



St Peter & St Paul
Great Missenden with Ballinger and Little Hampden

Great Missenden Parish Church Annual Report 2023



Great Missenden Parish Church Annual Report

Table of Contents

Contents

Services and Liturgy	3
Fabric	4
Fabric Forward	5
St Mary's	5
Little Hampden	6
Churchyard and Ecochurch.....	7
Music	7
Marimba Band	8
Servers	8
Safeguarding	8
Pastoral Care	9
Healing Ministry.....	9
Outreach	9
Finance	10
Youth	10
Schools (Great Missenden Primary School, Misbourne School and Chiltern Way Academy).....	11
Oldham Hall.....	11
Parish Office	12
PCC Secretary.....	12
Church Bells.....	12
Christmas Tree Festival.....	12
Friends of Great Missenden Parish Church (Regd. Charity No: 1067435).....	14

Services and Liturgy

Starting 2023 on a Sunday was indeed unique. I like to think that having the Lord's Day as a starting point for the New Year was a sign that the Parish would be blessed with a good year as regards our services and liturgy, and that the weddings, funerals, and baptisms would likewise be greatly blessed.

The Common Worship booklets which we started preparing and using from the *Feast of All Saints* and the *Commemoration of All Souls* at the beginning of November 2022, were followed, at the beginning of Advent, by the special service books for the Advent Season. Through the course of 2023, the following titles were made available and brought into use, namely:

- *Christmas Midnight Service and Christmas Day Family Service.*
- *Eucharists for Epiphany to Candlemas.*
- *Eucharists for Ash Wednesday and Lent.*
- *Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday Services.*
- *Eucharists for Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity and Corpus Christi.*

I am grateful to all who assisted in the preparation of these Service Books, especially Harriet Lemon, who as our then Parish Administrator type-set and printed them, and also to Sue Hawkins, whose talent for proof reading was invaluable.

These books have proved to be very useful and helpful in our worship both Sunday-by Sunday and at the great Festivals of the Church. I was grateful to receive very positive feedback from both long-term and new members of the congregation. Having specific books for ever changing liturgy though the course of the Liturgical Year, has helped both visitors and new parishioners feel comfortable and able to participate in our worship, in that all the words and directions are easy to read and follow, thus ensuring inclusivity and a warm welcome.

The new *Ordinary Time* booklet which will be professionally printed was planned for publication in the Summer of 2023, but regrettably was delayed for various reasons, and will now be released in the latter part of the Summer in 2024. This publication allows for additional Eucharistic Prayers so as to be able to have more variety as well as catering for a children's Eucharist.

We had very good attendances at our Remembrance Day services at both St Peter and St Paul and at Little Hampden, on Sunday the 12th of November. These were followed once again, by the very moving annual service of *Remembering with Love*, for which we once again thank Tricia Neale and her team.

The volunteers working with our young parishioners, and I, have continued with the planning for the ongoing growth of our youth work in the parish. Our first attempt at the end of 2023 of advertising for and shortlisting of possible names for a Youth Worker, did not result in a successful appointment. We are adopting a new strategy with the helpful advice of clergy who have recently been through the process and hope to readvertise the post in the near future.

The 10am service on the third Sunday of each month has become a regular date for our all-age worship, which focuses on the children leading the intercessions, reading the readings of the day and assisting with the music, the collection, welcoming and serving. Students from our local Church of England School are also now regularly involved in these services, which has resulted in a certain amount of interest from families who have come to worship more regularly.

The establishment of the Marimba Band in the middle of last year attracted a regular team of players who now perform regularly at the all-age worship services. In addition to this, a number of our children now also play voluntaries on the organ and, in some cases, accompany the singing on the organ or the Marimbas. This likewise saw a group of families join the church as regular worshippers. Thanks must go to Janet Chalmers for her hard work in teaching the children and to the parents for their wonderful support.

It was wonderful to launch the Marimba Project at our Patronal Festival on Sunday the 25th of June, which also celebrated the 200th Anniversary of the School, and started regular co-hosted services between the school students and the parish children.

Our servers at both the 8am and 10am services, continue to do outstanding work and are very committed and well organised. Well done and thank you, servers. There is always room for more, so please do consider prayerfully whether you are being called to this special ministry.

Our choir had a very busy year and continued to practise very hard for the weekly sung Eucharists, monthly Choral Evensong, monthly Sung Compline (sung by the men) and for numerous weddings and funerals. Their dedication is greatly appreciated. Thanks must go to Wendy Harris and Janet Chalmers for their hard work behind the scenes, and to Graeme Petrie-Brown for all his hard work with the choir library and the many technical challenges that need seeing to.

The Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul has been in great demand for funerals, as opposed to those being held at the Chilterns Crematorium. In fact, most funerals I officiate at are held in the Church, and the Committals then take place either at the Church or the Crematorium. The summer months have seen a rise in the number of weddings, and these were expertly managed by Sue O' Farrell, to whom we express our sincere thanks.

Most third Sundays in the Spring, Summer and Autumn months saw us hosting Baptisms, and these have been wonderful occasions. Thanks must go to Tricia Neale for all the work she does as part of the Baptism preparations.

We as a parish continue to work closely with our fellow Churches in Great Missenden, Prestwood and King's Hill. This was beautifully illustrated in the Christian Unity Week at the start of the year, the 'Walk of Witness' on Good Friday and our working together in various branches of the annual Lighthouse event held on the Bury Field. Long may this blessed cooperation continue.

In conclusion, I am pleased to report, that after the challenges of the fall-out from the Covid Pandemic, our service registers indicate that our regular numbers have increased and are showing stability. We pray that God will bless our endeavours in building his Church here in Great Missenden with Ballinger and Little Hampden.

God bless you all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chalmers', with a horizontal line underneath.

The Revd Malcolm Chalmers (Clerk in Holy Orders)
Vicar of the Benefice of Great Missenden with Ballinger and Little Hampden.

Fabric

The Qinquennial inspection was carried out in June 2023 by Stephen Crawley from Evans and Crawley, Chesham. A full review of the recommendations has not yet been carried out.

Water leakage by the Lady Chapel just before Christmas was investigated by a Roofing Contractor and it was found that the concrete channel leading to the down pipe was broken. This was repaired together with the flushing which was split.

Several of the heating gratings are lifting and these have been taped down to alleviate a tripping hazard.

The drains on the bridge are blocked, Bucks County Council to be asked to deal with them. **Brenda**

Fabric Forward

The Fabric Forward group was formed after the Indaba meeting in February 2023 to focus on the longer-term future of the church in terms of energy source & fabric improvements or additions/extensions. The main task for the group after the Indaba was to pull together a Statement of Need (SoN) for the Church. Various groups were consulted, and questionnaires were circulated to the whole congregation & community. Everybody was invited to contribute. After pulling together everyone's contributions the SoN was concluded earlier in 2024. The group was also active talking with architects that could come on-board to help us develop the SoN into a concept design and feasibility study. This work is now ongoing, and we hope to update further later this year. **Stephen**

St Mary's

Another busy yet very fulfilling year has flown by and once again Maggi and I have been tremendously encouraged by the endless support we've received, for which we are exceedingly grateful. This has given us confidence to press ahead with new ventures and by doing so increase the circulation of our newsletter.

2023 marked St Mary's 150th anniversary. The building was originally commissioned by Abraham Watson Esq, the Lord of the Manor at The Lee in 1873 and it has been all things to all people since then. Our celebrations took place throughout the year and included; a January Candlemas Evensong, a June Holy Eucharist, Hymns & Pimms in July, a Harvest Supper in September and a packed church for special Christmas services. Little Louie Hayes was baptised in July, continuing his family's long association with St M. Latterly Karen Butler has worked hard to compile a photobook commemorating all the above for posterity which will be available very soon.

Our usual pattern of worship, Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month, together with Parish Evensong on some fifth Sundays, plus Christmas Eve Christingle and Communion are well supported and the church is generally comfortably full, with standing room only at some. We are delighted to welcome everyone, of any faith and all enjoy the refreshments with time to chat afterwards.

The fabric of the church has been well maintained both inside and out. Of course, the Quinquennial Survey in August 2023 highlighted further areas of concern and we have been diligently addressing many of these; including asbestos checks, new fire exit signs, PAT testing, fire extinguisher updates, installing extra air-bricks, maintenance of the garden, paths and hedges, replacing any rotten wood on the external window sills and finally re-decorating internally throughout. Still in the pipeline is the restoration of the porch and replacement of concrete grouting in the brick and flint stonework with lime putty. Bucks Historic Churches Trust has kindly awarded us a grant towards achieving the latter and in fact used St. Mary's for their recent AGM in March of this year.

Maggi is the driving force behind all our fund raising activities, whether it be coffee mornings, stalls at The Lee Flower Show or Ballinger's Christmas Fair, she really spearheads the organisation of each with great success. Coffee mornings continue to prove popular and with the exception of April have continued throughout the year. In addition to the Harvest Supper which has now become an annual diary date, we will be hosting a bridge drive for the first time in November. We also anticipate that Ballinger Evening WI will use St M at some point for their meetings but under a new guise since BEWI was suspended in March. Ballinger Bats (baby and toddlers group) commandeered the church throughout August for their weekly meetings and we are intending to offer the building to them again this summer. A Boxing Day family party is another annual fixture. Additionally, Becky and Vik of Bazzard & Harris celebrated their first years of trading with an art exhibition of Simon Boyd's paintings in early December at St. Mary's. All these activities draw in local people, passers-by, walkers, rambles and members of the public generally. The information boards in the porch give them a snapshot of the role of this special building within the community and several have returned for further visits.

However, none of the above would be possible without the love, care and enthusiastic help which Maggi and I receive in abundance, making us feel truly uplifted and inspired. So we would like to

take this opportunity to thank all those who give so freely of their time; to the clergy, our friends at St. Peter & St. Paul, to our musicians, our esteemed treasurer and to those who pitch tents, move tables, serve behind the bar, mow the grass, cut hedges, bake cakes or who roll up their sleeves to shift plants, deliver news sheets and any other of the countless tasks which are completed behind the scenes. St Mary's is thriving and long may it do so - Abraham Watson would be delighted. **Anne and Maggi**

As an addendum Ed Whymark (our Treasurer for the last 22years) would like to pass on the pens to some-one else, so if you are willing and able to take on this role, please contact Maggi or Anne

Little Hampden

Little Hampden continues to have services on every 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month. Attendances are very encouraging and regular.

Again, the highlight of last year was the Carol Service which attracted about 60 people. Another moment of the year was the Harvest Festival in which we were able not only to raise a decent amount of funds for the church but also provide a very generous donation of foods from the congregation and residents in Lt Hampden to the food bank run by The Trussell Trust in Chesham.

We are continuing to work through the items on the Quinquennial list as the year progresses and are fortunate enough to be able to use our cash flow to do some of these works. This is thanks to the very generous collections made by our regular congregation, CAF donations and money left in our donation box.

The timetable for the preservation of the wall paintings continues. We are now in the second phase. This has involved monitoring the temperature, humidity and environment of the Church with four carefully positioned recorders. These were installed in August 2023 and need to be in place for a year. Rickerby & Shekede are planning to come back in May and the late summer to complete the second phase which involves:

- Further salts investigations: the extent and nature of the sulfate salts that have been identified as a contaminant are not fully known. Further information is needed on their source(s), transportation mechanisms and distribution patterns (both topographically and stratigraphically) to inform remedial treatment options and parameters. Investigations would include collection and analysis of surface and micro-core samples to obtain representative information on the presence and nature of salts in the walls.
- Further investigation of coating; treatment testing and evaluation: as the material nature of the remaining preservative coating on the painting is uncertain, further investigation and analysis are required. Sampling and instrumental analysis (FTIR) are recommended. Specific identification is necessary to guide the selection of potential treatment materials and procedures. In addition, cleaning interventions need to be trialled to establish constraints and possibilities, cleaning levels and their control, and the safety of cleaning outcomes.
- Limited emergency treatment: cracked and separating painted plaster along the top of the north wall is at risk of collapse and loss. Its emergency stabilisation is required.

We have been very fortunate to have received grants towards this work (which includes repairs to the gutters and hoppers) from Bucks Historic Churches Trust, The Benefact Trust and Church Care. We have further applications submitted to other charities.

Again, we would like to mention and thank Graeme and Ken who play our unique organ with great skill and bring joy to the hymns as well as a lively tempo.

Once again, a huge thank you goes to Patricia whose passion for Lt Hampden and its congregation is evident by the care and attention to brings to the Church. Thank you also to Cherry Aston for help with keeping the Church tidy. **Christopher**

Churchyard and Ecochurch

I am pleased to report that we now have two Commonwealth War Graves signs installed, one on the gates before the bridge and one on a post by the steps leading into the old burial ground. The charity funding from Rough around the Edges has now come to an end. We are indebted to Dr. Katie Horgan for all her work and guidance on our behalf regarding conservation and creating wildlife habitat, recently through grant funding we were able to purchase many bird nesting boxes which junior church were able to assemble and decorate Five of these boxes have now been installed in trees around the church We have also had funding for an owl nesting box which has now be installed with the help of the Raptor society.

We are very grateful to the students of Chiltern Way Academy who have spent many hours clearing paths and steps of ivy, leaves and branches and brambles from around graves.

Junior Church / Map have created a small garden next to the steps leading up to the Vestry which gave us all a good display of spring bulbs. They also spend greater time learning about environmental issues and conservation which is thanks to their leaders.

For the future I would like us to set up a dedicated Eco page on the church website. Which can be updated on a regular basis. See St Mary's church Wendover website Eco page.

Music

The highlight of the year for us and the nation was the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles 111 in May, a celebration much needed after the mourning of the Late Queen the previous year. Bells, including our own, pealed out across the country and the choir enjoyed a big old sing with the Stanford Te Deum. The Choral Society's Coronation Concert featured period brass instruments to great effect as we heard four of Handel's Coronation anthems, including Zadok the Priest and it was wonderful to see the church full again.

Other special services included our Patronal Festival, which we celebrated alongside GM School to mark their 200th Anniversary. The children lead the prayers and readings, then joining our choir for John Rutter's 'For the beauty of the earth' and sang 'Sing Cuckoo' as a separate item with Malcolm. If you didn't catch this delightful service, its well worth watching on FB Patronal Sunday 25th June. We rounded the day off with Choral Eucharist and Britten's Jubilate. Choral Evensongs continue on the 4th Sunday of the month, with Men's Sung Compline on the 2nd.

The celebrations continued with St Mary's 150th Anniversary for which we sang a special Evensong on Trinity Sunday and a moving and uplifting Hymns and Pimms a month later. The choir have always been made most welcome - somehow, we all manage to fit in and there is usually a glass of wine with which to celebrate afterwards!

New repertoire for Harvest included Bob Chilcott's joyful setting of 'Come ye thankful people, come' which we'd sung at his last workshop at P+P. David Ogden's very beautiful 'Prayer of St Teresa', David Orr's Eternal Light and Child be a Light, Billy Joubert – a lovely motet for Baptisms.

You will have noticed Malcolm has introduced special sets of service booklets for the various Liturgical seasons, enabling us to sing more of the liturgy and broadening our worship. Finally, I'd like to thank the choir for their ongoing commitment throughout the year (including running two Cream Tea events during the Summer Season!)

To Graeme, who unfailingly finds lost copies of music but most especially to Janet who hopped onto the organ bench at very short notice when I had to take sick leave for a couple of months. You can read Janet's Marimba Club report coming up! **Wendy**

Marimba Band

The Marimba Band has been an exciting addition to the provision for youth in the Parish. The first rehearsal was held at the beginning of November 2023 and the seven enthusiastic founder members have recently been joined by another member, bringing our total membership to eight. The band has played at three Family services, accompanying congregational singing, and performing by themselves. In December, three members of the band played short pieces that they had learnt on the piano as organ voluntaries before and after the service, and one band member accompanied the choir while they sang *Kum ba Yah*. In March, the same band member played a short meditation on the organ during communion.

We are currently working towards playing at a Cream Tea in the middle of the year where the programme will be augmented by solo instrumental performances. We hope to continue to grow this activity in the coming year. **Janet**

Servers

The dedicated team of servers has again been fantastic over the past year. We are back to full communion services at 8am and 10am every Sunday and without fail the servers have been there to prepare and serve with warmth & sensitivity. The Chalice Bearers also continue to support steadfastly during the 10am service. Many thanks to Carola, Tricia & Liza for maintaining the linen & gowns in pristine condition. Our team is quite small, and we could use a few additional volunteers to help serve, so please let me know if you know anyone who is interested in joining the team. The tasks involved in serving are not demanding and in fact quite rewarding. **Stephen**

Safeguarding

Safeguarding has become an agenda item on every PCC meeting and (being formally obliged to report to the APCM) we can report that we have made significant progress to comply with the duty to have due regard to then House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and adults.

In November Mike O'Farrell stepped down as Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO), willing to continue supporting Alan Mustoe in his place. Many thanks to Mike for his work in this role. With Harriet Lemon's move Elisabeth Hubach is now named as Safeguarding Administrator & Verifier, although she has yet to begin this role.

The Safeguarding Policy can be accessed on our website and notice boards. Further additional policies relating to safeguarding were introduced to the PCC in November with a view to their approval by the PCC this year (note: approval completed Mar 2024). We also distributed nearly 100 safeguarding pocket guides, purchased by the PCC.

All but one of the necessary DBS certificates were obtained (note: the remaining being obtained this year). 40 people completed at least one safeguarding course in the year. There is still a need for us to clarify safeguarding requirements with respect to the Keeping in Touch (KIT) team, those leading services and various other roles.

In seeking a Children & Youth Officer we have now updated the Safer Recruitment & People Management to be used when we 'recruit' anyone working with children and vulnerable adults. We are also using what is called a Dashboard to assist with clarification and recording of the House of Bishops' recommendations and requirements.

In the year one safeguarding concern was shared with the Parish Safeguarding Officer and referral was made to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

In this year 2024 we have clarify: the safeguarding forms for hiring our churches and hall; secure storage of safeguarding documents in the Office; the safeguarding requirements for different church roles (as well as providing opportunities for anyone to complete the Basic course, whether they need to or not!). **Alan**

Pastoral Care

Slava and I have been revisiting our lists of contacts throughout our area in view of the current rules required because of Safeguarding constraints.

Our teams were invited to take part in the Safeguarding courses held in Great Missenden regarding our commitment to the people in our vicinity. All agreed to continue.

Following a recent get together of our volunteers, they are aware of the current guidelines. Therefore, their remit is only to phone people within their groups but handing on any problems, that may have arisen, to our vicar Malcolm or to Patricia.

However, people in our community are friends and neighbours over many years, therefore there is a strong sense of generosity, trust and kindness. **Patricia and Slava**

Healing Ministry

The Healing Ministry Group meet once a month to pray together in preparation for this ministry held every Sunday in the Lady Chapel. All are invited to come to the Lady Chapel as they pass having received Holy Communion.

In the peace of the Chapel your personal few moments are surrounded with prayer offered by one of the group. **Brenda, Liza, Richard, Slava, Sue and Patricia**

Outreach

This has been another successful year for the Outreach group creating significant connections with the Village and raising funds for the Church and different charities.

We now have a small food bank running from the church where food can be donated at any time to the box in the porch and then used by anyone who needs it from the locality and what remains is taken to the Chesham food bank.

There is a small craft group initiated by the church but run by, and in, the library on a Friday after school for children and adults.

The Old Tea Warehouse is a charity we have supported for many years and are still supporting with regular monthly deliveries of items they need together with easter eggs and Christmas presents.

There have been a variety of events in the Church - the regular Cream Teas plus a one-off Saturday morning tea for a local cycling group, who were very generous with their donation, and our first Snowdrop Saturday cream tea run in February of this year.

Other events have included a Jazz concert with our local jazz group in May and a second Orlando concert playing the remaining Bach suites in September. At Christmas time we held a Christmas Tree

Festival. All of these were very well attended and raised a significant amount for the church and the Wycombe Refugee charity.

We would like to thank everyone who has helped with our many events and encourage anyone interested in helping in 2024 to be in touch. **Sue**

Finance

The Accounts were signed off by Mr Ed House, Independent Examiner, on 4th March 2023. The parish showed a small net surplus of £6,444 [2022 £3081] on unrestricted activities. Restricted showed net outflow of -£2939 [2022 -£37,293]. 2022 reflected expenditure on the Vicarage and also at Ballinger.

- Total Funds in hand on 31st December 2023 were £22,0103 [2022 £21,5823] of which Restricted Funds were £159,371 [2022 £162,522].
- Special Collections totalled £6,057 [2022 £4,763].
- The Oldham Hall reflected a Deficit of -£1,709, 2022 being a Surplus of £1,371.
- Funds held in the P and P bank account, but reflected separately in the Annual Accounts were £6,497 [2022 £8,206].

For any PCC member that would like to see a full set of detailed Accounts contact the Treasurer.

Martyn

Youth

Junior Church aims to meet on 2-3 Sundays a month and on special festivals such as Mothering Sunday and Easter. We avoid the 3rd Sundays of the month when Malcolm organises a children-led service with families from Great Missenden school and local regular church children. We meet in the bell tower, rather than Oldham Hall, so that children have access to their families and can run backwards and forwards. This also helps with safeguarding as the children's activities happen in the main body of the church. In the past MAP used to be for children in school years from Reception to Year 4 but as there isn't an older IGNITE group at present the older siblings, who have come up through MAP, join in and activities are organised to engage children of all ages.

The children have organised a number of fundraising events including a very successful quiz last April which raised £1,200 in aid of psychological support for local Ukrainian children. Eco church activities include running a fundraiser in aid of A Rocha UK, selling plant pots which they had decorated and planted with summer annual seeds, good for pollinators. Keith brought an empty beehive and some display materials and told the children more about the importance of bees and how we can protect them. Chris Nickless obtained some Blue Tit nest box kits and the children and other members of the congregation had fun building these and decorating them before Chris erected them around the church grounds. In May half term last year the children and their families helped to clear an overgrown area to the left of the North Porch and beside the steps leading to the vestry door to create a new flower bed. They added summer annuals and, in the autumn, planted bulbs and will ensure this is kept looking good all year.

Other events included a Treasure Trail and picnic in Great Missenden last summer, an alternative Halloween Party and a visit to Road Farm to see the newborn lambs.

We still struggle to compete with sport and children's birthday parties on Sunday mornings, so attendance can be low. Leaders are DBS checked and attend safeguarding training however finding enough volunteers is, as ever, a struggle.

I will be stepping down in July 2024 as I have been a leader in Junior church for over 10 years and my children are now at university. The PCC supports the recruitment for a part-time paid Youth Leader however no applications were received when the post was last advertised. **Chloe**

Schools (Great Missenden Primary School, Misbourne School and Chiltern Way Academy)

- **Great Missenden Church of England Primary School**

Malcolm Chalmers leads assemblies or similar events for the school every week. Classes from the school often visit the church for special services, and the church holds a number of services in the Church for Easter, Christmas and other festivals. Malcolm has been working with the school to arrange participation in some Sunday services, these will start sometime in 2024.

During the school terms in 2023 Lucy Wilson and Patricia Neale (LLM) visited a combined group from Early Years and Reception for about 25 minutes every fortnight. A Bible story time plus a lot of singing with Lucy playing on her violin which was much enjoyed. This was followed by prayers and actions before we left the classes.

Once a term, occasionally twice, the classes went up to the Church. They were met with lots of music being played by Lucy and Ken Harratt on the piano which encouraged the children to sing and dance around the Church looking at beautiful altar frontals embroidered with stories, the eagle lectern, the organ and much more. The children really enjoyed these excursions and talked about the treasures they have seen. A valuable time spent.

- **The Misbourne School**

Members of the Church provide support to The Misbourne School, the local Upper School in many ways.

David Harris continued with his role of Trustee of the school with responsibilities for Careers and chair of the Curriculum Teaching and Care Committee. The school is doing very well. Coming out of the restrictions was difficult. David stood down as a Trustee at the end of the year.

Active Work Experience: many members of the Church have provided career support to Misbourne students for many years. Activities have included practice interview days and CV workshops. This support is very valuable when they are going for real interviews, whether for further education or a change of school or for employment.

- **Chiltern Way Academy School**

The Chiltern Way Academy is a local school for autistic children. During 2023 a group of students visited the Church to help Chris Nickless with several activities in the Churchyard. **David**

Oldham Hall

This will be my final report on Oldham Hall as Hon Chair for the last 15 years. It has been a bit of a rollercoaster as though the hall was renovated after the fire, it is still over 200 years old and has required some quite major work at times, and the responsibility can hang heavy. During that time, I have been grateful for the support I have received from Martyn Green, who deals with the finance, Andrew Edwards as booking clerk for 16 years, and Martin Webster who for many years looked after certain aspects of maintenance. More recently Pete Tomes has taken on the cleaning of the hall, as well as some of the caretaking jobs. Thanks to Jeanette Green, who has provided needle work skills at various times. A big thank you also to Laurence, who has been unfailingly supportive and helpful in so many ways. Technology has moved on regarding essential services, and other aspects, which could be more efficiently managed by others.

The hall is in good order, and 2023 saw a proposal for the Parish office to move into the Bromley room in the new year. Not an ideal solution as there will be problems, but it is hoped these can be ironed out successfully.

It was proposed that the memorial plaque outside front of the hall be cleaned and re-lettered by Corinthian Stonemasons. Many thanks to Gavin Oldham's offer of sponsorship. **Sally**

Parish Office

In the last year, a new office manager has been appointed and started in September. Additionally, the office has continued to operate from the Baptist Church in Great Missenden, supporting the weekly functioning of a lot of aspects of church life. The plan is to move to a permanent location in the Bromley Room in the Oldham Hall in the beginning of 2024. The plan is to repaint the walls, have the carpet cleaned, remove any items that are not required for the office, declutter the cupboard and arrange access to the office when the Oldham Hall when events are taking place. The office hours change has allowed the office to service visitors and allow time for office responsibilities to be completed without interruption. The consistent hours have allowed for visitors to have a routine of when the office is open.

The office has continued to function with printing, invoicing and other support, where required, of internal church events, baptisms, funerals, and weddings. Covering communications through email, phone and updating the website and sending out the weekly Friday newsheet.

One suggested improvement of resources is for event organisers to anticipate what advertising is required, at least two months in advance when possible, and to contact the office at this time. This would help ensure that the office has time complete the work on the website, posters and social media, etc, and to address pressing issues that occur.

Thanks again, goes again to Esther Rose who has covered the office when I am not here, to Emma Ife for doing the Newsheet every week. **Elisabeth**

PCC Secretary

The PCC met regularly during the year and lively discussions on the many aspects of the Church life and the administration thereof took place.

Sadly, John Jeapes died during the year, and he is missed. Helen Biggerstaff did not stand for re-election at last year's APCM and Sally and Laurence Clark resigned from the PCC early in 2024. Very many thanks are due to these members for their valuable contributions during their time on the PCC.

Church Bells

Christmas Tree Festival

The Festival took place on the first weekend of December, the Sunday of which was Advent Sunday which meant we closed earlier than the year before at 15:30. Times: 10 - 5 on Saturday then 11:30 - 15:30 on Sunday. The number of people attending over the weekend according to the 'clicker' was almost exactly the same as last year (except Saturday was c175 up and Sunday c175 down). Footfall... 2022 - 358+464=822; 2023 - 527+289=816.

The monies taken are to be shared between the Church/ and Wycombe Refugee Partnership. Amounts... 2022 - £2953; 2023 - £3089 (an increase of 4.6%) therefore £1544.50 to both the Church and the Wycombe Refugee Partnership.

Also, the Friends stall made £1012 (2022/£991, an increase of 2.1%). However, the Friends also had a stall in the High Street on the Sunday where they made £276).

In addition to the above we were pleased to welcome local charitable organisations Road Farm with their woodcraft; the Walled Garden with their Christmas decorations and plants; I Odette and her bakery stall; and a number of musicians and local junior school choirs. There were no additional stalls (eg. craft) from outside the regular church community.

By way of 'competition' over the weekend there was a Christmas Fair at Missenden Abbey; a pottery and sculpture exhibition in the Oldham Hall (using ALL the tables); and the Artisan Market on the Sunday in the High Street. The school fair and GMVA high street fair had taken place on the preceding Friday and Saturdays respectively, at which we sold raffle tickets. It was just Saturday I think.

The Festival was organised by Alan & Kathleen Mustoe and Jane Ray (who organised 2021 and 2022 festivals) and for the first time Lisa Gianquitto, Thais Hobbs and Christine Stevens meeting 10 times from March 2023 with many other smaller meetings. The church was booked from the Wednesday evening before until lunchtime on the Monday following, that's is no other events or services were admitted. Wednesday evening saw the main preparation of the church to receive the 21 trees from Peterley on Thursday morning. A question of health & safety and working alone up to and into the 'attic' was raised.

The tables and boards (for the trees) all came from within the church with the exception of a few personal 'imports' and that brought by Walled Garden and Road Farm. Likewise, the electrical leads. The aisles we're kept of tables to create space and ensure ease of movement. There were three fire exits (vestry, south and west doors) with signs bought for the event.

Licences were obtained for the lottery/raffle and alcohol with the Council. We committed to live music rather than recorded as the church doesn't have the necessary CCCL coverage.

We decided to use the main church space, not utilising the vestries or arranging any outside activity. The Carrington Pew was designated a quiet space. The north aisle was given over to the Friends' stall and the Lady Chapel to the Healing & Wholeness with Prayer Tree, these three groups being the only ones making an definite 'bid'. The choir stalls were given over to the children's activities; the bell tower to the change ringers who, throughout the weekend, provided both young and old with the opportunity to give the bells a try.

A guidance sheet to safeguard the children was sent to the helpers in the children's area and copies left around the area designated for children's activities. Likewise, a food allergy notice was produced and posted on kitchen and serving tables.

Refreshments were available providing both following planning both food and drink, hot and cold. Provision of food and the necessary essentials (e.g. disposable cups) was affected by a visit to Bookers' warehouse; an appeal to the congregation for tray bakes; cooking of bacon by volunteers. 30-35 bakers/servers are to be commended, the refreshments being much appreciated. Recycling bags (for cups and plates) worked well as did the absorption of unused but purchased items (e.g. kitchen roll) into the church for future use, including mulled wine and mince pies after the Advent Carol Service. The kitchen needed an extra clean before the weekend began, including a repair to the strip light.

The raffle was organised in the same way as last year with Karen Butler overseeing the gathering of prizes. The hampers were filled with the generosity of the congregation filling in the sheets at back of the church and the other prizes by further generosity and Karen's journeying around the community. The tickets were printed by Raffle Tickets 4U as they were in the preceding year, all work done

online. The church bought another SumUp machine which was used in the High Street and the church. The draw was made at 3pm on Sunday in church after the announcements of teddy's name, number of sweets in jar, items in socks and Roald Dahl book titles' winner. Thanks to a number of children for pushing these 'games'. Karen also made contact with, and distributed the prizes to, prize winners after the weekend. There is one prize to be claimed (the free MOT) and one to roll-over (dog shampoo).

Publicity was by church notice sheet, posters in many shops etc., stand up boards and articles in press. We also used Facebook and our website. We lacked, however, the skills of the younger generation with other platforms in social media (e.g. Instagram). Christine Stevens designed the poster. The Rotary Father Christmas and his elves supported us by handing out joint advertising leaflets at the Artisan market of the 3 events happening on the Sunday in Great Missenden.

A team of 'welcomers' at the door greeted people as they arrived providing information about the festival if asked. This was appreciated and added to the atmosphere of the festival.

Information was posted on the church website and over the festival weekend on a notice board giving details of refreshments and a general timetable.

For the third year the PCC approved of the selection of Wycombe Refugee Partnership as our charity. With the exception of the monies raised by The Friends (who gave a donation to the church and charity) the monies were divided between the church and charity. The Charity are to be thanked for their energy in providing representation throughout the weekend.

The organisers would be happy to provide new organisers with details of our contacts subject to their approval, respecting personal information and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

It was considered by many (exit poll) to have been a very successful event for both church and community, creating the opportunity to build new relationships and strengthen existing ones. MANY THANKS to those who gave of their time and skills and to all those who just came and enjoyed themselves.

Breakdown, a 'best guesstimate'

Donation	100	
Unidentified cash	551	
Craft	117	
Donation 'jar'	63	
Trees	110	
Catering	1,445	
Raffle	1,661	4047

Expenses	-643	
Trees	-315	-958
Surplus		3,089

Note: All the homemade cakes, biscuits and Christmas produce were donated.

Friends of Great Missenden Parish Church (Regd. Charity No: 1067435)

2023 was our Silver Jubilee year! We celebrated in June by inviting our members to a very enjoyable Tea Party in the Oldham Hall.

The charity held many happy events in 2023:

- "Tales from a Riverbank" talk by Jo Laurie in April.
- The AGM was held in the Parish Church on 22nd April.

- Silver Jubilee Tea Party in June, with live music.
- “Great Missenden Church School’ Bi-Centenary” talk by Paula Kitching, a Trustee, in September.
- Tabletop sales by the Library in June, October and December
- Attendance at the Church School Summer Fair in July and the School Christmas Fair in November, with preserves.
- Attendance at Sunday afternoon Cream Teas at the Parish Church: £1889 raised from sales of Preserves.
- Participation in the Holy Trinity Church Bazaar in Prestwood in November.
- The Christmas Tree Festival over two days, with preserves, gifts and books raising over £1000. Maurice Taylor’s five large wooden church models were displayed in the Lady Chapel, representing the building’s development from its foundation in AD 1133.

Income: £14,648 was raised in 2023 thanks to the excellent Committee, kind members and supporters. We are most grateful to local shops and businesses for help with publicity, raffle prizes and other support. Sales of preserves, some cakes and gifts raised £7085. Fruit and sugar donations and the Eco-friendly re-cycling of jam jars and lids were greatly appreciated. *Easyfundraising* donations have raised £303.

Grants to the PCC totalled **£11,212** in 2023: **£4720** for the third tranche of stonework repairs to the Tower and south wall; **£5892** for repairs to the church boiler which should extend its life by 16 years; and **£600** for the regular annual gutter and downpipe maintenance and cleaning, to prevent water ingress and damage to interior wall plaster.

The **Quinquennial Inspection** took place in August 2023.

Membership now totals 145. Several new Friends were welcomed in 2023, including Missenden Abbey as a corporate member. We sadly lost several members, including John Martin, our former excellent Treasurer for three years. We record their kind support of our charity over the years. New members are always welcome and necessary to build up funds for future repair and restoration grants to the PCC.

Forthcoming 2024 events

15th June 2024: **“Life in Her Hands”** talk by Professor Dame Averil Mansfield DBE FRCS FRCP

21st September: **“Ukraine and East Europe”** talk by Paula Kitching, historian, researcher and a charity trustee.

The Committee worked hard and continues to contribute many excellent ideas. Norma Gardner stepped down in November after nine years as a trustee and Nevil Coulson, Treasurer, steps down at the AGM on 11th May 2024 after seven years in post. Their work and support have been invaluable and have greatly helped the charity. Nick Moss was welcomed to the Committee as Assistant Treasurer in September 2023 and will be formally elected Treasurer at the AGM. **Vivienne**

Trustees: Hon Chairman: Vivienne Davis; Hon Secretary: Avril Cobham; Hon Treasurer: Nevil Coulson; Hon Assistant Treasurer: Nick Moss; The Revd. Malcolm Chalmers; Ann Biscoe-Taylor, Jill Burton, Di Denney; Paula Kitching; Jill Pateman; Esther Rose.