in the centre of December, the church welcomed 31 superbly decorated pines and spruces for the Christmas Tree Festival, won by Hamilton School and our own Bell Ringers, and encouraged 100s of visitors into the church. The Sparkle event that set the Festival in motion celebrated our church within our community. Thanks to Thistle Martin, Lis Burns and Jenny Cartledge for their exhaustive work in making these spectacular occasions, and to all the volunteers who welcomed visitors.

We closed the month with the height of Christmas, the final Sunday of Advent flowing through a beautiful Crib and Christingle Service, and into Midnight Mass and a joyous Christmas morning.

2024

It has been a joy to join such a vibrant church with such opportunity for mission and growth at the centre of High Wycombe. There have been, in these first months of my service here, many occasions that have confirmed the work of the Holy Spirit in placing me here, in this place at this time.

The church is the people who gather together in prayer, study and worship. The development plans of Sound, Light and Space are to better enable the work and worship of our community. The efforts of the Operations and Ministry Team, the SLT and PCC, and the Churchwardens, are all to support the church in our mission in this place. In all this, I thank those who have committed time and talents over the years, and particularly those who are setting aside their roles: thanks to Lis Burns and Jenny Cartledge for their tenures as Churchwardens; to Jo Norman and Philip Hynard who have served as Parish Safeguarding Officer and PCC secretary respectively; and to Dawn Segre, Thistle Martin and Lauren Harvey, who have served on the PCC.

Church is blessed by those who are part of its community. Each of us give as we are able, of time, talents and money, and we give from what we are given. There is a role for each of us in the mission of the church, in the work and worship of All Saints, and it is through prayer and the study of scripture that we might each discover what is our role. Our thanks go to those who have felt called to take up positions alongside those who continue to serve. Particular thanks must also go to John Lord and his team for their work in finance.

In the year ahead, we will continue to explore our mission, in how we might grow in numbers, in discipleship, and in service. We can only do this together, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. In all this, I give thanks that God has gifted All Saints with a heart to follow and a community who love.

Lis Burns, Churchwarden & Vice Chair of the PCC (January to October)
Fr Anthony Searle, Team Rector (from November)

Mission & Evangelism

Introduction

The Church of England describes five 'marks' of mission as:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

The following reports highlight some of the All Saints activities where we are striving to demonstrate these beliefs.

Arts and Spirituality

Installations

Lis Burns and I have continued to create installations in the Quiet Space linked to the church year, creating a focus for prayer and contemplation for visitors. However, reorganisation of the layout and furniture in this chapel has meant that this has proved less conducive to the use of the space for installations.

All Saints Gallery

Thanks to personal contacts with local schools, we have been able to have displays of artwork from a range of local schools, primary and secondary in the gallery this year. As planned, the work has been on display roughly for a half term. Some contributing schools have provided artwork connected to events or the season, one providing wonderful pictures for our Coronation Celebrations, and another providing Christmas themed stained glass pictures.

Christmas Tree Festival

The ninth tree festival was very successful and a wonderful way of welcoming visitors into the church and providing local charities and schools the opportunity to showcase their work to the community. This year we had a number of new groups wanting to be involved.

Drawing Together

Joc Lucas and I have been running monthly art group, designed to provide a welcoming relaxed space. We have been focusing on different processes of drawing and creating art rather than the finished work. The sessions have provided a time for participants, some new to church, to engage with each other while discovering new ways of drawing and improving concentration and observational skills. Sessions have been fun as well as instructive. The next display in the gallery will be of artwork created during our sessions

Forward planning

Drawing Together sessions will continue, usually on the 4th Wednesday of the month. In addition to this, Helen Cousins and I are planning a papermaking workshop in the summer, followed by a follow up session to use the paper we have made to create cards and pictures. I also hope to have some art days focusing on children's art.

Elizabeth (Thistle) Martin

Mustard Seed Café

The Café continues to contribute to the church funds with takings up year on year as we have seen an increase in numbers.

Our partnership with local charity Talkback continues giving young adults with Autism or learning difficulties an opportunity to work in the café and gain new skills and we look forward to welcoming more new Talkback members in 2024. We also welcome another group of young adults on a Tuesday who come to enjoy the cafe whilst out exploring the town.

Thank you to the café volunteers and bakers who make it possible to open most days of the week. We would like to try opening again on a Wednesday morning for a couple of hours, if you are interested in volunteering or would like to know more, please let me know.

Stephen Linger
Church Operations



Mustard Club

The Mustard Club has been running for ten years now and some of the volunteers have been with us since the start. However recently they have been thin on the ground and we could do with a few more to fill in occasionally when the regulars are ill or on holiday. Gill Blair comes every alternate Tuesday to cut the guests' hair....a service much appreciated by all of our guests. It would be good if we could offer a similar service for feet and/or teeth! We have a contact from Bucks New University through Wycombe Homeless Connection who provided a really good volunteer but sadly she was hospitalised shortly after starting – she is looking forward to coming back as soon as she is better. Meanwhile the same contact has promised two more volunteers.

We are very grateful to Steve for compiling the comprehensive Health and Safety Guidelines, particularly for working in the kitchen preparing food but also for all aspects of using the church building. We are alerting all volunteers to them and endeavouring to make sure they have signed to say they have been read.

It is heart-warming the way in which guests have stepped up to help with setting out tables and clearing up afterwards – they have done so unobtrusively when help was needed. The atmosphere is calm and respectful, very different from when we occasionally have to use Oakley Hall if the church is needed for another function. One guest (Katherine) cooks a meal for us once a month.

Some of the cooks do not ask for reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses, for which we are grateful. We made two collections outside of Waitrose before Christmas....this year shoppers were very generous, so with the money raised from collections, the occasional anonymous donation and the safety of the church fund to fall back on we are financially stable. We give out clothing when needed and small gifts at Christmas provided by friends and helpers. We sadly cannot provide accommodation but can supply sleeping bags from time to time.

Grace is said at the beginning of the meal and candles are available for private prayer if needed, either for them to use on their own or with a volunteer if counselling is requested. We celebrate birthdays and remember those guests who have sadly died.

Numbers are restricted to twenty at the moment because of the implications of Covid which changed all of our lives. We try to restrict numbers to four on each table but we need to review that in the near future. Board Games are available before the meal, and smoking is supervised outside.

We sponsored one of the stairs to the tower and occasionally guests put small change into the collection point in front of the hatch.

We appreciate the help offered in any way to support our meal....the benefits we receive in return are too numerous to mention. We love walking through the town and being greeted by guests and ex-guests with a friendly greeting and a wave and we thank all of the church community who help support this initiative.

Sheila Doig and Chris Lamb

Craft Group

The All Saints Craft Group has had another busy year with over twenty members contributing in one way or another: and not just from the All Saints congregation. We have a regular core of about eight people with others dropping in as and when they can.

2023 began with an exhibition at the back of church showcasing all the crafts we had produced since 2018. There were 18 exhibits.

One of our fundamental aims is to raise funds for projects within All Saints and in this respect the proceeds from the sale of our bespoke handcrafted Easter Eggs, Coronation brooches and bunting were donated to the Bell Tower Replacement Steps fund -a grand total of over £500 was raised: the cost of 2 ½ steps.

In the summer we made a trip to St Mary's Wantage to visit the summer workshop of the Christ Church Cathedral Embroiderers. Having been asked to make some minor repairs to our own altar frontals, this was a confidence boosting exercise, enabling us to make initial repairs to the modern Advent frontal.

During 'The Light at the End of the Summer' week, in August, we began to engage the congregation in the process of creating a new, 'ordinary season' frontal. 'Hands' of over 130 members of the congregation, both adults and children, will feature in this new work.

In September and October we visited several exhibitions. Thus, we had an away day at the 'Voices in Cloth', a textile art exhibition in Henley, followed by a visit to the 'Hats Made Me' exhibition at the Stockwood Discovery Centre in Luton, which explored the global significance of hats and headwear. Our final trip was also to Luton for 'Showtime for Hats', which focussed on the making of hats for theatre, film, TV and Opera – all very interesting and informative.

In the Autumn we resumed our regular making of red felt poppies for sale in Church and elsewhere. This venture raised almost £400 for the Royal British Legion. Then it was all hands to the deck as we prepared for the Annual Christmas Craft Fair: another very successful day that raised over £2,000 for All Saints funds.

The All Saints Craft Group is an active friendly bunch of people who are always delighted to welcome new members to join them to chat, drink tea and eat cake on Sunday afternoons (about once a month), as well as try their hand at the various crafts that we do. No experience or specific skills are necessary: just a willingness to join in and perhaps try something new!

Helen Cousins

Children's, Families, and Youth Ministry

Reflecting on the year 2023, All Saints remains a beacon of joy, community, and spiritual growth, and our engagement with children, young people, and their families is testament to that.

Worship within All Saints services

Ark and Small Saints continued during term time, on fortnightly Sundays and weekly Fridays respectively and both groups have welcomed enthusiastic new joiners. Our intergenerational services such as Easter Sunday, blessing of the backpacks, and Harvest continue to encourage participation amongst our children and young people. The 'Christingle around the Crib' service on Christmas eve was a blessing to all involved, filling the church with people of all ages.

Celebrating the admission of eight children to communion was a significant milestone, prompting ongoing conversations on how to involve these children and their families more deeply in the life of the church. Our serving, readers, intercessors, and sides teams are being boosted by some new young members who are gaining in confidence and desire to join and support the teams here at church.

School and Educational Engagements

All Saints played a leading role in the blessing of the High Wycombe Church of England Combined School (HWCoE) at the start of the year and the warm reception that we received on the playground after school during the distribution of 'Ashes to go' on Ash Wednesday highlighted the meaningful connections fostered within the school community.

Active involvement in the Collective Worship Committee at the HWCoE, as well as our participation in delivering collective worship sessions at the school, emphasises All Saints' support of the school to ensure that collective worship remains 'Inclusive, Invitational, and Inspirational.' Assemblies at both Godstowe Prep and Lodge has initiated discussions on improving our links, paving the way for future collaborations which includes volunteering opportunities for the students.

The increased frequency of school visits this past year has further strengthened our ties with various schools within the community of High Wycombe. The visits, including those from HWCoE, Godstowe, Crown House, Wycombe Prep, Hamilton Academy, and All Stars Preschool, as well as many school and preschool groups who wander into the church while on trips within the town centre, have been integral to spreading the message of welcome. These visits, along with various school Christmas, Easter, Harvest, and Leavers services, are crucial in ensuring that the church remains a welcoming space for all.

Community Outreach and Collaborative Efforts

Collaborative efforts with Children's, Families, Schools, and Youth Ministers in the deanery area, along with the Diocesan Children's Advisor for Buckinghamshire have been particularly fruitful, fostering monthly gatherings for prayer, worship, and discussions on how we can support one another. The deanery puppetry roadshow that took place during the Advent period which told the Christmas story was a phenomenal success, reaching over 2300 children, staff, and volunteers from ten schools around the deanery, three of which are in our parish.

Feedback from all involved in Lighthouse High Wycombe and Little Lighthouse this year, emphasised the success of these holiday clubs in positively engaging children and young people within the community of High Wycombe, sharing the message of the gospel.

The 'Light at the end of Summer' activity week was well received by the community, consisting of engaging activities, and allowed for meaningful conversations to take place. The community puzzle became an ongoing testament to the success of the week, showcasing the dedication of the team and volunteers.

Involvement in Opportunity Bucks, a council instigated initiative, focusing on ages 0-5 in identified hardship wards, showcases our commitment to levelling up communities. Collaborative efforts with leaders from various organisations including faith based and councillors within the Abbey ward are underway.

Conclusion

As we celebrate the achievements and growth in our ministry to under 18's, we express gratitude to the dedicated team, volunteers, and the entire All Saints community. The past year has been marked by impactful engagements and the fostering of a vibrant, inclusive community. Looking forward, we remain committed to nurturing spiritual growth, building connections, and contributing positively to the lives of children, young people, and their families in our community.

Robyn Connelly
Children and Families Minister

Pastoral Care

We have noticed recently that more people are visiting the church and especially those experiencing particular challenges. We try to offer what support we can, but this sometimes involved pointing them to an agency that is better equipped to offer support. This is very much part of the ministry for All Saints as a town centre church.

Care homes: we are continuing to hold monthly services at Little Oaks Care Home and at Royal Star and Garter. It is a great joy to visit these homes and to share in the Eucharist with them. I am grateful to the team who help with the singing and keyboard accompaniment. A huge thank you to all of them. Once again we were invited to lead the Remembrance Day Service at Royal Star and Garter. This year we have been invited to offer a service of Holy Communion at Shelburne Lodge.

We are now free to talk to the residents. After lockdown, we had observe the two metre rule to conduct services. It's good that we can now chat to the residents and get to know them more easily. It is a great privilege when we are invited to be with residents as they near the end of their lives.

Maureen Lampard continues with others including Derek Lancaster to lead the Christian Fellowship at Hughenden Gardens Village which continues to grow.

Pastoral Visits: these are offered to any who are housebound whether that is for a short term or on a more long term basis. We should love to hear of others who would like to receive the sacrament at home. Please let the ministry team know – it may be for yourself or for a member or your family or a neighbour.

Ideally we would like to set up a pastoral care team who would be able to keep in touch with people and visit as necessary. Please let me know if you feel called to this ministry. Appropriate training will be given.

Baptisms: these are now taking place as people request them. In 2023 there were nine baptisms in the course of the year. It is a joy to welcome new families as well as members of the congregation for baptism. We like to offer support on the day to the family, and would welcome more volunteers to be with them. It is an enjoyable ministry. Please talk to me if this is something which you would like to be involved with – during the service or in other ways.

Prayer ministry has been offered at Led by the Spirit services. We would like to build up the team again so that this ministry can be offered on a regular basis. If anyone feels called to this ministry, please let me know. We will offer training for this ministry. My thanks to those who offer this ministry on a regular basis.

The Prayer Guild meets monthly. Members have undertaken to pray regularly for a large number of people and situations, including many with long term illness and their families who care for them. This is a hidden but invaluable ministry.

*The Reverend Jackie Lock
Associate Priest*

Welcomers

Thank you to all the volunteers who help us to open the church throughout the year.

We continue to open the church most days for visitors/private prayer. The Monday Lunchtime concerts attendance have increased with an average audience of 50+ which has helped with takings in the café.

There's no pattern to the number of visitors we get throughout the week, some days we have 50+ other we have around 15, all can be assured of a warm welcome and someone to chat to if they wish.

If you are interested in welcoming on a regular basis or just on odd occasions, we are always looking for new volunteers, and would like more information about what you could do to get involved then please do contact me for a chat.

*Stephen Linger
Church Operations*

Liturgy and Music

Services continued as normal throughout the remainder of the vacancy in the Team Rector role, thanks to the hard work both of our own Ministry Team and the support of clergy from other parishes. The wardens' report notes some of the highlights of the year. An innovation at Christmas was the combining of the crib and Christingle services on Christmas Eve. This proved a popular development, with a good turnout.

There were regular baptisms, and confirmation on Holy Saturday by Bishop Alan. We marked the end of the Revd Gareth Morley's curacy with the Eucharist on July 2nd, where his choices of hymns were used. Several of us subsequently attended his licensing service in Easthampstead. It was a joy to welcome Fr Anthony Searle as Team Rector on All Saints Sunday, and he settled in quickly, bringing fresh vision for our liturgy amongst much else besides.

The choir has been well sustained under the very capable direction of Philip Wayne and Oliver Roberts. We are so grateful for their leadership, and they have produced high quality output from all our singers. We welcomed a small number of new singers during the year, which was encouraging – we would still welcome more soprano/trebles and more tenors, though!

The organ continues to give cause for concern – our organists do an excellent job of concealing the lack of flexibility and the number of failing stops etc. The report on the SLS project notes the continuing need to address the future provision here.

Choral Evensong has grown in numbers as well as quality, and is much appreciated. The regular early Sunday morning Communion and afternoon Parish Evensong services continue, though it would be great to have more people attending those as they are an opportunity both to experience a more reflective style of service and to enjoy the continuing use of the traditional Book of Common Prayer language.

The Thursday Eucharist continues to be popular – a said service in contemporary language, with a short sermon and the opportunity for social time afterwards in the Mustard Seed Café. The other weekday Morning Prayer and Eucharists are sparsely attended, but they sustain a pattern of regular prayer each week in our building. The services are said, and short, so easy to attend if you're able to come at 0900. Morning Prayer on Tuesdays is also livestreamed to our Facebook page.

The regular Led by the Spirit Eucharists also continued – these are our contemporary catholic charismatic services inspired by On Fire Mission. They combine traditional liturgy with contemporary music led by a band, ably led by Sacha Tomkins, who brought us some excellent new songs to add to our repertoire. The service is designed to attract people from a wider area than our other services and is advertised at diocesan and deanery level. We are most grateful for those who provide refreshments, led by Dawn Segreue – this provides an invaluable space for fellowship together after worship.

Thank you to all who offer their time and skills to make our liturgy and music a worthwhile offering of worship to God.

Derek Lancaster LLM

Bellringers

Having had no new recruits in 2022, we were inundated in 2023, partly because of the Ring for the King media coverage in February when people were invited to learn to ring for the Coronation. Some potential recruits in the High Wycombe area were directed to other local towers but in all we started to teach 8 new ringers last year. Learning to ring takes a long time and a lot of dedication on behalf of both the learner and the teacher. Two of the eight gave up fairly soon because they didn't realise what was involved, one transferred to Marlow and one has taken a break but hopes to return. We have also had two people join us who could already ring so our numbers are greatly increased, enabling us to ring all 12 bells on occasions for Sunday morning service. On the downside, David Leonard, who had been a regular Sunday service ringer since about 1978, moved away.

As many people as possible were included in ringing for the Coronation of King Charles and Queen Camilla, including two of the new recruits. A date touch of 2023 Stedman Triples, a quarter peal of Grandsire Triples and a full peal of Cambridge Surprise Royal were all successfully completed for the Royal occasion. Another full peal was rung for the King's first official birthday in June.

16 quarter peals were rung during the year, mostly after Evensong services. A quarter peal takes about 45 minutes, and these longer periods of ringing help to consolidate a learner's progress with the support of an experienced band. Special occasions marked included a farewell to David and Miriam Leonard, the arrival of Fr Anthony Searle, and a half muffled quarter of Grandsire Caters was rung on Remembrance Sunday.

We enjoyed our annual dinner on Monday 3rd April at the Grouse and Ale at Lane End, and an outing on 1st July to North Moreton, Little Wittenham and Brightwell-cum-Sotwell for ringing followed by a pub lunch.

We did not have a good year in striking competitions. In the local EBSB Branch 6-bell competition we were placed 3rd. This was only the third time we have not won this contest in 34 years so it was probably time for someone else to win. Our "B" band took part in a local knock out contest. They didn't win either but it was good to have two of our newer ringers taking part in their first contest.

The handbell group rang carols for the opening of the Christmas Craft Fayre and outside the west door of the church for an hour on the Saturday of the Christmas Tree Festival. Sadly we had competition from a singing group along the road but some people stopped to listen to us.

The church clock continues to be problematic with the main power supply tripping every few weeks. The hands on the clock face on the west side of the tower have also been disconnected because of a suspected problem which needs further investigation.

We were very grateful to all who donated and raised funds for the Stairway to Heaven project. By the end of the year about 15 steps had been replaced.

Patricia Newton

Flowers

Firstly, Janet and I would like to thank the team for their continued support over the last year. Sadly, three of the team are stepping down for various reasons. This means we need to recruit more volunteers to strengthen the team. You don't have to be a flower arranger, we need help to water the flowers at least twice a week and help to dismantle and clear the arrangements after festivals, especially Easter and Christmas.

If you would like to sponsor an arrangement in memory of a loved one, please give the name and date to either Janet or myself and we will be happy to arrange flowers of your choice.

We hope to be able to continue to make our church even more beautiful with flower arrangements.

Pat Lea

Servers & Communion Assistants

The serving team has continued to support the majority of the services during the last 12 months, the weekly Sunday services at 8am and 10:00am and evening services as required and additional services such as Holy week, Ascension Day, induction service for Father Anthony and more recently Bishop Alan's Memorial service.

During the year we have welcomed two more younger members of the congregation into the serving team.

The team of people who assist during the Sunday services and other special services comprises the following roles:

8:00am *Servers:* Assist the Celebrant, take a Chalice

10:00am *Servers:* Assist either by carrying the Cross or by carrying a Candle

Communion Assistants: Serve at Eucharist and other services by taking the chalices to distribute the wine at communion

Many thanks to all those who assist on a regular basis and for their dedication in this service for the Church. Training is available for all the different roles if anyone would like to join the existing team and new members would be very welcome, so if you're interested or would like further information please speak to us in Church, phone 01494 529758 or email adtm@btinternet.com

David and Alison Adamson

Sidespeople

Thank you to all our sidespeople who play a key part in ensuring the services at All Saints run smoothly whether it is our regular Sunday and weekday worship or other occasional services throughout the year.

We currently have a core team of 18 people. With some of our regular sidespeople stepping down we currently have opportunities for others to get involved particularly 1st and 2nd Sundays of the month at our 10am service, on the 4th Sunday at our 8am service and the 2nd Sunday at our 5pm service. Even if you can't commit to a regular slot but could help occasionally or would simply like to find out more about what is involved, we would love to chat with you.

It is a real privilege to greet and assist people who attend services at All Saints. Thank you to everyone who supports the churchwardens in this vital ministry.

*Lis Burns & Jenny Cartledge
Churchwardens*

Stewardship & Finance

This group is responsible for monitoring our finances & expanding our planned giving, as well as supporting the Treasurer & Planned Giving Secretary. During 2023, the members were: John Lord (Chair), Barry Titchen (Deputy Treasurer), Chris Lamb (Planned Giving Secretary), Lis Burns (Church Warden) & Fr Anthony Searle (ex-officio, from November). The team is completed by Jean Johnson (Assistant Treasurer). Please let me know if you can help this team, in any way!

The details of the financial position are in the separate Trustees Report & Financial Statements, but this includes some highlights, as well as notes from Chris' Planned Giving report.

In normal budgetary terms, regular income was £264,562, against expenditure of £239,193, resulting in a surplus of £25,369, reversing a deficit in 2022. There were also unbudgeted 1-off grants & legacies of £15,093 & revaluation gains, giving an accounts surplus of £45,930.

Vacancy savings, low mission spend & maintenance delays reduced expenditure, whilst increased events, property rental & higher interest rates helped mitigate the impact of inflation. Although cost of living pressures & departures reduced planned giving by 2%, general collections offset this. However, these are often not Gift-Aided, so we can't reclaim the tax. There were generous responses to fundraising for repair of the tower steps & our Parish Gift Day. Other social fundraising events, particularly the Christmas Craft Fayre & Christmas Tree Festival were very successful – both communally & financially.

The balance of these funds will go towards urgent maintenance, Children & Families ministry & future mission. The Sound Light & Space capital projects (including the South Porch) will require significant fundraising & grants.

Planned Giving: Standing order gift aided donations in the year were £83,418, a decrease of £1,258 versus 2022. The Envelope Scheme gift aided donations were £3,180, a decrease of £636. Overall the planned giving gift aided numbers decreased by £1,894.

Non gift aided Envelopes and Standing Orders were £12,544, a decrease of £63 versus 2022.

Irregular giving via GA Yellow Envelopes amounted to £2,592, an increase of £902.

The ceiling of £8,000 in the financial year for Gift Aided Small Donations was reached halfway through the tax year. Gift Aid donations for specific purposes came to £31,448 & the total tax reclaimed for the year was £34,659.

The All Saints' Gift Day review triggered many generous responses: 9 made single gifts totalling £8,300 (including GA) & there were 18 increases in Planned Giving, which will amount to £5,895 in a full year. Although some regular donors have had to reduce or stop planned giving, this still amounts to a potential net increase of £1,530 a year.

It was great to see the response to the Stairway to Heaven appeal, raising £13,158 (including GA) for the tower steps. Other social & fundraising events, included the quiz, 60's-70's evening, afternoon teas, Christmas Craft Fayre & Christmas Tree Festival raised a total of £11,352. These were great community activities, as well as raising much needed funds, so a double thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make these events happen.

Planned Giving is our main source of funds, making up nearly half of all income. We are extremely grateful to the 100 families & individuals who have committed to making regular contributions to All Saints. This pays for the ongoing work of All Saints in the community. Once again, **thank you for your generosity!**

If you pay UK Income Tax, please Gift Aid all of your donations, allowing us to claim an extra 25%, without extra cost to you. Please also consider if you can start, or increase your regular giving – there are several options, so please contact me if you have any questions.

I continue to be grateful to Barry & the whole team for their work, dedication & guidance throughout the year. Also to the Wardens, Fr Anthony, the SLT & PCC for their support.

John Lord
Hon Treasurer

Education & Discipleship

Whilst resources were limited during the vacancy, there were a number of activities in this area during 2023.

During Lent there were short talks at the Lent Lunches, and the Ministry team provided a recommended book list. Unfortunately, a planned parish study day and visit to the cathedral had to be cancelled as they were unable to accommodate us in the end. In Autumn, a new series of leaflets describing aspects of our faith and practice were put out in church, and there has been some take-up.

The All Saints Plus group continued to meet weekly on Zoom to discuss the following Sunday's gospel. This has really helped us engage more deeply with scripture and the issues and questions it raises, and we sometimes correctly predict the theme of the sermon too!

Derek Lancaster, LLM

Buildings & Fabric

As we emerged from COVID we have been able to tackle some of the work highlighted in the Quinquennial Report as well as undertake other general repairs and maintenance to the church.

Items on the agenda during 2023 have included:

- In 2022 it was found that the tower staircase was infested with death watch beetle and part of the staircase collapsed. The beetle treatment was applied in December 2022 and the repairs to the stairs commenced in 2023 (completed January 2024).
- Because of the work needed to repair the tower stairs we had had to postpone the survey of the church masonry to 2023. This survey was completed in the summer of 2023
- The new flagpole was installed and was in place in time for the coronation.
- The work to refresh the toilets in the church recommenced and the painting was completed in Summer 2023. New radiators have also been installed.
- We have tenants on a 12-month tenancy (to March 2024) in the flat in Aylesbury.
- New tenants were found for 3 Castle Place and they are now in the property on as 12-month tenancy (to June 2024).
- The peregrine falcons who are regularly seen on the church tower are still in residence. They managed to rear 3 healthy chicks in 2023. We are hoping that they will successfully breed again in 2024. Peregrine Falcons are category 1 protected birds.
- It was discovered that some of wooden chairs had evidence of woodworm. A treatment was applied over the summer and our thanks go to Philip Hynard for arranging this work with a group of church volunteers.

- We had another successful 'Big Church Clean' in September which provided an opportunity to give the church a good clean and a time for fellowship and lunch together.
- The hot water heater in the kitchen finally gave up and a new water heater has been installed.
- We still moving forward with the Sound Light Space project. Please see the sperate report for this project.
- The next step with the South porch renovation is to undertake an environmental survey to establish the continuing clause of the stone decay. An appointment for a specialist report has been booked and will take place in 2024.

Trevor Flower retired from the Fabric Committee and we are grateful for his dedication and contribution to the upkeep of the fabric of the building.

As we move into 2024, it will be time for a new person to lead the fabric committee to preserve the fabric of our wonderful building. A rethink of the function and responsibilities of the fabric committee is needed and the new fabric chair after the APCM will need to review how the fabric committee works and the role it has to play at All Saints in the future. As always, new members to the fabric committee are always welcome.

Jennifer Cartledge
Churchwarden

The Space, Light and Sound Project (SLSP)

The SLSP attempts to bring together all the major outstanding repairs, replacement and renovation required at All Saints Parish Church. This is necessary to ensure that this Grade 1 Listed Building remains structurally safe and in a good state of repair while being improved to meet current and future standards for use in Christian worship and greater community use. It comprises:

- Repair and renovation of the South Porch.
- Repairs to the church building as identified in recent quinquennial inspections.
- Work to the Churchyard
- Refurbishment and repair of the Willis Organ.
- Improvements to the church lighting and wiring.
- Improvements to the audio-visual systems used in church.

While the overall progress this past year has been slow during the period of vacancy, preparatory work has continued by the small SLSP team.

Following advice from the PCC the churchwardens are working with a specialist practice to formulate a plan to repair the South Porch while increasing its functionality as a useable area within the church (similar to the way the west end foyer can be used when not the main entrance to the church).

Similarly, the wardens are working to get the stonework repairs started following a stonework survey that was carried out at the end of 2023. This will require an initial survey to scope the work required. A problem we have faced this past year is waiting for the tower steps to be repaired and limitations to access during the peregrine breeding season!

The Revd Gareth Morley did considerable research into the history of the church yard, and developed and presented some proposals to PCC to address the issues of anti-social behaviour, littering, and the abuse of the graves by some who choose to park on them. He also managed to secure some grant-funding to begin work.

As the year progressed, it became clear that the proposals needed to be better integrated with those for the south porch and stonework, and it is anticipated to progress design in 2024. Two 'community days' were held under the supervision of Chiltern Rangers and with the support of the Council. Volunteers from the church and from Dandara Living worked hard to clear unwanted foliage along the boundary with Castle Street and to trim some trees to open up the space and make anti-social behaviour more difficult. Many bags of rubbish, including dangerous drugs paraphernalia, were safely removed. Hundreds of spring bulbs were planted and wild flowers sown, so the area should look much better in 2024.

We have been in discussion about the Council's plans to develop the church square area as part of the town redevelopment, and the rat infestation was treated and reduced, though not yet eliminated. It is hoped that there will be the opportunity to re-design the south-west corner of the church yard, and have support with that from the council.

There have been many discussions about the provision of CCTV, but progress was slow and it is now hoped this will be provided in 2024. This should address the continuing parking issues, as will provision of a proper barrier at the top of the path and, potentially, the kerbing of the path to match the south porch area.

The Acting Director of Music (AoM) has been in contact with major firms who undertake organ conservation and repair and the Diocesan Organ Advisor to ascertain what is required for the church organ. On best advice, it appears that a complete refurbishment would be the best solution and one which could attract significant grant funding. Companies. The PCC has agreed this plan and the AOM is in consultation with the Diocese to decide on the scope of refurbishment and which organ company to select for the contract.

Barry Titchen and Derek Lancaster are leading on the church lighting and audio aspects of the project. A full assessment of the current limitations of the existing lighting was completed in 2022 and a specialist church lighting company (CGB Light Conceptions) has been consulted and tasked with producing a new lighting plan for the church. Their report and recommendations have been agreed by the PCC and, currently, initial consultations with the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) have started to obtain the necessary approvals.

Work on the audio-visual aspects of the project have continued throughout the period as we try to improve on the sound quality in the building and also improve the quality of the live streaming of services which commenced very shortly after COVID struck in 2020. We currently use up to 3 fixed cameras and one mobile camera which provide almost complete coverage of the church interior. All major services are streamed and scripting is used for all hymns and sung responses. The availability of 'zoom' has enabled participation in some services from around the world. Currently, much of the audio-visual associated cabling is visible and unsightly requiring it to be hidden in underfloor ducting where possible.

The big unknown is, of course, funding and how much is this all going to cost! While we have some initial estimates, detailed work estimates have yet to be received. The overall figure for all the work could be between £1.5M to £2M. This is a large sum to raise but other local churches have managed it. We shall, almost certainly, receive favourable consideration from a number of grant making bodies which could ease the burden on the church community. It is possible that we might have to employ a professional fund-raiser.

The power of prayer cannot be under-estimated and your prayer is need to guide the team who are leading in this work.

SLS Project Team

Oakley Hall

The Oakley Hall trust is a trust separate from the PCC under which the PCC is the managing trustee. It has the benefit of a lease of the Oakley Hall ("the OH lease") for 250 years from 1973 at a rent of £1 (plus insurance). The trusts terms include the use of the Oakley Hall as a church hall, parish rooms, and for any religious, charitable, or educational object, but with the proviso that should the premises be required for the accommodation of a unit of the Church Lads Brigade then provision should be made for them.

The church has its offices in the building and five parking places which are granted with the lease. Otherwise, except for Ark, the church seldom uses the building. We do however provide essential facilities for Wycombe Homeless Connection, CRUSE, DrugFam, All Stars preschool, the church House of Refreshing Ministries, Rainbows and Brownies, and Castle Street Dance studios. We also provide facilities for other organisations when requested, for all of which we make a charge.

This year new push button switches have been fitted in the recently refurbished toilets upstairs, and those off the downstairs hall.

A fire risk assessment was undertaken, and the committee has been prioritising and completing action points from this. A full electrical survey was carried out and updated. The building is in a more manageable position. A maintenance programme is continuing.

Edgar Samuel
Oakley Hall Management Committee

Communication

We continue to offer worship onsite and online with most of our 10am and 5pm services livestreamed via Facebook. This enables those unable to join us in person to participate and is an important part of our ministry. It has also allowed us to share special occasions such as the town's civic celebration of the coronation of King Charles III in May. My thanks to Barry Titchen, Hazel Arthur-Hewitt and Derek Lancaster in our technical team for their continuing hard work in this area.

A big thank you also to Thistle Martin who continues to write each week to congregation members unable to be with us in the church building or access online materials and for her assistance in publicising services and events.

We have recently taken some new photographs to refresh our website and we are actively using Facebook to update the local and wider community on our services and activities. Thank you to Steve Linger for leading on this with "This week at All Saints" and encouraging the leadership team to talk more about what we are doing.

Our Christmas 2023 postcards successfully encouraged new interest in our festive services, tree festival and craft fayre. As we weren't able to use the building during the Christmas lights switch on, we didn't hand out as many in November but we made up for it in December and will definitely print more for 2024!

Two new wobble boards with welcome signs have been purchased and are now in use outside the West doors and we have added inclusive signage on the blue noticeboard. A draft donations banner is under review and should be printed soon.

There are lots of opportunities to get involved with our communications. If this interests you please come and talk to me or contact Thistle in the parish office. I would also love to hear from you if you would like to publicise regular church activities you are involved in or if you are arranging a one off social or fundraising event.

Lis Burns
Churchwarden

Website: www.allsaintshighwycombe.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/AllSaintsHW
Twitter: www.twitter.com/AllSaintsHW
Instagram: www.instagram.com/allsaintshw

All Saints Parochial Church Council

During 2023, the PCC met six times, all of which were 'in person' although on occasions some members joined via Zoom. In addition, the PCC conducted business via email.

Our meetings have always begun with Evening Prayers, a time of worship together and concluded with prayers and the Grace.

The formal business included reports from the various Shared Leadership Team (SLT) task groups: Mission & Evangelism, Liturgy and Music, Children, Youth & Families, Stewardship & Finance, Buildings and Fabric (including Oakley Hall and the Sound Light and Space and Churchyard Projects), Pastoral, Education & Discipleship, Communication along with the Rector's and Churchwarden's reports and matters concerning Safeguarding.

Reports have also been presented by representatives of the Deanery and Diocesan Synods.

In 2023 the PCC supported and reviewed various projects and measures, some of which are noted below:

- Development of online worship and activities.
- Consideration of developing proposals for both the Sound Light and Space and Churchyard Projects including the outcome of consultation with local stakeholders.
- Consideration of certain Diocesan matters.
- Consideration of environmental and sustainability matters.
- Reviewed and approved certain measures relating to Safeguarding and Health and Safety.
- Finance and fundraising
- The appointment of Holy Communion Assistants
- Arrangements for special services
- Matters related to the Church's properties.

In addition to 'regular' meetings, the PCC met formally on two separate occasions in connection with the Vacancy, and this included the Section 11 Meeting, held on 15th February, in which the Parish Profile was discussed and finalised and Lay Representatives were appointed to participate in the selection of a new Rector. This was in preparation for the Section 12 meeting, held on 13th April, at which members of the PCC actively participated.

May the doors of this church be wide enough to receive all who come seeking God and fellowship.

Philip Hynard
PCC Secretary

Safeguarding

The safeguarding team consisted of Jackie Lock, Robyn Connelly, Gareth Morley (until July 2023) when Gareth as curate at All Saints went to a position of rector in Bracknell. We met 7 times during the year and welcomed Fr Anthony in November 2023 we have had 1 meeting with him and he has been updated as to the current safeguarding activity. During this long period of vacancy safeguarding matters were shared as required with Area Dean for support

All the minutes for these meetings are held with the parish safeguarding officer Jo Norman and will be transferred to the All Saints safeguarding files in due course.

The meetings are intended to provide a platform to manage and oversee safeguarding concerns that arise in the natural process of having a vibrant and diverse congregation serving the town centre.

Safeguarding includes a wide remit of ensuring the safety and well-being of all those who are members of the congregation and those that visit the church remit and includes the safety and protection of children (under 18years) the well-being and safety of our vulnerable groups who may be unable to protect themselves and in ensuring that the focus of all the work provided for within the church community is safe and risk assessed. The meetings give us opportunity to consider the complexity of this work and make arrangements for robust responses when there are any gaps in this provision.

For the children of the congregation, we offer support and assistance when requested to assist with meeting well-being needs.

On going work includes the implementation of Recommendation 26 of the past case reviews

"All Church bodies to raise awareness of domestic abuse, including the understanding of the harmful impact of domestic abuse on children"

A repeated agenda item includes discussions of concerns relating to vulnerable adults who may have been at risk and unable to protect themselves from unwanted attention and coercive behaviour, and those who pose a risk of harm to themselves and others.

We have had three occasions to be involved and work with the Diocesan safeguarding team, and we have good communication with our named safeguarding officer Tsungai Muchegwa.

The safeguarding training has been updated to meet the expectations of the National Team and the Diocese has published a training calendar with an explanation of who should do which element of training. Please check the website: <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/support-services/safeguarding/safeguarding-training>

All Saints is included in the Welcome directory for churches that welcome ex -prisoners/offenders. When reviewing the directory you will notice that there is a gap for the champion for offenders. This needs to be rectified and recruitment to this important role sought

The team are now in the process of updating DBS applications – this is on-going and becoming more limited as the stringent requirement of working in a regulated position for a minimum of 3 times a month or a one off overnight stay is a fairly high threshold for an enhanced child and adult check

Currently we are processing basic applications for the PCC members in accordance with CofE expectations

On-going work:

- To complete the safeguarding dashboard as a priority
- To update DBS
- To promote the Church of England training to all members of the church
- To transfer all safeguarding records to All Saints and organise GDPR approved recording system within the church office.
- To identify a Champion for the Welcome Directory
- To provide training on Domestic Abuse to PCC members

*Jo Norman
Parish Safeguarding Officer*