ST LEONARD'S CHURCH SANDRIDGE PARISH MAGAZINE JANUARY 2024



JANUARY DIARY REVIEW OF 2023 CHRISTMAS CONCERTS CHURCHYARD NEWS LIVESTOCK UPDATE PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

JANUARY DIARY

| Tuesday 2 | 10.00am | NO midweek communion |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Sunday 7 | Epiphany | |
| | 10.00am | Holy Communion |
| Tuesday 9 | 10.00am | Midweek Communion |
| Sunday 14 | 10.00am | Holy Communion |
| Tuesday 16 | 10.00am | Midweek Communion |
| 2 | | |
| Saturday 20 | 10.00-12.00 | Craft Church - drop-in session for families |
| 2 | 10.00-12.00 10.00am | Craft Church - drop-in session for families Holy Communion |
| Saturday 20 | | • |
| Saturday 20 Sunday 21 | 10.00am | Holy Communion |

FEBRUARY DIARY

| Sunday 4 | Candlemas | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|--|
| | 10.00am | Holy Communion |
| Tuesday 6 | 10.00am | Midweek Communion |
| Sunday 11 | 10.00am | Holy Communion |
| Weds 14 | Ash Wednes 10.00am ******** | day Holy Communion with imposition of ashes |

www.sandridgechurch.org.uk

The church is open daily from 10.00am until at least 3.00pm

Letter from our Vicar

Dear readers, Happy New Year!

January is named after the Roman god Janus. Janus was the god of transitions. He is pictured with two faces, one facing the past and one facing the future. In his hand he holds keys to show his protection of doors, gates and other thresholds. So January is a good name for the first month of our new year: a time when we look both back over the past year and forwards into the new one.



When I look back over 2023, I can see that as a church we have achieved a great deal. We have done a lot of important (and expensive!) work on the building, especially in the ancient chancel. We have repaired the Lychgate and restored the honour boards. We have improved our communications: not only do we have five lovely new noticeboards, but the magazine and parish cards have had a revamp and we are much better at using social media, with a beautiful new website.



Honour boards after restoration

We have also done a lot of tidying and reorganising inside the church to make it



more welcoming. We have a new sound system, as well as a hearing loop for the first time. We have relaunched Craft Church as a monthly drop-in session and in December nearly 60 people came along. We have a new organist, as well as people learning to ring the bells. We have some welcome new faces coming along to our regular services.

(continued overleaf)

We held some very successful events including an amazing Flower Festival, and Summer and Christmas Fairs. We have put a great deal of thought into our Sunday services to improve both accessibility and enjoyment. I can't claim credit for much of this, because in each case members of the congregation have stepped forward to make these things happen. Everyone at St Leonard's can be very proud of what has been achieved.

Looking forward to 2024, we are already thinking about our priorities for the building. We would like to improve or replace the heating. We would like to have some parking spaces allocated for blue badge holders. We would like to have a roof that didn't leak, even in extreme weather conditions. We would like our income and expenditure to match. Most importantly, we would like even more people to come into our beautiful building to encounter a welcome from those who worship there and to sense the presence of God.

We very much look forward to sharing all this and more with you in 2024. God bless you and all those you love. *Revd Wendy*

The Friends of St Leonard's

In Wendy's article in December's magazine about work on the Lychgate and church building, mention was made of joining the Friends of St Leonard's but without the details of how to do this.

If you would like to join or get involved in any way, then please contact **Rodger Scott**, who is a **Trustee and the Treasurer of the Friends.** His contact details are as follows:

Email: friendsofstleonards@rodosco.co.uk

Tel: 01727 837421 or 07769 654150

Mail: The Greens, Sandridgebury Lane, Sandridge, St Albans AL3 6JF

Magazine distribution

The magazine is available free of charge to anyone via email. Please contact the Magazine Editor on: news.stleonards@gmail.com if you wish to receive a monthly copy.

Paper copies are available free in the church, at Carpenter's Nursery and in the Village Stores. For people unable to obtain copies in either way, contact Peter Hyde to arrange for a copy to be delivered.

Livestock update - the patter of tiny hooves?

When Dad (Roland King, our much loved Churchwarden Emeritus) passed away a year ago, I knew finding a good home for his beloved Blonde D'Aquitaine cattle would not be easy. Luckily however I found a young farmer looking to build and establish his own herd near Maidstone in Kent. The three cows remaining in Dad's herd - Eloise, Poppins and Patience - were going to begin a new life in Kent.

We moved them from Sandridge in May 2023 and for the last six months they have been running with the farmer's herd. We visited them in September to find them settled, very happy and enjoying their new life. I have kept in regular contact with the farmer, because within the herd he had his own bull, and I am pleased to announce that the two youngest cows, Poppins and Patience, are now in calf! Unfortunately the older lady, Eloise, is not presently in calf.

I am sure Dad would be pleased to know that his Blondes are in good hands and continuing to enjoy life. *Mike King*



Publication notes

The magazine is edited by Rosamund Adlard, with thanks to all our contributors. Please send contributions for the next issue, including any photographs, as soon as available or **by 14 January at the latest please** to: news.stleonards@gmail.com

Churchyard news

Many families choose to remember their loved ones with Christmas tributes. Can we just remind you that if you wish to reclaim these, this needs to be done **by 21 January please**. Soon after this, depending on the weather, we will tidy away any that are left and dispose of them.

Can we please remind families that items made of glass and other breakable materials are not allowed: most are not frost-proof and all will cause a hazard if they get broken. As ever, artificial flowers and plants are not allowed under the Regulations. We actually have a resident flock of parakeets who seem to take it upon themselves to police this particular regulation and regularly shred artificial flowers! I've no idea why.

During 2023, we continued to make progress with maintaining the House Lane Churchyard, in particular with:

- Seasonal planting watch out for snowdrops, daffodils and cowslips in the spring.
- More regular clearing of graves and mowing. The clearing is done by hand, so as not to impact adversely on this unique habitat and the wildlife who live there.
- The regular clearance of unauthorised items and unwanted items such as empty flower pots.
- Two smart new noticeboards.
- Work done to level some more recent graves and seed with grass.
- Initial attempts to try to clear some of the unruly patch at the far end next to the playground. This will be an ongoing task I'm afraid, but we are doing our best with the resources we currently have.

The main old churchyard alongside the church is maintained by Sandridge Parish Council, apart from the Garden of Rest, which is lovingly tended by two village residents. The House Lane Churchyard is partially maintained by professionals and partially by volunteers. We are able to pay for some professional support due to a grant from the Parish Council and donations from families. Some people choose to donate their time maintaining a single family grave or a much larger patch.

We would like to thank:

Sandridge Parish Council for their immense support across both churchyards, and Rod and Rowan the professional gardeners, for all they have done this year. Also, the families and friends who donate either time, money or both to help maintain our churchyards. Especial thanks to Roger who does so much at House Lane, and Ed and Louise who maintain the Garden of Rest.



How can you help?

You could donate money: to help us pay for new planting, grave levelling, hedgetrimming, grass mowing and the other things that need doing.

You can specify how you would like a donation spent.

You can contact us for help with maintaining or levelling a grave.

You can volunteer to help with maintenance.

You can continue to help us by following the Regulations – many of which assist us with

making maintenance a bit easier.

It's also really helpful if folk clear away any items such as plastic wrappings, dead flowers, flower pots and so on.

Thank you to everyone who cares for and about our two churchyards, both of which are very special and holy places. *Revd Wendy Sellers*

Christmas tree in the Chancel

Candlelight Carol service





W I Report

At our Christmas meeting on 12 December, our speaker Rachel Woolf, the granddaughter of one of our members, gave us an extremely lively talk. She explained how her charity **Street Storage** came to be founded in response to the need, in the face of rising homelessness figures, to provide a safe and accessible place for those facing homelessness to store their precious possessions and documents. She started with a quote from Emmaus Herts, refuting the former Home Secretary's view that using a tent as shelter was somehow a 'lifestyle choice' and stating that, contrary to what might be expected in such a prosperous area, over 2000 people in Hertfordshire are currently homeless, due to a combination of factors. There is rising homelessness among private tenants due to PRS evictions, or it may be caused by a relationship breakdown, or health problems - both mental and physical.

People may also be fleeing domestic abuse and amazingly 25% of those supported by the charity are in regular employment but sofa-surfing or living in their car. They cannot access suitable housing because the temporary accommodation offered is often unsuitable and there is a lack of post-prison support for recently discharged prisoners, and lack of provision and support for care-leavers. UK-wide, there are 27,000 homeless people.

The charity was founded in 2018 in order that work, tools, clothing and documents could be kept safe and accessible. Belongings can be left regardless of the person's residency status - everything is based on trust. They have 2000 square feet of space available for storage in Camden and Hackney. The charity also does face-to face outreach work, providing blankets, etc. Approximately 20% of their clients have now been able to move into permanent housing and 10% are in rehab.

The last year has seen a 38% rise in referrals - 400 in 2023 - so the staff has increased from two to eight in the last two years. The need continues to be pressing - they have had requests for referrals from 17 other locations in the UK and even from Ireland.

At our next meeting on 9 January, our speaker will be Marion Brown, one of the Deputy Lieutenants for Hertfordshire, who will tell us what her role involves and particularly about her involvement with the recent Coronation.

Visitors are always welcome for a small fee, which includes a raffle ticket and refreshments, so do come along to the Village Hall at 7.30pm for 8.00pm and join us. *Christine Nutton, Vice President*

Christmas concerts at St Leonard's Church

Two very enjoyable and successful concerts were held before Christmas in the church. On Sunday 10th December Emma and Steph, known as Alban Duo (opposite), played music for four hands on one piano. This included jazzy versions of festive favourites, extracts from The Nutcracker ballet suite and finished with



'Sleigh Ride', with added sound effects and audience participation! The total raised, thanks to a large and generous audience, was almost **£600**, to be divided between the church and Myeloma UK.

On Saturday 16th, Village Voices gave their usual Christmas concert, with the addition of two other choirs: Global Harmony and Fleetville Harmony.





Festive refreshments were served in the interval and **£200** was donated to St Leonard's from the proceeds of ticket sales.

From top to bottom: Fleetville Harmony, Global Harmony, Village Voices



PARISH COUNCIL SUPPLEMENT (abridged draft minutes)

AT THE MEETING OF SANDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 13 DECEMBER 2023, THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE DISCUSSED:

There were apologies received and accepted from Councillors Twidell, Reid, Leonard and Chalkley.

Disclosures of Interest

There was none.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 8 November 2023 were reviewed. They were agreed to be a correct record and it was unanimously resolved that the minutes of the meeting be approved and signed by the Chair.

Questions to Officers

There was none.

Public Participation – an opportunity for residents to raise issues or ask questions of Members

Mr Iain Begg, a Wheathampstead Parish Councillor, spoke to Members on the subject of a clear definitive cycle/footpath between Sandridge and Wheathampstead alongside the B651. Following discussion it was agreed that Sandridge Parish Council is in favour of working with Wheathampstead Parish Council in ensuring a definitive cycle/footpath remains in place for the future with no risk of closure. Cllr Begg undertook to speak to the Sandridge Clerk in due course to establish next steps.

CLERK'S REPORTS

Monthly Accounts

Members reviewed a schedule of creditor payments for the period 9 November to 13 December 2023. It was unanimously resolved to approve the schedule for payment on 15 December 2023.

Jersey Farm Open Space Pump Track Update

Members received a verbal update from the Project, Amenities and Community Engagement Officer on the current status of this project. It was noted that the recently commissioned traffic survey report has been forwarded to Herts Highways for comment in respect of concerns around the site access.

2023/24 Budgetary Control and 2024/25 Draft Budget

The projected year-end position for 2023/24 and the draft budget for 2024/25 were reviewed. The reserves position and the five year forecast based on projected net expenditure of £306,330 against a budget of £343,095 was noted.

In summary, the Clerk's report showed draft net expenditure for 2024/2025 of £357,305, being an increase of 4.14% on the current year's budget. Members noted two items in respect of Sports and Recreation:

1. The sum of £50,000 is shown in the reserves as earmarked for the bike track. This expenditure is not however reflected in the budget at this stage because of uncertainties around if/when it is to be used. The Sports and Recreation capital budget at the adventure play-ground is shown as £30,000 but without a specific project named. 2. This is because the final cost of complying with planning requirements to build the bike track are unknown and it is probable some of this funding will be required. It's also known that the build costs have increased. Most of the £30,000 should however fund a new project at a location to be determined in 2024/25 once bike track costs are finalised. Any new project(s) will be brought to Full Council before progressing because of the sums involved.

It was also noted that several budgets have been brought under the control of the new Committee for Sustainability, where previously they've not been overseen by any committee. It was proposed by Cllr White, seconded by Cllr Roberts and unanimously resolved to approve the draft 2024/25 budget of £360,305, including an additional £3,000 allocated to the Parish Event, subject to funding.

Five Year Model

Members considered a five year financial model to give context to the 2024/25 budget and position on reserves.

2024/25 Draft Reserves, Precept and Funding Requirement

Councillors considered and discussed an appendix showing the opening and projected closing position on reserves. Also noted was that Sandridge Parish Council continues to raise the lowest precept in the district for comparable councils and economic challenges in future years will impact more heavily if balances are not maintained.

It was proposed by Cllr Lambert, seconded by Cllr Sieger and unanimously resolved that an increase on the 2023/24 precept of 7% is approved for the 2024/25 financial year. This will increase the precept by £21,280 from \pounds 304,001 to £325,281 in support of the approved budget.

Parish Council Schedule of Internal Controls

A schedule of internal controls as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 was reviewed and formally noted.

Internal Audit

A summary of the 2023/24 Interim Internal Audit was circulated with the agenda, along with the Clerk's response to the three issues raised. It was noted that of the 109 audit tests carried out, 108 were positive and 1 was negative. Following discussion it was unanimously resolved to formally note and approve the internal auditors report and to record thanks to the office team.

Matters of Note

- Staff appraisals will be carried out in early January 2024. These will be taken to the HR Committee on 5 February.
- A new Salvation Army clothing bank has been ordered for the Village Hall/Spencer Meadow car park. The Parish Office will monitor the bank for fly tipping. *Post meeting note: this is now in place.*
- Grants awarded this year to the Jersey Farm Day Care Centre and the Hornbeam Hedgehog Sanctuary were awarded under the LGA 1972 s.145 and the Open Spaces Act 1906 s.9 & s.10 respectively. These details were omitted on the original minutes.
- Councillor Hale and the Clerk attended the first of three course sessions entitled 'Carbon Literacy' on 5 December. These are run by the Groundwork organisation and funded through the County Council.

COUNCILLOR AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Grant Applications

Sustainable St Albans - After deliberation it was proposed by Cllr Lambert, seconded by Cllr White and resolved to award Sustainable St Albans the sum of £2,000 towards venue, logistics, technical and promotional costs for the 2024 SustFest. This award to be made under the LGA 1972 s.145.

D-Day 80 at the Jersey Farm Woodland Park

Members discussed an initiative to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings, to take place on 6 June 2024 throughout the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, UK Overseas Territories and at the site of the British Normandy Memorial. Each event to be centered around lighting a beacon, 80 of which are planned in each county.

Cllr Twidell circulated a report with the agenda, confirming he has spoken to the Scout's District Commissioner for St Albans regarding their participation in lighting a beacon, possibly with some words such as a soldier's memoir spoken during a short ceremony. Members were reminded that the Parish Council signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant in March 2023. It was unanimously resolved that; the Parish Council agrees in principle to participate in the D-Day 80 event on 6 June 2024.

- That a budget of up to £300 be allocated in principle.
- That the matter appears again on the February 2024 agenda for further discussion.

Community Festive Lunch

Members were informed that Cllr Ahmed has organised a community festive lunch at Jersey Farm Community Centre on Thursday 21 December between 12pm and 2pm. Participation in the lunch is free of charge and walk-ins will be welcomed although booking is advised.

Proposed Diversion of Footpath 26 Sandridge

The meeting considered a report by Cllr Ternouth in respect of a longstanding proposal to permanently divert Footpath 26, currently running through Nashes Farm. Following discussion it was unanimously resolved to support the proposed diversion.

Meetings of Committees:

Members noted this month's committee meetings:

- 1. Sports and Recreation Committee 6 December 2023 *Meeting* postponed
- 2. Planning Committee see below

MATTERS OF NOTE ARISING SINCE THE CIRCULATION OF THE AGENDA

Members were informed that the first Parish Event meeting had been held. A provisional date of 1 June 2024 between 1pm and 10pm had been agreed.

Officers from Herts County Council met with representatives of Oaklands College this week in respect of re-opening public access through the campus.

PLANNING MATTERS

It was noted that the Planning Committee met on 27 November 2023. The planning applications commented on since the last Full Council meeting are:

> 22 Skyswood Road AL4 9PG 5/2023/2099 112 Osprey Drive AL4 0LU 5/2023/2206 7 Evans Grove AL4 9PJ 5/2023/2280

Please note: Planning applications received at the Parish Office from the Planning Authority *after* the Parish Council agenda has been published may also be discussed at the meeting, as may applications of complexity or applications likely to impact heavily on the Green Belt.

SUGGESTIONS AND/OR MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION AT FUTURE MEETINGS:

- Oaklands College public access issues.
- St Leonard's Lychgate restoration.

Next meeting date:

FARTW(

10 January 2024 at 7.30pm – Marshalswick Community Centre

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CHRISTMAS FAIR 2023









Yet another very successful Christmas Fair was held on Saturday 4 December. As ever, the luxury hamper raffle was very popular, as were the craft and cakes and preserves stalls in the lead-up to Christmas. The Fair raised a total of **£1637** towards the upkeep and maintenance of the church, a magnificent total. A huge thank you to all who helped in any way.



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Church Directory

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