

**ST LEONARD'S CHURCH SANDRIDGE
PARISH MAGAZINE
DECEMBER 2023**



**DECEMBER DIARY
CHRISTMAS FAIR
CHRISTMAS SERVICES & CONCERTS
REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY
BUILDING WORK UPDATE
W I REPORT
PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES**

DECEMBER DIARY

- Saturday 2 10.30-1.00 Christmas Fair in church**
- Sunday 3 First Sunday in Advent**
10.00am Holy Communion
- Tuesday 5 10.00am Midweek Communion**
- Sunday 10 Second Sunday in Advent**
10.00am Holy Communion
- Sunday 10 4.00pm Alban Duo (piano duet) concert**
- Saturday 16 10.00-12.00 Craft Church and Christingle service**
- Saturday 16 7.30pm Three choirs concert**
- Sunday 17 Third Sunday in Advent**
10.00am Holy Communion
- Sunday 17 4.00pm Carols by Candlelight with refreshments**
- Tuesday 19 NO midweek communion**
- Sunday 24 Christmas Eve**
10.00am Holy Communion
3.00pm Crib service
5.00pm Carols by Candlelight
11.00pm Midnight Mass
- Monday 25 Christmas Day**
10.00am Holy Communion
- Tuesday 26 NO midweek communion**
- Sunday 31 10.00am Holy Communion**

JANUARY DIARY

- Tuesday 2 NO midweek communion**
- Sunday 7 10.00am Holy Communion**

www.sandridgechurch.org.uk

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



Letter from our Vicar

Dear Friends

O Come All Ye Faithful

Happy New Year! And no, I'm not a month early, because the Christian new year starts at the beginning of Advent. Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas so it is a different date each year.

This year Advent, and therefore the New Year, starts on Sunday 3 December.

Advent is an exciting time for most of us, with the preparations for Christmas. Many of us will be busy with card writing, present wrapping, Christmas parties and so on. In church our preparation is a little calmer and a whole lot cheaper! Each Sunday we light a candle and sing a verse of a song, as we remember how the Bible tells us of how God prepared the world for the birth and ministry of Jesus Christ. We recall the founding fathers of our faith (and of course of several other world faiths too). We re-read the words of scripture which we see as letting people know Jesus is on his way. We think of his cousin John, who baptised Jesus at the start of his three year ministry. And we give thanks for his mother Mary, who said "Yes" to God when he asked her to do something which didn't necessarily sound like a great idea. Each week moves us closer to the wonder of Christmas when we celebrate again the birth of Jesus Christ, who was also called Emmanuel, which means 'God is with us'.

If you fancy an hour of calm in the busyness of the run-up to Christmas then do join us for one of our services: either our regular weekly ones or those in the week before Christmas. There are four to choose from on Christmas Eve alone.

The church is looking wonderful after its renovations, and will be dressed for Christmas. Many of our Christmas services are candle-lit and children are welcome at all of them. The church is also open in daylight hours if you want to just go in and sit quietly with your own thoughts.

Last year, many of you came to church over the Christmas period. We hope to see you again. And if you keep meaning to come along, then we'd absolutely love to see you too. Whether or not we are lucky enough to see you in person over the Christmas season, may I wish you a joyful and peaceful Christmas.

Every blessing.

Revd Wendy Sellers

W.I. Report

At our November meeting, we welcomed three police officers from the Beacon Fraud Hub who gave us advice on how to avoid scams and cyber-crime. Over 600 victims a month fall victim to these and £3000 is lost to fraud every 60 seconds, but the aim of the Hub is to empower rather than frighten and they emphasised that nothing is too small or trivial to report to them. They warned about phone spoofing in which fraudsters can clone a phone to make it seem they are phoning from a familiar number and can keep the line open even after you have hung up. The defence against this is to phone the number on the back of your card from a different device. Never give out any information about your phones or other devices. It might be advisable to invest in a phone blocker - available free from Trading Standards – to block unwanted and nuisance calls.

There have been instances of people phoning, impersonating a police officer, alarming you by saying that they need you to go to your bank and withdraw money as something irregular is happening which will enable them to catch a criminal. No police officer will ever ask for your bank details. Another scam is a call or letter saying that you have a parcel for delivery or collection on which a charge is due. Yet another is a family emergency text or email, in which the person impersonating a family member asks you to transfer money to them. This is often the result of someone having their email account hacked. Never click on a link in any of these emails. You may also receive repeated calls saying that unauthorised activity has been detected on your card or bank account. Never press the button to ‘speak to one of our advisors’.

Beacon Fraud Hub’s number is 0300 123 2040 and they are available from 8am to 8pm. You can chat online with a legally qualified Fraud Advisor or counsellor if you fear you may be a victim of grooming.

If an offer sounds too good to be true it almost certainly is. Never pay any money to ‘release’ a lottery win. Always create very strong passwords to protect your accounts. The good news is that over £3million has been recovered by the Beacon Hub, which was set up by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire, David Lloyd.

At our meeting on 12 December, we will have a speaker from Centre 33/ Open Door to tell us about their work and we will be giving them the toiletry bags made by our craft group, filled with donations from members. We will also be laying on Christmas refreshments, so do think about joining us that evening at 7.30pm for 8pm in the Village Hall. Visitors are always very welcome.

Christine Nutton, Vice President



**St Leonard's Christmas Fair
2023**

**Saturday 2nd December
10.30-1.00 in the Church**

Featuring
Craft and gift and Bric-a-Brac stalls
Tombolas for all ages
Famous Christmas hamper raffle
Children's Lucky Dip
Send a letter to Father Christmas
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the excitement of
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This Christmas at St Leonard's church

Hopefully, many of you will have received the parish Christmas card which details all the services and events at St Leonard's in December. We have a packed schedule and your vicar is looking forward to a good sleep on Boxing Day!!

We kick off with our popular **Christmas Fair on Saturday 2 December**: you will find a poster advertising this on page 5. As well as raising much-needed funds, this is always a jolly social event with a chance to catch up over a cuppa. We then have **two concerts** to look forward to, **on Sunday 10 December and Saturday 16 December**: the details of these concerts are opposite and on page 12. They promise to be fantastic events, so do come along and support the performers.

On **Saturday 16 December from 10.00-12.00 we have our Christmas Craft Church**: a drop-in event for families with activities and refreshments. One of the activities will be to make a Christingle and there will be **a short Christingle service at 11.30am** at which everyone is very welcome.

On **Sunday 17 December at 4.00pm** we are holding the first of our **andlelit family-friendly carol services**, featuring some well-known carols and short readings. The crib figures will be placed in the crib as part of the service and afterwards there will be seasonal refreshments. This event will be repeated on **Christmas Eve at 5.00pm** but without refreshments. This carol service was our busiest service of 2022, so we thought we'd offer two opportunities this year for people of all ages to come and enjoy this retelling of the Christmas story.

Christmas Eve is a Sunday this year so there will be no less than four services that day: **Holy Communion at 10.00am, the Crib Service at 3.00pm** (which is particularly suitable for younger children, although everyone seems to enjoy it), **Family Carols by Candlelight at 5.00pm** and of course **Midnight Mass at 11.00pm**. Our Christmas Day service is at 10.00am as usual.

Apart from all of the above, we will also welcome Sandridge School into the church for two services, and Christmas services will also take place at both Tara's Retreat and Lyndon Care Home. By the end of it all, hopefully your vicar will know the Christmas story off by heart and will no doubt have sung *Away in a Manger* many many times..... Luckily, the joy of Christmas never fades; every year it is fresh and new and exciting.

I can't wait to share it with you once again.

Revd Wendy

Update on work to the church building and Lychgate

The work on the chancel is now finished and it looks amazing. Do pop in to admire its new paint job, which has uncovered much of the original stone. If you come in and the church is dark, the light switches are through the arch and on the left-hand wall. Please remember to turn them off as you leave. While you are there, why not hunt for the graffiti carved many years ago? Some of it is dated and therefore we know it's 400 years old. However, please don't feel tempted to add to it!!

All this work was funded by two ancient legacies and a more recent donation from the family of the late and much missed Richard and Vivien Koh.

The work on the Lychgate should also be finished by the time you read this. The brickwork will have been re-pointed and the woodwork treated. The honour boards, bearing the names of the fallen and also the names of those who returned from World War I, have to go away for specialist conservation and restoration, so we look forward to them being reinstalled. Can I make a very serious plea to dog owners not to allow your dog to pee on the Lychgate please? Not only is it hugely disrespectful, but the urine reacts badly with the building materials of this listed monument which is over 100 years old. As you perhaps already know, this restoration work was largely funded by grants, together with some personal donations.

Inside the church, you may notice that we have moved some furniture around and had a bit of a clear-out. The main purpose was to clear items away from the radiators to improve the heating of the church in winter. But we also wanted the church to be more welcoming, so we now have a larger children's area and a flat surface for literature as you come in. This meant moving the Book of Remembrance and we do intend to move the flower vases too. If anyone has the skill set (and tools) to do this for us, do please get in touch.

From the Parish Registers

Burial: 6 October Mary Eunice Staines

Burial of ashes: 12 November Anthony Peter Gayton

The cost of improvements to the furniture and repairs to pews was met by a generous donation made by the family of our beloved former churchwarden Roland King, for which we are most grateful. I know Roland would have approved of our spending money, in his memory, on the building he loved so much.



The PCC has now had time to think about next year's schedule of work. It includes some essential repairs to our stained glass windows and yet more work to stop the side aisle roof leaking. We are hoping the Friends of St Leonard's will help with the cost of one of these projects, as costs will be substantial. We are also investigating options for improved heating and disabled car parking. As ever, we will keep you up to date. All this work allows the church building to fulfil its purpose as a place for people to gather – to worship God, to celebrate baptisms and weddings, to mourn the departed, to practise singing, to eat cake, to ring bells, to meet socially, to sit quietly, to play, to learn or whatever else it is that you visit the building for.

If you too love and cherish St Leonard's church, do please think about how you might help look after it. Many people who do not come to church regularly still choose to help us maintain the church. That might mean joining the cleaning rota or helping maintain the churchyards. Or perhaps you could join the Friends of St Leonard's, donating a small amount monthly, or buying lottery tickets for the St Albans lottery which benefits the Friends. You may even consider leaving something in your will. If you'd like to discuss any of these, we'd be happy to hear from you.

Revd Wendy

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 December at the latest please to:**

news.stleonards@gmail.com

Remembrance Sunday 2023

Although the weather was dull and damp, a large crowd of about 150 people gathered outside the church at the Lychgate for this year's Remembrance Sunday service on 12 November. The service had been preceded by a shortened service of Holy Communion inside the church, in order to be able to observe the two minute silence outside at 11.00am. Local scout and guide groups were well represented, as well as Sandridge Parish Council.



After the service, many of those present came into church to light a candle in memory of loved ones and to warm up with a welcome cup of coffee.

Next year, we look forward to gathering around the newly restored Lychgate and honour boards, which commemorate those villagers who gave their lives for their country.



Left: Poppy wreaths laid in the Garden of Rest

All photographs by Peter Hyde



Charity Concert supporting Food Bank

three choirs for
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Join us for a festive fun evening
of seasonal songs, and carols
with chances to sing along

Mulled wine and mince pies

16th December 2023 7pm

St Leonard's Church, Sandridge

Entry £10 on the door, children free

Christmas Tributes in our Churchyards

I am sure many families will want to place something on their loved ones' graves at Christmas time. However, please remember someone also needs to tidy away once Christmas is over.

If you are leaving flowers or arrangements in the **Garden of Rest**, please place them by the central stone and not on the grass or the flowerbeds.

Vases are provided. Items will be removed and disposed of once they no longer look their best.

If you are leaving tributes on a grave in the **House Lane Churchyard**, please try to use natural materials, avoiding any lights, candles, glitter, polystyrene, fake snow, etc. One arrangement I noticed last year was just some holly and other evergreen sprigs placed in the metal flower holder on a memorial stone. It lasted for weeks, cost nothing and was fully compostable afterwards. If you like this idea, both churchyards are full of evergreen trees and bushes you can prune!

If you are personally unable to remove any Christmas tributes once Christmas is over, then we will tidy these away for you and dispose of them. The date we do this will depend on the weather and other tasks that need doing, so if you would like to reclaim your tribute, we ask you do this by **Sunday 21 January please.**

Thank you so much.

Revd Wendy



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.

PARISH COUNCIL SUPPLEMENT

(abridged draft minutes)

AT THE MEETING OF SANDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 8 NOVEMBER 2023, THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE DISCUSSED:

There were apologies received and accepted from Cllr Twidell.

Disclosures of Interest

There was none.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 11 October 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

There was none.

CLERK'S REPORTS

Monthly Accounts

Members reviewed a schedule of creditor payments for the period 12 October to 8 November 2023. It was unanimously resolved to approve the schedule for payment.

Clothing Banks

Members noted that the provision of two Salvation Army clothing banks in the Parish Office car park has been very successful. They have been emptied regularly and there has been no fly tipping. Also noted was that there is no long-term commitment to retain a bank that's causing issues. It was however stated that each bank will normally take up a single parking space.

Unlike the previous clothing bank provider, the Salvation Army pays a small commission to the landowner and the first payment has been received in the sum of £33. It was unanimously resolved to apply to install a further Salvation Army clothing bank in the Spencer Meadow car park at the earliest opportunity. It was further unanimously resolved that the commission payments are earmarked each year with Members then nominating a Parish Council environmental project to receive the funding in Spring (e.g. tree planting).

Post meeting note: The Salvation Army has confirmed that Spencer Meadow is a suitable location and will provide a bin at the earliest opportunity.

Centres Manager Report

The Community Centre Manager's report, produced in replacement of the discontinued Community Centres Committee, was reviewed before it was unanimously resolved to formally note the report's contents.

Committee for Sustainability - Terms of Reference

After consideration it was unanimously resolved to approve the draft Terms of Reference for this Committee as circulated.

Standing Orders

Following the circulation of an electronic copy of this document, sent to Members by the Clerk on 24 October 2023, it was resolved to re-adopt the Standing Orders for review in one year.

Parish Event

Members discussed holding a summer event next year. There was a consensus that an event should go ahead provided there were sufficient volunteers available prior to and on the day itself. The Deputy Clerk undertook to circulate some suggested dates for those interested to meet with the Project, Amenities and Community Engagement officer for preliminary plans to be made.

Matters of Note

- A Climate Fresk session led by Cllr Lambert was held on 23 October. Nine Councillors and staff members attended the session which was very informative and thought provoking. There is a waiting list of three for a second session which could be held if others come forward.
- Work on the Sandridge village public toilets commenced on 30 October and will last up to three weeks. Only one unit will be brought back into service at this time.
- Cllr Chalkley and the Project Officer recently met with a member of Wheatfields Junior School staff to discuss collaborative working in the community garden to educate the children and allow them to be involved in a community project.
- An insurance settlement of £850 has been received from Zurich Municipal in respect of repairs to the skate ramp.
- The Committee for Sustainability is exploring sites where dual bins can be installed in Parish Council parks (as per the Sustainability Policy). All waste is currently taken to landfill.
- Sustainable St Albans has kindly agreed to have a member sit on the Parish Council's Committee for Sustainability.

- An article will appear in the winter edition of Neighbourhood News to promote a project initiated through the Committee for Sustainability. Members of the community will be asked if they have skills in repairing various everyday items such as garden tools, clothing and furniture. It's hoped that, with enough volunteers coming forward, it will be possible to organise a regular repair shop in support of the Parish Council's Sustainability Policy.
- Following Cllr Chalkley's article in the Neighbourhood News regarding residents sponsoring a tree on or near their verge, six householders have expressed an interest with at least four able to proceed.
- The draft 2024/25 Budget and recommended precept were presented to the Finance Committee on 30 October. These will appear on the December agenda of Full Council.

COUNCILLOR AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Grant Applications

Jersey Farm Day Care Centre. After deliberation it was proposed by Cllr Jenny Roberts, seconded by Cllr Mary Ternouth and unanimously resolved to award the Jersey Farm Day Care Centre the sum of £2,000 towards hall hire charges.

Proposed Climate and Ecology Bill

Members discussed a request of support for the Climate and Ecology Bill, due its second reading in Parliament later this month, the details of which were emailed to Members on 18 October and again on 20 October. The request to support the Bill came from an organisation called Zero Hour which is lobbying the Government to pass the Bill.

A motion drafted by Zero Hour was circulated with the agenda and it was proposed by Cllrs Twidell and Lambert to show support for the motion as circulated. It was then resolved to support the motion and to:

1. Declare support for the Climate and Ecology Bill.
2. Inform local residents and inform the local press/media of this decision.
3. Write to our local MPs to inform them that this motion has been passed and urge them to support the Bill or thank them for already doing so.
4. Write to Zero Hour to express Sandridge Parish Council's support.

Public Access through Oaklands College during Building Works

A report on footpath closure through Oaklands College was produced and circulated by Cllr Hale.

After discussion it was unanimously resolved:

- To write to the College expressing concern at the closure of the Definitive Right of Way Sandridge 51, requesting that the route is reopened at the earliest possible opportunity.
- To write to the Rights of Way team at HCC noting the closure and requesting that the County Council opposes any extension to the temporary closure notice until such time as appropriate alternate routes have been established.
- To request a meeting with the College to discuss its plans for the campus and future public access across the site.

Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan Review

Cllr Hale talked Members through a report, circulated with the agenda. It was explained that some aspects of the five year plan needed reviewing and that three small groups of members could complete this task. It was unanimously resolved to carry out a review as above, Cllr Hale to contact individual Councillors regarding involvement.

Bus Services in the Parish

Cllr Roberts talked Members through a report circulated with the agenda on the low standard of bus services in the parish. Following discussion it was unanimously resolved to formally note the report as circulated.

Meetings of Committees:

Members noted this month's committee meetings with updates from the Chair of each:

- Community for Sustainability 17 October 2023
- Finance Committee 30 October 2023
- Planning Committee – see below

MATTERS OF NOTE ARISING SINCE THE CIRCULATION OF THE AGENDA

Cllr Hale informed the meeting that he was involved with the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership in his role as County Councillor. He undertook to circulate meeting notes to other Councillors.

PLANNING MATTERS

It was noted that the Planning Committee met on 25 September, 16 October and 6 November 2023.

The planning application commented on since the last Full Council meeting is: 5 Ardens Way AL4 9UW 5/2023/2022

SUGGESTIONS AND/OR MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION AT FUTURE MEETINGS: There was none.

Next meeting: 13 Dec 2023 7.30pm Marshalswick Community Centre

How to make sloe gin

There is an abundance of berries in the hedgerows this autumn: the black-thorns are covered in sloes, there is a profusion of scarlet rosehips, and finally the hollies are revealing their beautiful red berries, just in time for Christmas. Readers of a certain age will no doubt remember being dosed with rosehip syrup as a child, to ensure we all had enough Vitamin C in our diet. But what can you do with all those beautiful deep blue sloes? Well, now we have had the first frosts, it's time to make some sloe gin, which goes down a treat with a slice of fruit cake.

You will need a large quantity of sloes, a similar amount of pale golden demerara sugar, some cheap gin and an empty gin bottle or two. Don't bother to use your best gin as it will be wasted once flavoured with sloes!

If the skins of the sloes have not burst open in the frost, then either pop them in the freezer for 24 hours or so to encourage this to happen, or prick each sloe with a silver fork (silver-plated works equally as well). This is so as not to taint the fruit: if you are preparing a lot of sloes, use the freezer.

Then take your empty bottle(s) and fill each bottle one-third full of sloes. Top up to two-thirds full with the sugar and finally pour in enough gin to come up to the top. Seal tightly, invert the bottle and shake gently to disperse the contents, then stand it upright in a dark place. You will need to invert the bottle(s) regularly, say once a week, over the next couple of months to ensure the sugar is completely dissolved.

If you spotted the words, 'the next couple of months' above, the bad news is - it won't be ready for Christmas this year I'm afraid. However, after about three months, the flavours will have developed fully and this is the time to strain the beautiful pink liqueur through muslin into a jug and thence into a clean, empty gin bottle - and enjoy! The sloes were originally very bitter, but now they've been steeped in gin and sugar, you can coat them in melted chocolate, chill, then enjoy as an extra treat.



Preparing the sloes



Ros Adlard



A frosty day last winter *Photo by Peter Hyde*

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the sloes



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