



St Peter & St Paul

Great Missenden with Ballinger and Little Hampden

Great Missenden Parish Church

Annual Report 2024



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18 June 2025

From the Vicar – Services and Liturgy

We started 2024, having celebrated the Advent and Christmas Seasons with the finest offerings of liturgy and music, which was all uniquely Anglican. It was a fine overture for what turned out to be a very busy liturgical and choral year, not only for our usual weekly services and the special Feast Days, but also in terms of Funerals and Baptisms. There were not a large number of weddings this past year, but we had sufficient to make the Summer special, and a glorious Christmas Themed wedding in December for the new Peter and Kathryn Withams.

The Common Worship booklets which we have had in circulation since the beginning of November 2022, and completed in 2023, were used through the course of 2024. The following titles make up the completed collection, namely:

- *Eucharists for Epiphany to Candlemas.*
- *Eucharists for Ash Wednesday and Lent.*
- *Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday Services.*
- *Easter Sunday and the Sundays of Easter.*
- *Eucharists for Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity and Corpus Christi.*
- *Battle of Britain Sunday.*
- *Eucharists for All saints and All Souls.*
- *Remembrance Sunday Eucharist and the Village Remembrance Service.*
- *Remembering with Love.*
- *Eucharists for the Four Sundays in Advent.*
- *Christmas Midnight Service and Christmas Day Family Service.*

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. We continue to receive very positive feedback from both long-standing and new members of the congregation, and those who join us online. Having specific books for ever changing liturgy through 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 professionally printed *Ordinary Time* booklet, entitled – *THE HOLY EUCHARIST – As celebrated in Ordinary Time, including the Festivals and Saints' Days of the Church which fall within this season of the Liturgical Calendar* was 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. The late David Harris was very helpful in having the books printed, and thus they are a wonderful memorial to him, and all that he did for the parish.

We had very exceptional attendances at our Remembrance Day services at both St Peter and St Paul and at Little Hampden, on Sunday the 10th of November. In fact, the Churchyard at Little Hampden was filled to capacity. 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, Philippa Howells, Paula Kitching, Chloe Lewis and I, have continued with the planning for the ongoing growth of our youth work in the parish. We are continuing to work in conjunction with the Diocese in terms of our

appointing a Youth Worker. Whereas our efforts in 2023, were not successful for various reasons, we feel that we are now moving in the right direction, and are hoping for a successful outcome within the next few months

Our young people from year 7 to year 9 were the founder members of our new Youth Group, which they have chosen to call the LIGHT Youth Group. A big thank you to Katie Dunne for all the hard work she has put in to getting the group established and for being so willing to run the group until our Youth Worker is able to take over.

The younger children are still meeting on Two Sundays of each month, and for that we are also deeply indebted to Philippa, Paula and Chloe.

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 2023 attracted a regular team of players who have become our foundation group. They 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. In addition to these, we have also added trumpet and bass guitar. We hope that more children will join the band and instrumental group in the new school year. Thanks again to Janet Chalmers for her hard work in teaching the children and to the parents for their wonderful support.

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 has had yet another 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 weddings and funerals. The performance of the Faure Requiem on the Commemoration of All Souls was also very moving. The Choristers' dedication is greatly appreciated, and this was celebrated on RSCM Music Sunday, when certificates were awarded for long service. 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 weddings were once again 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, albeit now two years ago, 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 dark ink, appearing to read 'Malcolm 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.

PCC

Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council of St Peter and St Paul, Great Missenden
for the year ended 31 December 2024

Administrative Information

The parish comprises the churches of St Peter and St Paul, Great Missenden, St Mary's Ballinger, and the Church at Little Hampden. It also acts as the managing trustees of the Oldham Hall, a registered charity (1063630), which owns this parish hall.

- The Vicarage is at 2 Walnut Close, Great Missenden, Bucks, HP16 9AL. The Church telephone number is 01494 862352.
- The Parochial Church Council (the PCC) is a registered charity (1129874), registered with the Charity Commission.

The major change to the PCC this year was the deaths, 4 months apart, of David Harris and then Brenda Harris. Brenda was our sole Warden and David was closely involved in, and contributed to, all areas of church and PCC life.

At the 2024 APCM Rosemary Ladd stood down as PCC secretary but remained on the PCC. Aileen Fenn and Liza Wormell took over as joint secretaries, but neither is a member of the

PCC. Thais Hobbs was elected at the APCM, Alan Mustoe was later co-opted as Safeguarding lead and Simon Jenkinson was co-opted during the year a but had to stand down shortly afterwards.

The members of the PCC who served from 1 January 2024 until this report was approved are:

- Chairman: Reverend Malcolm Chalmers, Vicar
- Ex officio: Tricia Neale
- Elected: Margaret Cameron, Anne Ellis, Christopher Figg, Jamie Gairdner, Wendy Harris, Thais Hobbs, Philippa Howells, Rosemary Ladd, Christopher Nickless, Graeme Petrie-Brown, Guy Priestley, Stephen Tanno, Val Withams.
- Co-opted: Alan Mustoe
- Churchwardens: Positions Vacant.

The Standing Committee of Church members cover relevant work required and meet regularly.

Representative on the Deanery Synod: Malcolm Chalmers – Ex Officio, 2 lay member vacancies.

Structure, Governance and Management

The PCC members are elected in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. Regular worshippers are encouraged to register on the electoral roll.

Objectives and Activities

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish. PCC members have, and must accept, ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of their PCC, ensuring that it is solvent and well-run, and delivering its charitable outcomes. They also manage the Oldham Hall Charity as Trustees.

The PCC met regularly during 2024/25, and complied with its obligations, but there are limits on activity that can be undertaken due to availability of people to take on tasks. We are at a critical point and need committed people to take on roles within and outside the PCC.

Financial Review

This has been agreed by the PCC and is set out in the annual report. The annual accounts form part of the annual report.

Reserves Policy

It is the policy of the PCC to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds that equates to 6 months expenditure to cover emergency situations that may arise from time to time. However, it has not been possible to adhere to this policy every year because of the pressures on income and expenditure, especially the parish share. Six months expenditure is approximately £65,000/£70,000. Overall liquid funds of the Parish at 31st December 2024 amounted to £209,967. [2023 £220,103]. See Notes 10 & 16 to the Accounts. However, £156,926 [2023-£165,867] funds are restricted. We are advised that Diocesan policy is 3 months expenditure as policy.

Serious Incidents

There was a serious drain collapse under the C of E School playground which affected the Oldham Hall kitchen drainage and some of the roof guttering drainage. Total cost was £3580 and the School contributed £1790, being 50% of the cost. Professional drainage contractors carried out these repairs. CCTV was used to identify the collapsed area, and the initial problem was identified by a qualified surveyor.

Approved by the PCC on 19th March 2025, and signed on their behalf by: Reverend Malcolm Chalmers (Chairman)

Liza Wormell

Church Warden

P & P had an interesting year 2024 financially...with strong Cream Teas and the Christmas tree festival helping to turn an anticipated deficit into a small year end surplus. For 2025 we are unfortunately forecasting a deficit again.

Revd Malcom Chalmers

Fabric Forward

The proposal to move ahead with the Concept Design stage for the future of the church and the site was approved by majority vote after the PCC meeting in January 2025. On the 7 February a Briefing Meeting was held with our architect Libby Watts. MK Surveys did the measured survey work which has been over handed to the FF team and more importantly to Libby Watts on 29 March 2025.

Libby is expected to commence work on initial concept ideas in April 2025 and we expect the first review & feedback workshop in mid-late May 2025. The FF team will keep the PCC informed of the next meeting with Libby in order that those interested in attending can make plans to attend.

The Concept stage is expected to conclude in the autumn of 2025 and from there we hope it will form a centerpiece for the 'Vision of the Future' of the church. If the concept captures the imagination of the local community and meets planning, DAC and other regulatory approvals by late 2025 or early 2026, we can commence fund raising for implementation.

Stephen Tanno

St Mary's

As requested, this year's report is a short one, giving a brief snapshot of life at St Mary's during 2024-2025. Maggi and I are pleased to record that we have achieved a lot during the past twelve months in all aspects of church life, particularly as St Mary's is now more than ever, a real community hub.

The building itself has undergone continuous repair and restoration; the interior is now fully redecorated, the porch and its roof completely restored, the outbuildings re-stained, the gardens nurtured, and the hedges given their annual cut.

Services are generally well attended, and we have welcomed several new members of the congregation during that time. The porch was dedicated in November and named the Wilson

Grey Porch in memory of two families who between them contributed so much to this little chapel over many years.

Inevitably age is catching us all up though and our regular coffee mornings are much appreciated, particularly by those living alone. Fund raising continues apace; our first bridge afternoon held in November will probably become an annual event, along with the September Harvest Supper. St. Mary's had stalls at The Lee Flower Show, Ballinger Village Morning and a tree at the Christmas Tree Festival at St Peter and St Paul. Several groups now use St Mary's for their meetings: the newly formed Village Friends, the youth club LIGHT to mention a couple. In the pipeline are chair pilates classes and the return of our Flower Festival.

None of the above would be possible, however, without the ongoing commitment and steadfast support of Malcolm, Tricia and Alan who regularly commute up to Ballinger; our musicians, Bernice Fuggle, Gerard Hallows and Ken Harratt who grace our singing with their skilful accompaniment. Additionally, I would like to acknowledge Ed Whymark, in his final year as our Treasurer who keeps an eye on our finances. Finally, to all those who share in the life of St. Mary's and who help out whenever asked, thank you for your love and friendship, it is immensely valued.

Anne Ellis and Maggi Cameron

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 Figg

Churchyard and Ecochurch

Chris Nickless, who has sadly passed away, guided us to the A Rocha Silver Eco Church award, which not many churches achieve. Keith Ray carries out moth and butterfly surveys and MAP look after their garden near the north door, but otherwise Chris has been on his own. We thank him for the work he has carried out to make the church more ecology friendly.

He wrote:-

The grass area outside the west doors will continue to be cut on a regular basis, as also in the quiet garden, other areas will be cut on a less regular basis and will provide a good habitat for moths, butterflies, insects and wildflowers.

We continue to publish a Monthly A Rocha Eco tip in our Church news sheet. Which I hope some folks find interesting and helpful.

Last year the children made bird boxes, and they were fixed to various trees around the church yard. I don't know if any birds are nesting in them yet!

Due to my current condition, I am unable to clear bramble and nettles from our two Commonwealth War Graves. However, The War Graves Commission continue to visit the site. These two graves are located at the top of the old burial ground.

Points he raises are

1. There is no proper plan or system within the church, to recycle paper, plastic, cardboard or glass. We seem to have social events, and all the rubbish ends up in black plastic bags, without a consideration of recycling. These are then frequently ripped up by animals.
2. There needs to be a team carrying out the work
3. While cleaning Chris and Chif find items in the vestry and choir vestry that could be taken home for recycling, and a need for the Henry vacuum cleaner to be used for time to time.
4. It would be a good idea to produce a charter with a list of recycling dos and don'ts regarding recycling within the church and at home. This would be for the whole congregation and for hirers.

Chris Nickless

Marimba Band

Although small in number, the Marimba Band continues to flourish during their Monday evening rehearsals, and regular participation in Family Services. Their playing skills have developed, and, in some pieces, they are able to play five independent melodies at the same time. In the summer, I plan to introduce some additional instruments to the group.

The Marimba Mums are very supportive and have also taken on the role of Holy Dusters once a month during rehearsals.

Janet Chalmers

Servers

The team of servers is depleted in number but those that remain are dedicated and are coping admirably. A big thank you to Richard Hawkins, Liza Wormell, Roger Rowlands, Chif Tang, Carola Clarke and Richard Martin. A team of Champions. We need 2 or 3 new team members to join us to make the schedule more manageable.

Stephen Tanno

Safeguarding

Introduction. Safeguarding is a standing agenda item on the PCC. There have been other meetings with respect to particular events or groups of people, working in line with the Church of England's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance. The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and clergy discipline measure 2016 with a duty to have due regard to House of Bishops guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Safeguarding Roles. The Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) is Alan Mustoe who is also the Recruiter and Verifier. There are no additional safeguarding roles in this parish.

Safeguarding Policy, Guidance and Information. Our Policy; the Church of England's Code of Safer Working Practice; and Policies concerning Privacy, Safer Recruitment, Recruitment of ex-Offenders and Whistleblowing can be found on this parish's website.

Safeguarding Learning and Development. 70 people have completed the Basic Course; 36 the Foundation Course; 16 the Awareness of Domestic Abuse. Vicar and PSO have also completed the courses required of their office. All those who require a DBS disclosure are up to date with one due to begin the application.

Safer Recruitment and People Management. The Vicar and PSO have done the requisite course to safely recruit those working with children and vulnerable adults, this most immediately relevant to engaging a youth worker.

Concerns Raised. In the last calendar year, there were a number of conversations and meetings with respect to safeguarding issues. Three of these required advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Office. Another two had to be referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Office.

Additional Information. The PSO's email has been changed to safeguarding@missendenchurch.org.uk that it can be retained and transferred to a successive PTO. Should a DBS be required and our PSO is away then Gloria Haynes (the PSO in Little Missenden) can provide help with the DBS process.

Next Steps. There will be ongoing need for people to complete courses and obtain a DBS disclosure due to their role or due to expiry of their certificate(s) after three years. Some courses can be led by the PSO whilst others must be completed online. In addition, the Basic Course will be offered to everyone so that we stay aware of safeguarding issues and all that is required to keep everyone safe.

Alan Mustoe
Parish Safeguarding Officer

Pastoral Care and Prayer Chain

During our past year we have sadly lost good friends within our parish, all of whom had a constant open door to friends and neighbours. However, our 'Team' will remain in place and these kind souls will continue to have an open door whenever there is a need. Please don't hesitate to contact Slava Miles or Tricia Neale who can guide you to the nearest contact at any time. We are so grateful for the care and kindness within our area which includes the Hilltop villages, shown to many when there is a need.

Prayer Chain

Slava and Tricia wish to emphasise the availability of the Prayer Chain which is always open to those who seek prayer for themselves or those they love and care for. Simply contact who always has availability to add a prayer to the chain. We are eternally grateful to our Parish and beyond for all who help us Keep in Touch (KIT), throughout the Parish and beyond.

The Healing Ministry

Week by week during the early morning service and during our Parish Communion, a prayer in the Lady Chapel may be said. It is a special moment following on from receiving the Sacrament to have your moment of stillness and prayer.

We are a small group who meet monthly to hold in prayer those names given to us who may be unwell or wish us to hold them in our thoughts.

Please don't hesitate to contact us or come with a request at any time for one of us to pray with you. Our thanks. Slava, Tricia, Sue, Richard, Liza, Angela.

Tricia Neale

Outreach

A lot has been happening for the Church and the Community in 2024 with regard to Outreach.

- We held our first Snowdrop Festival in February together with Susie Brooke in Overstroud Cottage with a successful cream tea being held in the church.
- In June we repeated our Jazz evening with the local jazz group with everyone able to enjoy a chilli with their glass of wine in the interval.
- A cycling group from Rickmansworth asked if we would be a checking station for their 50 km ride and we provided yet another cream tea and raised £1000 for the church.
- The Moonrakers joined us in September and together with their folk music and Stephen Tanno's BBQ another successful evening for the church and community.
- Our main outreach event throughout the summer is the cream teas that run from Easter through to the end of September together with music most weeks. This is a very successful event for our community and raises much needed funds for the church.
- This year our annual Christmas Tree event was run mainly by two people, not part of our congregation and it was very successful for the church and the charities we supported, raising £4000.
- We are still supporting The Old Tea Warehouse.

- We have a food chest in the porch at the North Door and some donations are left for people to help themselves when they are in need and the rest is collected and passed on to the Chesham Foodbank.
- The Oldham Hall coffee morning for parents/carers now only operates on a Friday. We have a loyal group that drop in with small children and a dog, but we've failed to break through to the majority of parents. Martin Webster has stood down after many years of volunteering.

A big 'thank you' to all the volunteers who help throughout the year with all the different activities, and we would love to hear from anyone else who might be able to spare a minute or an hour to help - please be in touch.

Sue O'Farrell

Old Tea Warehouse

- Following last year's appeal for new members of the congregation to join the rota, one person stepped forward from each of the three churches.
- The Christmas appeal was a great success. The congregation gave generously, and we were able to take 80 wrapped gifts to the hostel for those living there and in the 'move on' properties.
- Likewise, the appeal for Easter eggs. 69 eggs were taken to the hostel at the start of Holy Week.
- The last three months have brought further challenges from the point of view of the rota, with the death of our churchwarden and the failing health of other volunteers who have not been able to continue. An appeal made in April attracted three new volunteers, which is really heartening and an offer from two others – already on the rota – to give twice rather than once. All three who offered have now been put on the rota. The list is stable, at the moment, but I anticipate the possible need for further appeals given the age profile and increasing fragility of some of the volunteers.
- The appeal also attracted a donation of £20 which will be put into the contingency fund for the hostel to use in exceptional circumstances.
- Five of the volunteers contribute by giving a donation and having their shopping done for them as they are unable to do this themselves.
- The partnership between Karen, Ian and Malcom continues to work smoothly. It has been very helpful to have Ian collect items and store them at his home and for Malcolm to be the main point of contact for delivery. The sides people have provided an invaluable service supporting each appeal by putting out and returning the various boxes to the vestry at Christmas and Easter.

Karen Butler

Weddings

We are not alone in having fewer weddings than we have had in previous years. In 2024 we only had one wedding **BUT** it was the wedding of Pete Withams and Katie. A very special wedding for a young man who has been a member of the church for most of his life. A great celebration for us all.

This year we will only have two weddings.

Sue O'Farrell

Finance

- 2024: A successful Tree Festival and Christmas period saw us to a small surplus as a Parish of £1504 [2023 £6444]
- Liquid Funds £209,967 [2023 £220103]. Of this £60025 is Unrestricted [2023 £58521].

- The Accounts show just how important on top of our generous giving and Gift Aid are the Cream Teas and Tree Festival. They contributed just over £13000 in 2024.
- Special Collections etc were £4329 [2023 £6057]. The major difference was the sum collected for the Ukraine Hilltop Villages scheme in 2023...that was £1611.
- We currently project a deficit for 2025. Income is about in line with forecast, expenditure just below.
- Hard copies of the full accounts will be available at the APCM.

Martyn Green

Children and Young People

We continue to struggle to make proper provision for the children and young people in our church family – never mind reaching out to children and families beyond our regular congregation – owing to a shortage of volunteers.

Since Chloe Lewis stepped back in July 2024, our MAP sessions for younger children during the 10 am service take place irregularly, when volunteers can be found to support them. We do find that when those sessions are held, they are well attended.

We are particularly grateful to Katie Dunne who, despite now living in Thame, volunteered last summer to set up a new group for our pre-teens/young teenagers. LIGHT sessions now take place on Sunday afternoons, once or twice a month, usually with around 9 young people in attendance. The sessions are run by Katie, with an additional volunteer in attendance for safeguarding reasons (usually Sue O'Farrell). The group usually meets in St Mary's church. LIGHT are currently raising funds to support two charities, Youth Concern and Reserva.

The marimba band run by Janet Chalmers continues to flourish, though with reduced numbers, and plays at the regular Family Services.

The volunteers involved with our children and young people continue to be firmly of the view that, in order to maintain and grow this work, it is necessary to appoint a children's/youth worker. We have been liaising with the Diocese with regard to making this happen and are hoping to make proper progress in the next few months.

Philippa Howells/ Chloe Lewis/ Paula Kitching

Parish Office

It has been an active year for the church office, starting with a successful move from the Baptist Church in Great Missenden to the Bromley Room in the Oldham Hall on the 28 February 2024. Thank you to Malcolm, Sally Clark, Sue O'Farrell and Martyn Green for getting the room organised. Special thanks goes to Martyn for spending an exorbitant amount of time in helping the office transfer to a different phone and internet company. After this effort, a move has been made to have all contracts in the Church's name and/or set up in a way that it is easier to change the responsible person's name. It has been agreed that the office can be accessed, during opening hours, by emailing or phoning the Office Manager.

The office has continued to support the weekly functioning of a lot of aspects of church life. There is still a request for any requests for printing to be given at least two months in advance, and two weeks minimum. See last year's report for details. The Office Manager was made a part of the Standing Committee, as the role is involved in a wide range and depth of the church activities. Below is a summary of the projects that the office has completed in 2024 and currently working on. Due to my resignation from this post, future projects have also been included.

Projects completed in 2024

The office manager worked in conjunction with Katie Dunne, who did the more technical IT work, and advice from Malcolm:

- Updated the formatting and layout of the church website.
- Increased donations at Oldham Coffee mornings by having a Sum Up machine.
- Worked at increasing donations in church by adding QR codes to the pews.
- Sent email invitations for Remembering with Love service to approximately three-quarters of people on the Funeral database. This helped reduce costs, as well as time printing, signing, stuffing envelopes and posting.
- The church calendar, which used to be a diary on the office desk, was made available online with all the bookings and events. The calendar is regularly kept up to date by the Office Manager.
- Updated Safeguarding and church booking conditions with Alan, which are now available on the website.

Projects in progress or completed

- Online Electoral Roll – approximately only thirty-two people out of over one hundred registered online. There were teething problems with it not being clear to everyone that the enrolment was a two-step process (one for the website and then for the electoral roll). Encouragement is needed to enrol electronically; too many hard copy forms were made available, hence at least four hours were spent inputting and verifying the information manually.
- Writing role descriptions for vicar, warden(s), music director, choir coordinator, booking manager, office manager; to be finalised by the Standing Committee. This help prevent double work (two people doing the same thing) or issues not being addressed.
- Updating the website photos – Unfortunately the request for up to date photos was not successful, hence the office is currently writing guidelines for a photography competition for the church to get photos from different perspectives. A contact of Malcolm's is also due to be engaged this summer to take semi-professional photos to update the website.
- Coordinating with the diocese to guide on how to address how and where church documents need to be kept, and which documents can be discarded/ shredded.
- Organising Thank you Tea for Church volunteers in October to show appreciation to all volunteers for their time, effort and support in all aspects of the church.
- Working with Katie Dunne with information from Graeme in addressing the email system that will allow for more storage of emails and storage of electronic documents. As well as the addition of inboxes for roles, e.g. warden@missendenchurch.org.
- Together with Mike, the office is working to build closer ties to the Great Missenden C of E School; currently a reciprocal arrangement for links to each organisation's website.
- Making church booking documents available electronically, with the aim of reducing the amount of paper used and double copies being available and allow the PCC to view what is required to set up for the event.

Future projects

- Making the church (un)locking rota electronically generated, hence minimising manual input by the Office, as well as making the funerals spreadsheet into a proper database.
- Updating church website too include description of the sub-groups (what they do and who to contact), to raise awareness and involvement
- Making the Oldham Hall booking form available online, once it has been completed by the responsible person(s).
- Working with the Outreach Group to implement a system of Meal Trains for people needing extra support due to a life event (birth of baby, injury, death in family, etc).

Elisabeth Hobbs-Hubach
Office Manager

Oldham Hall

Oldham Hall bookings have remained fairly constant this year. We have more regular and less ad hoc bookings, e.g. 2 of our yoga teachers have added extra weekly sessions and we have a new regular hirer doing once a month sound baths. We also have regular school holiday clubs for children which is great as the hall is not sat unused in half terms / Easter / Christmas breaks any more. Summer school holidays are still quiet, and I think it might be worth some (free) advertising perhaps on Facebook and local groups to encourage some holiday clubs.

We have a steady number of one-off events like children's parties without any issues. (The only problem we had this year with litter came from a church booking!!)

I installed a Hive to better stay on top of the heating and we have saved money this way. I set the heating every week depending on who has booked the hall, so it is only ever on for the absolute minimum of time.

Pete is great with general upkeep, and we've had no issues at all there. We had the drain problems which Martyn sorted with the school, and which did not involve me. The boiler has had a couple of issues with pressure, but I can fix it myself so there has been no need for repairs.

There has been a problem, hopefully resolved, with the school coming in on the off chance that the hall is available to use. This isn't acceptable as there may be bookings and they have been told to not do this. They also have a habit of leaving the doors open and leaving the hall unattended when they are using the hall. Again, they have been told not to do this. So far this seems better, but I am keeping an eye on it.

In terms of prices, I think we are charging a fair amount. Other venues nearby charge a similar fee or less than us (and some have parking too) so I think that for now, our prices are fair (£15ph during the week and £20ph at the weekend).

We don't take deposits because it would be time consuming to refund hirers. Our Ts and Cs say that we will take a £60 deposit. Given the amount of time (and therefore cost) to do the refunding and the fact that we have never had an issue that would necessitate keeping £60, I believe that it isn't worth putting this in place. Using the system to take payments also incurs a fee of 2.2%, so I try to get hirers to do transfers rather than pay online.

The issue of rising damp in the office, near to the emergency exit door, was found to be a broken drain in the school playground, which has now been fixed. Pete, the Oldham Hall caretaker, has been monitoring it and has repainted area.

Ali Chryssides, Bookings Manger

Church Bells

In the last few years since Covid we have managed to build up our members including our latest, who is only 17, elected at our branch AGM held here on the 15th of March. This means that we do now ring all eight bells fairly regularly.

On our Saturday morning practice we encourage members from other towers including Great Kimble, Amersham, Little Missenden, Weston Turville.

Our repertoire of ringing methods is gradually building up. We regularly welcome visiting ringers who ring quarter peals (non-stop ringing for 45 minutes) our next group from Windsor are ringing at 10am on the 5th of May.

Special thanks to Chris Potter, our steeple keeper, who looks after the maintenance of our bells and tower, and thanks to members who recently did a Spring clean upstairs!

Lucy Wilson, Tower Captain

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

2024 was a very successful and enjoyable fundraising year!

Events: We held three happy fundraising *Talks & Tea* events which were very well attended and have become valued community gatherings:

- “John Hampden the Patriot” by Dr Beth Rogers on 20th April.
- “Life in Her Hands” by Professor Dame Averil Mansfield DBE FRCS FRCP on 15th June.
- “Ukraine, Russia and European Tensions” by Paula Kitching, one of our Trustees, on 21st September.
- Also, participation in the Christmas Tree Festival, with our tree theme of “Robins” and our tabletop sales.

Income. £21,049 was raised in 2024 thanks to incredible support from our members and other kind supporters. The committee is most grateful and will be able to give the PCC further grants for fabric repairs to our much-loved Parish Church.

Easyfundraising donations now total over £350: we are most grateful for this kind support and would welcome other contributors to the scheme!

Grants. Two grants were made to the PCC for the usual gutter/downpipe cleaning. We await a grant application from the PCC for several necessary repairs to the church tower: our “Save the Tower” fundraising campaign!

Preserves. A total of £7,549 was raised in 2024. There were sales at our Talks, at the Church Cream Teas and Christmas Tree Festival, by the Great Missenden Library and at the Church School Farmers’ Markets and their Christmas Fair. There were many other purchases by various people. Over 2,450 jars were filled during the year. All the sales and many kind contributions of fruit, sugar and re-cycled jam jars are greatly appreciated.

Membership. Sadly, several founding and other members died or moved away in 2024. We are most grateful for their kind support and contributions over the years. Eleven new members joined last year and are warmly welcomed. Membership is now 140 and we would welcome new members to help further our fundraising efforts.

The Committee, a “Merrie Bande”, works hard and contributes to our work in so many ways. Nick Moss took over from Nevil Coulson as Treasurer at the AGM in May 2024 and we welcomed Lucy Wilson to the Committee in November.

Finally, our Parish Church was founded nearly 900 years ago, in 1133AD. It has a cultural heritage which needs preserving and which is handed on from one generation to the next in order to build the future. We all have an obligation to protect and preserve it and its heritage.

Vivienne Davis
Honorary Chair

Trustees/Committee members: Hon Chairman: Vivienne Davis; Hon Treasurer: Nick Moss; The Revd. Malcolm Chalmers; Ann Biscoe-Taylor; Jill Burton, Avril Cobham, Di Denney; Paula Kitching; Jill Pateman; Esther Rose and Lucy Wilson.