



**THE PARISH OF ST LAWRENCE
WITH
ST SWITHUN-UPON-KINGSGATE
WINCHESTER**

PARISH REVIEW 2023



Front cover illustrations:

Top: Altar crosses in St Lawrence and St Swithun's churches

Below: (L) Monthly coffee mornings at St Lawrence

(R) Easter cross at St Swithun's

ST LAWRENCE WITH ST SWITHUN-UPON-KINGSGATE WINCHESTER

PARISH REVIEW 2023

This review complements, and is published with, the parish's formal "Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements" for submission to the Charity Commission, which contains administrative information, the Treasurer's financial review and the 2023 accounts and accompanying notes. Some of the material in this review is summarised in the Annual Report.

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Rector's Report

In terms of parish life, 2023 has thankfully felt like a more 'normal' year than any of the preceding three, and across the benefice there has been much activity, as you will see from this report.

There have been some moments of great celebration, not least for the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III in May. For many this was their first experience of a coronation, and our flower arrangers certainly rose to the occasion, with beautiful decorations in our churches for the special services we held to mark this historic event. Thank you to those who have organised wonderful social gatherings, including benefice lunches on Palm Sunday and Advent Sunday, a tea party for all the faithful volunteers in the parish, and the Benefice At Home event.

At St Lawrence we were pleased to host the annual Diocesan Mothers' Union Festival Service in June, welcoming Bishop David to preside and preach, and he returned for the Patronal Festival in August. This year that was a double celebration, as it included the Confirmation of Joanne Siu.

The Advent season had its own highlights, with Bishop David making his first ever official visit to St Swithun for a Holy Communion service, and the Diocesan Office choosing to hold their staff carol service there. At St Lawrence another 'first' was a special service with members of the community of adults with learning disabilities. Many thanks to Jane Jessop for organising "Dance and Sing the Christmas Story", which was a joyous re-telling of the birth of Jesus, led by members of Blue Apple, Winchester Go LD and Boaz, with plenty of mince pies to go round afterwards.

Attendance on Sundays and at festivals has generally held up or increased, and, with thanks largely to Beauman Chong, the services continue to be live-streamed for the benefit of those who cannot get to church. The privilege of being a city centre parish is that even when there is no formal worship or prayer happening, the churches provide a valuable and greatly appreciated space for personal prayer and contemplation, amidst the bustle of the city. The Visitor Books are testament to how this unseen ministry reaches people from far and wide, as well as residents of Winchester. St Lawrence also provides a good exhibition space, for example during Winchester Green Week, thanks to the hard work of Chris Pilgrim, our benefice Environmental Officer. Many thanks to those who make all this possible, by unlocking and locking the buildings each day.

It is a real joy to see vocations being discerned and to support their development. In March we said a final farewell to the Revd Eluned Phipps, who completed her curacy following her placement in North Stoneham, and we welcomed Jamie Cann on a short placement prior to ordination in June. Malcolm Bruce embarked on the new one-year Caleb course, aiming for ordination in 2024, and Nick Goulding was admitted to the year-long course for the Bishop's Permission to Preach (BPP). Revd. Amanda (Assistant Priest) and Meriel Walton (LLM) both reached the age at which their licences to the benefice came to a natural end, and I am most grateful to them both for continuing their ministry with the Bishop's "Permission To Officiate" (PTO). With Chris Pilgrim, Edmund and Jane Jessop, Jane Bessey and Clare Talks, the benefice is blessed to have a team of people to lead our worship, giving it richness as well as sustainability. My grateful thanks to all of them and to those who lead intercessions. There is always room for more, so if you a feeling a nudge to get involved in some way, please come and have a chat with me. The same is true for the many other roles and duties that are crucial to the smooth running of the benefice. Many thanks to everyone who already undertakes any of those, and particularly to our excellent churchwardens, PCC members and officers, and to Sara Gangai for all her work as Administrator for the benefice.

2024 got off to a joyous start, with a lunch to celebrate the ministry of Revd. Amanda, and the Welcome Service for Bishop Philip as the 98th Bishop of Winchester. It was an honour to take part in the ancient tradition of welcoming the new Diocesan bishop at St

Lawrence prior to the service at the Cathedral. I hope that we will continue to build on all the good things described in this report, as we seek to deepen our faith and serve our community in the name of Christ, who has called us and is with us, whatever 2024 has in store.

The Revd. Karen Kousseff



Chloë McKenzie and Joel Found were married at St Lawrence



Hector and Montgomery Morris were baptised at St Swithun's



Joanne Siu was confirmed by Bishop David at St Lawrence



We celebrated Revd Amanda Goulding's many years of service to the parish at a lunch in St Lawrence Parish Room



Flower arrangements for King Charles' Coronation

Children & Families Ministry

This ministry has been reshaped during 2023, partly because it has not been possible to replace our Children & Families Worker, who left at the end of 2022, but also because of having fewer volunteers. Some have understandably stepped down after many years' faithful involvement, and I am most grateful to them for all their time and commitment for so long. If you feel a calling to this ministry in any way, from serving drinks to leading activities, please get in touch with me. Messy Church in particular cannot take place without a team of volunteers, so is now 'on pause', but we still have a lot of contact with families, through our Little Wrighlers toddler group and our relationship with St Bede Church of England Primary School.

Messy Church was put on for Good Friday and was attended by several families, including some from Little Wrighlers. We hoped to put on a summer picnic in the churchyard on 15th July, but the weather was too wet to be outside, so at the last minute it turned into an indoor Messy Church on the theme of St Swithun! It was after this that the reality had to be faced of having too few volunteers and an age group of children who are really too young for the Messy Church format, so it is time to refocus our ministry accordingly.



Little Wrighlers is therefore a priority: it is proving a great way to build relationships with new families and is a very relaxed and happy gathering, every Wednesday in term time, even resulting in a number of baptisms. The adults really enjoy the time for a chat and having a cup of tea made for them, and the children love all the toys. We all greatly enjoyed a Christmas party.

Clare Talks and I continue to be Foundation Governors at St Bede School, and I have enjoyed many visits to the school during the year, whether to talk about aspects of faith or Church practice, to attend performances and Collective Worship, or simply to serve the school by listening to children read. It is always a joy to host the children in St Bartholomew's Church, whether it's a year group visit or the annual service for the Year 6 children who are about to move on to secondary education. In December the upper juniors invited their parents and carers to the church to watch their performances of the nativity story. Many thanks to Cathy Seago who organised an excellent session in Hyde Parish Hall in August, for children who were about to start school in the Reception year. It gave them and their parents a great chance to get to know each other so that there would be familiar faces on the first day of term.

It was lovely to have so many families taking part in Good Friday activities, the Advent Posada and Crib services in both parishes on Christmas Eve, and we look forward to continuing to build relationships in 2024.

The Revd. Karen Kousseff

Churchwardens' Report

We are so blessed with an excellent ministry team headed by Karen. The current service pattern is working very well. Since January our congregation number has been on the up. It has been as high as 75. After the pandemic, the people dialling in on Zoom has been between 8-18 for St Lawrence and 4-12 for St Swithun in the evening. We know how important it is for those who are not able to attend church in person. As we write we are working on upgrading the livestreaming. More later in this report.

Many have commented on the fresh coffee and biscuits that we serve. They make a big difference to our welcoming on Sundays.

The 1st Friday coffee morning at St Lawrence continues to thrive. On a very cold and wet March Friday, we served over 45 cups of coffee and endless supplies of biscuits. Quite an important part of our monthly social events.

Keeping our two churches open during the week brings along some concerns. The occasional shoplifters, drunks, drug addicts using St Lawrence are far outnumbered by the number of people coming in to use the church for prayers. The prayer cards are always well used at both of our churches. As well as personal prayers there are always prayers for other national and global issues. The prayer board at St Lawrence in particular is always full. The Faith cards in the St Lawrence porch are always in demand too.

We are working on upgrading our 30+ years old sound system; it has served us well but there is a danger that if any goes, there will be no way of repairing it. We are using the opportunity of having a scaffolding tower to replace our CCTV cameras as well. The present one has a few blind spots and can't be accessed remotely. We shall be running an appeal to ask parishioners to help to fund this project. If you would like to know more about it, please speak to us.

Thank you to the efficient stewards, assistant churchwardens, lesson readers, intercessors, eucharistic assistants, sacristans, organists and pianists, flower ladies, coffee makers, social committee members. Without them we would not be able to function.

We shall be hosting another Volunteers' Thank You afternoon tea in the summer. An occasion that we are all looking forward to very much.

Beauman Chong and John Stanning

Fabric Report

St Lawrence Church

Change of Vestry Landlord

The adjacent shop, previously owned by St John's Winchester Charity, has been sold to Bakhaty Property Limited, a developer who is planning a major refurbishment. The parish leases the basement of part of the shop as our Vestry.

As a condition of the sale, a new fire protection system has been installed in the adjacent building and extended through to the church. The cost of this fire alarm has been borne by St John's out of the proceeds of their sale, but the parish will be liable for the ongoing annual maintenance costs of servicing our part of the system.

A new fire door was required at the top of the Vestry stairs, and it is intended to add the engraved glass panel of St Lawrence from the old door onto the viewing panel.

Audio Visual & Sound System

It has been agreed to install a new PA / Sound System, as the current sound system is more than 30 years old and needs upgrading to take advantage of modern technology. The microphones are becoming obsolete, as spare parts are no longer available and need replacing.

Since the Covid lockdown the churchwardens have set up a Zoom service improvising with a smartphone. Although the quality of sound can be unreliable, it is recognised that this service is valued by those unable to get to church, or who may be away and wish to link into our worship.

Whitwam's have been commissioned to install a modern AV and sound system with the facility to record and/or broadcast via the internet any service, concert or event at St Lawrence's. Work is in progress to install an internet connection provided by Virgin Media.

LED Lights

The lighting system was installed some 14 years ago utilising the type of lamps which were in common use at that time. Since then the technology of light-emitting diode (LED) lamps for large public spaces has become widely available at an economically viable cost. It will be much more efficient to convert the existing fittings to LED lamps, which should save up to an estimated 80% of our electricity consumption on lighting; particularly relevant as we maintain our policy of keeping the church open each day as part of our mission to visitors. The longevity of LED lamps is many times better than the existing bulbs, so replacing the new LED lamps should only be necessary after 30,000 hours of use.

A mobile scaffold tower will be used when the new AV and sound system are installed, so it has been decided to take advantage of the same tower to change all the lights to LED luminaries.

All this work is currently scheduled to be done during the Spring of 2024.

General Repairs

St Lawrence is generally in good condition and most of the maintenance items listed in the last Quinquennial Report have been addressed.

The Gas Boiler has been serviced each year.

There are some hairline cracks in the lead roof of the tower, which are due to be repaired this summer.

The roof light in the NW corner of the church leaks occasionally during heavy rain when the wind is in a particular direction, and further investigations are planned to decide if it is better to replace the skylight or to take it out and roof over.

We continue to be plagued by pigeons who shelter from the Cathedral peregrines in this corner of the Square as falcons won't hunt in restricted spaces. Our noble churchwarden hoses down the pavement before each event in the church to prevent bird droppings being walked into the church, but we continue to lobby the City Council to adopt a more effective pest control policy. In support of the churchwarden, the Fabric Officer recommends Pigeon Pie!

Quinquennial due in December 2024

At the end of this year, Louise Salman from St Ann's Gate Architects of Salisbury is scheduled to prepare her first quinquennial report since being appointed some 18 months ago.

St Swithun-upon-Kingsgate

Generally, St Swithun's is in good condition.

The gas boiler has been serviced each year, and a rather obsolete control system has been replaced with a much simpler user-friendly system.

A new Quinquennial is also due in December 2024.

Damp Penetrating South Wall

From time to time the south wall of the church is damp to touch. It has been difficult to be sure of the cause of this, which could be

- a) a defect in the dormer windows;
- b) a failure of the gutter below the stone parapet;
- c) excessive condensation.

We are reluctant to commit to expensive repairs before being reasonably sure that we have identified the problem. Once the weather improves we plan some exploratory investigations opening up the roof to try to identify the problem.

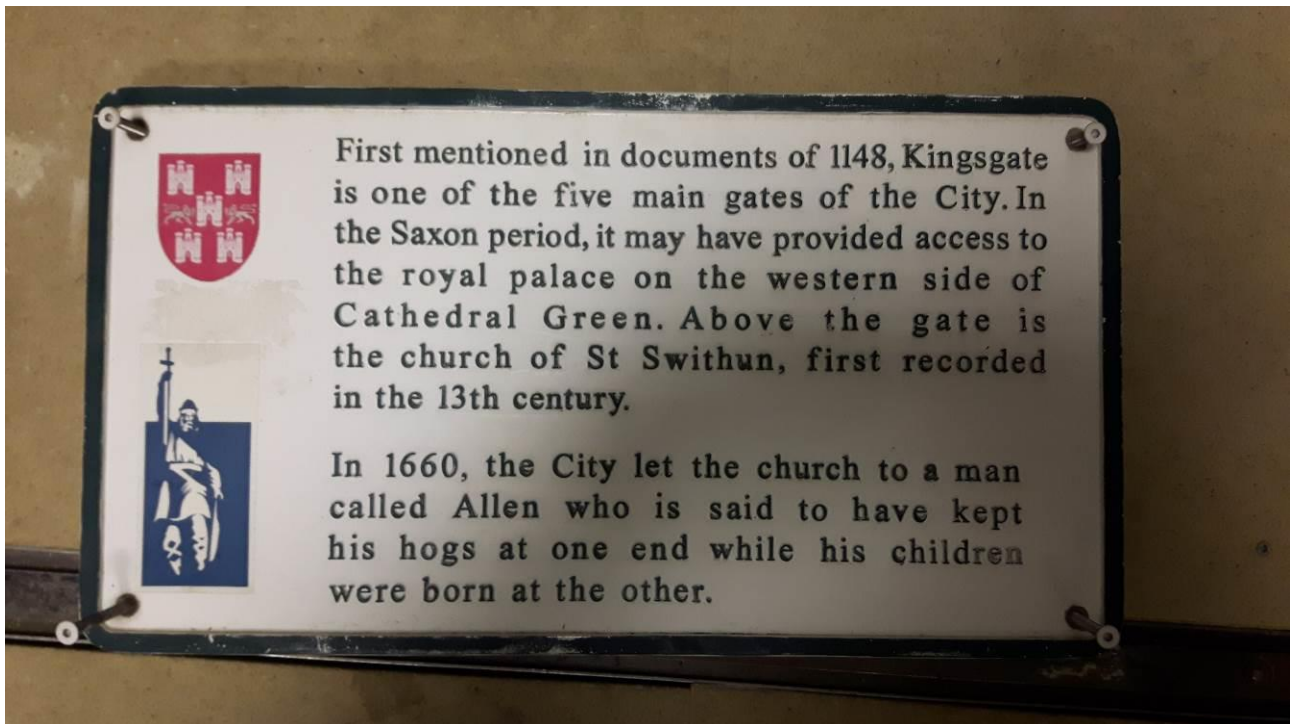
Condition of the Masonry of Kingsgate

The Parish owns the church of St Swithun's which is listed Grade I Listed, but it sits over the Kingsgate Arch which is owned by Winchester City Council. The Church is effectively dependent on the stone arch for its structural stability.

For over 10 years we have been reminding the City Council that the stones in the Kingsgate arch need urgent repair, but in these times of local government austerity, they have yet to take any satisfactory action. Considering that Kingsgate is a scheduled ancient monument this is highly regrettable. We should continue to be vigilant to put pressure on the Council to undertake a comprehensive refurbishment of the masonry of Kingsgate.

Historic Sign

Some years ago Winchester City Council removed the sign, which we have been asking to be reinstated as it records an important part of the history of The Kingsgate. WCC have it in store at their Bar End archives.



The Parish Room

During the summer of 2023 the car park was resurfaced with improved drainage.

The paving to the main entrance was also relaid to avoid puddling.

Some defective lights were repaired at the south end of the hall.

The gas boiler which is serviced each year has developed a fault which, at the time of writing, should be repaired under warranty.

A new carpet was laid and tables acquired from St Bart's to replace those which were becoming too large to handle comfortably. We are grateful to our sister parish for these.

Thanks to our 2 Churchwardens

Finally, I could not conclude this report without acknowledging the incredible dedication of John Stanning and Beauman Chong who work tirelessly to keep the parish running smoothly. Much of what they do is unseen by most parishioners, and I could not fulfil my role as Fabric Officer without their support.

Chris Higgins

Safeguarding

Safeguarding continues to take place within the Parish by the Ministry Team, the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO), volunteers, the Winchester Diocese Safeguarding Team and, at a national level, by the Church of England's National Safeguarding Team. Within our Parish, DBS (disclosure and barring service) certificates are applied for and renewed when necessary, together with on-line training as required for a particular role. To keep up-to-date some of the training has to be renewed or refreshed on a regular basis. I also meet with the PSO of St Bartholomew's Parish, Rosie Duffy, and we have written joint articles for the Parish magazine.

I have attended meetings of the PCC and pastoral visitors to update them on safeguarding details. During the year a small number of parishioners identified concerns that were able to be resolved without needing to be referred as safeguarding matters.

St Lawrence is and continues to be an opening, welcoming Church in the City Centre and the Safeguarding Team at the Diocese of is always available for discussion and guidance. As more Churches have been open offering warm spaces, or hot food, during the winter months, the Diocese and those involved at our Churches are aware that safeguarding extends beyond the weekly services or members of the congregation attending them.

Kathryn Whelan – PSO St Lawrence with St Swithun-upon-Kingsgate

Pastoral Visitors' Report

Pastoral visits across the Benefice continue to support those who welcome them, and especially those who are no longer able to get to church. Home Communion is available from both the Ministry Team and Pastoral Visitors and we are glad to be able to include them in this way in our church community.

We have seven Pastoral Visitors plus three members of the Ministry Team, who are visiting more than thirty members of the Benefice. We meet regularly under the guidance of Liz Baron and the Revd. Amanda Goulding to support one another, share good practice, and occasionally listen to experts who might come to speak to us on a special topic. Three members of our team have retired this year but they continue to visit and keep in contact with members of the church community, but now as friends.

In addition to the pastoral visiting happening within the Benefice, we currently also provide support to the St John's *Hand in Hand* scheme, which works alongside GP practices to fulfil their requests for what is known as 'Social Prescribing': pastoral visiting to those living within a parish, fulfilled by volunteers from that parish. At present we have just one of our Pastoral Visitors visiting one person living within one of our parishes.

We are all involved in regular safeguarding training and hold current DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) certificates. We carry out visits and make contact in accordance with those guidelines. Some Pastoral Visits have been made at home and some occur over tea or coffee in a mutually agreed public place. A lot of contact is made by phone calls. We are blessed by the dedication of our Pastoral Visitors who clearly find fulfilment in this role, and the feedback we receive from these visits and phone calls is very positive.

Rosie Duffy and Kathryn Whelan, Safeguarding Officers for the two parishes, have been immensely helpful in guiding us in gaining access to the statutory training required by the National Church, through the Diocese, and ensuring our training and DBS status is kept up to date.

We are often alerted to pastoral need by other parishioners, so if you know of anyone who would appreciate contact from a Pastoral Visitor, please leave a message with Sara in the office, and she will contact us.

Liz Baron – Facilitator for Pastoral Visitors for the Benefice

Julian group

The Julian group has continued to meet on a Tuesday afternoon, regularly throughout the year. Always virtually, and where possible in person too. We take it in turns to choose a reflection and I email it to the group on a Sunday. We also have a WhatsApp group on which we can share afterwards if we want to. We are always open to new members so anyone interested do contact me.

Sue Tisdall

Benefice prayer group

The Benefice prayer group has been meeting regularly on the third Monday throughout the year. We usually meet at one of our houses in Hyde. There are 6 of us: 3 from St Lawrence and 3 from St Bart's. Very democratic! We take it in turns to lead the prayers, and there are times of quiet and stillness, when those who wish can add their own. We pray for our churches, the diocese, the wider world and offer prayers for those who we know are in particular need at the time. We always end by linking hands and saying the Grace together. We have now been meeting for some years and would always welcome new members.

Sue Tisdall

Environment Officer's Report

The Church of England expresses its mission in what it calls "The Five Marks of Mission" and the 5th Mark is 'the Care of Creation'. Caring for Creation can take many forms and it can involve a group of people or by individuals. Across the benefice we demonstrate our commitment to this in different ways.

During June there was a 'Count on Nature' afternoon in St Bartholomew's churchyard, a national initiative of the charity 'Love Your Burial Ground'. With the help of the iNaturalist app, local knowledge and some gardening books, we managed to spot many different varieties of plants, from the tiny Speedwell to the huge yew tree. We contributed 127 plant observations to the national database, covering 86 species.

The summer was spent encouraging parishioners to contribute to this year's Winchester Green Week theme of Growing Greener Together. The parish rose magnificently to the occasion with an amazing wall to wall display, held in St Lawrence Church from 23 September - 3 October 2023. Parishioners, photographically or otherwise, demonstrated how they, individually or as a household were growing greener within their lifestyle. From electric cars to wild gardening, to community commitment (litter picking), it was all demonstrated in the display. We had many visitors!

We were delighted, at our Morning Worship service on 24 September, to be joined by Jo Crocker, Chair of Winchester Green Week and Executive Director of WinACC (Winchester Action on the Climate Crisis). Her talk was informative, inspiring, and importantly, very hopeful!

Our fourth Recycle Sunday event took place on 28th January 2024 in St Lawrence Church, after the morning service. There were two goals: (1) Recycling and (2) Donating to an agreed charity. Parishioners were encouraged to bring any unwanted/unused gifts to the church. This year's chosen charity was The Winchester Hospice. A magnificent (pre-gift aid) £1804 was raised and handed over to a delighted Winchester Hospice. Gifts not taken up were given to the Mountbatten Hospice Charity Shop, to maintain the hospice thread.

Most months an environmental themed article or reflection has been put in our United Benefice Magazine.

Christine Pilgrim

Overseas Group

The Parish of Saint Lawrence and Saint Swithun has for many years taken a keen interest in overseas mission and encouraged prayer and support. The Overseas group often met and was particularly active some years ago when we were introduced by parishioners who had visited and/or worked at Kisiizi Hospital, a Christian Hospital originally founded by CMS in our link diocese of North Kigezi in Uganda.

Members of the Parish also started to sponsor orphans at a school not far from the hospital called Ikona Hillside School and continue to do so. The parish supported nurse training, other expenditure at the hospital and a house for teachers.

Now the child sponsorship is through Kisiizi Partners, a charity based in Reading and occasionally includes children at different schools in North Kigezi. New sponsors are always needed. Do please contact me if you would like to sponsor a child

Each year in the autumn Kisiizi Partners hold an annual day near Reading which I have attended for the past two years (since Covid), which has been reported in our Parish Magazine and online. A collection is also held annually during Advent beginning at the Advent Sunday lunch (kindly prepared by the social committee). The recent collection for 2023 raised £1,775.50 before gift aid.

The Overseas Group also encouraged links with the Church of the province of Myanmar which the parish continues to support annually. The parish contributed to the training in England of a student from Myanmar who returned to work at home in ministry.

We would really welcome help from someone gifted online to promote our links with Myanmar.

Meriel Walton

Home Groups

The Benefice holds regular home groups throughout the year for Bible study, prayer and fellowship. During 2023 we had home groups in Lent and Advent and have commenced a new series of meetings during Lent 2024.

In Lent 2023 we did a course on the Psalms designed by the Scottish Bible Society which was much appreciated. This brought members much closer to understanding the Psalms in the context of the time they were written in, as well as their application in present times. This course had 27 participants meeting in 4 groups.

Our Advent course was called 'Journeying through Advent', using a booklet, produced by the Bible Reading Fellowship, of daily Bible readings and group study material. This course had 13 participants meeting in 2 groups.

We have commenced a Lent course called 'Shapes for Living' developed by the Diocese of Gloucester with 26 participants meeting in 4 groups.

We are exploring the best time to offer a course in the second half of the year.

Tom Nell

Social Events

After a quiet year last year, the parish social events have been getting back to normal.

There were two simple events in Lent; a quiet and solemn time when it's still good to have company.

We welcomed about 45 people to the Palm Sunday lunch. Plenty of good soup and a collection for Christian Aid.

On Good Friday there were warm hot cross buns, with or without home made jam or marmalade.

The Thank You tea party in September, organised by Chris Pilgrim, for parish volunteers was a chance to spoil people a little, with sandwiches and cakes and a very well deserved thank you speech for all.

The Advent lunch might have mirrored the Palm Sunday lunch, but people kept arriving. It was lovely. There were about 60 and it made for a really good atmosphere. There wasn't much soup left over.

These are our regular events. But this year the team helped put on a special lunch to say Thank You to Amanda. It was such a lovely event and now we know that we can also produce something a bit different.



There are about twelve people who put on these events, joining in as their time is available. They are a wonderful and generous team - thank you - and we welcome anyone who would like to help.

Judith Chong

Parish Room Committee

Lettings have picked up this year as we get back on track after the Covid lockdowns.

A number of improvements have been made, such as the new carpet, attention to the curtains, and the acquisition of some crockery and cutlery from St Bartholomew's hall when it was sold. They also gave us some lighter-weight tables to replace the heavy square ones.

The tarmac at the front and in the carpark was renewed, and white lines painted to mark spaces - users have been very complimentary about all the changes.

We had some great gatherings there - notably the Advent lunch and a very ambitious lunch for 70, to celebrate Amanda's renewal of her commitment to the Benefice.

Thank you to Sara Gangai and Judith Chong for their invaluable help on the committee.

Louise Kerr

Historic Churches Ride and Stride

Due to the increasing age of our congregations, we found it impossible to raise a team to ride in 2023. However, some intrepid individuals stepped up and took on the challenge: Caroline St Leger-Davey, Richard Stead and Tom and Ros Nell.

Our thanks are due to all of them, their sponsors and everyone who stewarded in both churches on the day. The total raised was nearly £1,000 - and that's before adding Gift Aid.

Clare Kilroy and Louise Kerr

Space in the City

This year I was astounded to note that it is some thirty years since the inception of *Space in the City* talks, and twenty years since I became involved. Canon David Scott had been appointed as Rector of St Lawrence with St Swithun, and Warden of Spirituality for the Diocese. There was a natural connection between his focus and that of various enthusiastic members of the parish including the Reader (LLM) Dr Margaret Marshall and parishioner Graham Guest's passion for 'Kingdom Living' brought to the work place: melded together the ideas gave birth to *Space in the City*.

Originally, these lunch time talks were intended to be available for anyone working in town or coming in for shopping or appointments; those in the local offices could take time out at 12.30 for a half hour talk and a sandwich before going back to work. These days few people take a 'lunch hour' and are more likely to eat at their desk or be working from home, but we still have an enthusiastic following and adding Zoom recordings to the website has meant more access for all.

The first series to be recorded and available in the archive was in the autumn of 1995: *Yes to God's Earth* and others followed focussing on the arts and spirituality, the environment, and theological themes presented by lively and interesting speakers. Look at the archive and see the range and expertise! www.spaceinthecity.org.uk

At its height, *Space in the City* offered three series of talks each year and had need of the larger capacity of the United Church to accommodate the audiences. Nowadays, in a post-Covid world, we avoid the winter months, and have one series a year, in late spring, and still attract interest and enthusiasm.

In Spring 2023 we enjoyed four talks on *Sacred Spaces* where four speakers showed us the ways that the arts enhance the sacred in a space. Andreas Andreopoulos came back to speak about Icons, bringing dozens of slides for us to look at; I followed with my own illustrated talk on some amazing examples of beautiful modern church architecture; Thomas Denny, the renowned stained-glass artist, brought slides of his own beautiful work in a variety of churches and talked about the way they are created, and we ended with the return of Bishop Christopher Herbert talking about works of art entitled *Noli Me Tangere* and the Resurrection in Art.

Coming up in April/May 2024 we hope for a full series of talks called *Spiritual*, looking at spiritual traditions that have shaped lives and religious practice over the centuries and how they still influence our flourishing today, with some excellent speakers lined up.

I am grateful for the help and encouragement of the church wardens at St Lawrence and St Swithun parish, and to all the parishioners for their practical and moral support; as always, I have much gratitude for the committee of Denis and Jeannette Archdeacon, and Nigel Close, our treasurer.

The Revd. Amanda Goulding

The Winchester Beacon

This is a local charity we support financially but also by providing a team of 18 volunteers who provide at least one meal to feed 12 in the year which means that in some months we are providing a second meal. 2022-2023 has been a year of growth for the Winchester Beacon. They have accommodated in their main Jewry Street residence (10 bedrooms) plus 3 off-site residences (totalling 12 bedrooms) 60-80 homeless people who stay for an average of 4 months, whereas in 2021 they accommodated only 33 residents. The income has been £737,880 consisting of £422,953 in donations, £174,580 in LA grants and £140,447 in Housing Benefit etc. Their total expenditure was £461,399 with staff costs amounting to £231,723, running costs £119,006 and resident support and wellbeing £110,670. This meant they were left with a surplus of £276,581 which has been used in much-needed refurbishment of its properties and the balance has enabled them to realise plans to increase bed capacity off site.

They are open 365 days of the year, all day and night. The service provided helps their residents to plan a path forward and to find more permanent accommodation which matches their needs. They offer one to one advocacy, help with budgeting and finances, claiming benefits, practical aid with food and nutrition, guidance for anyone with substance misuse problems, counselling and psychotherapy, and a wide range of training and recreational activities.

According to figures from Crisis, it's estimated there were 240,000 homeless in the UK in 2022 (an increase of 21,000 compared to 2021), and there is an acute shortage of housing support for those experiencing homelessness in Hampshire. The statistics are grim: 1 in 3 homeless have attempted suicide and 7 out of 10 have mental health problems. The issue is compounded by a shortage of affordable housing locally. The average waiting time for a one-bed council property in Winchester (for someone who is not regarded as a priority) is 4 years and 4 months, And then there is the cost of rent, especially in the private sector.

This is a charity doing tremendous work and we need to continue to do all in our power to support them. If you want to find out more about them, visit www.winchesterbeacon.org.uk

Ros Nell

Deanery Synod

At its March meeting the Deanery Synod agreed to submit to Diocesan Synod a proposal for (in summary) the increase of clergy rest periods from 24 hours in any one week to 36 hours in any one week. This proposal was duly presented at the Diocesan Synod and passed with a very strong majority. The next step for it was to go to the Archbishop's Council who would then present it to the General Synod. It is now (29.2.24) on the GS agenda.

There was a discussion on how to use lay ministries across the Deanery, specifically Bishop's Commission for Mission, Bishop's Permission to Preach and Licensed Lay Ministers. The aim was to create a register of those who are willing to go to other parishes. It was recognised that they cannot, of course, provide Eucharistic cover, but they could potentially stand in for services of the word and preaching. (No further news on this.)

At our meeting in October we heard a summary of the work we had done in early 2023 on exploration evenings with emphasis on the areas that had most appeal to members of our Deanery:

Youth & Children
Inter/Intra Deanery Support
Volunteers / BCM / LLMs
Minority Groups
Services.

A paper was circulated about Eli Gent offering her time free of charge to support Deanery Benefices. Eli is a Licensed Lay Worker who acts as a support worker for children, youths and families for Benefices in the Winchester Deanery. She has had an initial conversation with the Rector about how to reshape our Children & Families ministry, based at St Bartholomew's.

We shared in small groups some of the successful practices in various parishes. Highlights were then shared in a plenary session. It is becoming evident that we will have to involve an ever-greater number of lay members to support our internal ministry and activities as well any outreach ministry.

Many churches in our Deanery including our own PCC have helped to fund the training of 17 Lay Ministry Trainees (of a total 50 such trainees) in Murabura, Uganda. We heard a progress report from Brian Wakelin who had visited the area and met with the trainees. Our support was very positively received and was being put to very good effect.

During the meeting we agreed to hold an Ideas Fayre in the spring of 2024 when there will be an opportunity for PCC's, Parishes, and Benefices to show what is new and what is going well in their area and for all visitors to see the wide range of positive developments.

A further Deanery meeting was held on Zoom in February 2024 in which more detailed planning for the Ideas Fayre was discussed and firmed up. This will take place in St Pauls' Church on Saturday 13 April 2024.

In this meeting we also heard that Deanery parishes had been very successful in contributing to the Common Mission Fund. It was also confirmed that there was unlikely to be a major increase in the size of contributions required for this coming year.

Tom Nell

Charitable Giving

The charitable giving from St Lawrence and St Swithun in 2023 took four forms:

- a) Donations to charitable organisations listed below. These are suggested by members of the Churches and reflect the areas in which people are involved or interested in addition to church. Appreciation has been sent by e-mail or letter from the beneficiaries. They express the need for such contributions to enable them to carry out their work.

	£
Emmaus	615
Friends of the Family	615
Winchester Go LD	615
SWVG	615
Trinity Winchester	615
Basics Bank	615
Winchester Beacon (formerly Night Shelter)	615
Winchester Hospice	615
Winchester Samaritans	615
Young Carers	615
Youth Counselling	615
CMS	580
USPG-Church of the Province of Myanmar	580
St John of Jerusalem	680
Tear Fund - Middle East work	680
Christian Aid - Middle East work	580
	9,865

- b) Specific grants approved by the PCC specified in the accounts.

	£
St Bartholomew's Giving for Living Appeal	5,000
Winchester City Centre Chaplaincy	1,800
Winchester Street Pastors	800
DEC - Turkey-Syria Earthquake Appeal	500
	8,100

- c) Collections or donations for appeals or on-going projects.

	£
St Lawrence Sound System	625
Parish Quinquennial projects	585
Little Wrigglers and Messy Church	231
	1,441

- d) Collections and donations made during the year on behalf of charities and paid directly to those charities not through the PCC bank account. The amounts quoted are pre any Gift Aid claimed by the charity.

	£
Harvest - Basics Bank	2,800
Kisiizi Orphans - Ikona Hillside School	1,776
Christian Aid Week Collections *	1,359
DEC Turkey-Syria Earthquake Appeal	500
	6,435

* collection by the Benefice not just the Parish

Bethany Milward



5th Winchester City Brownies



Most meetings during the Spring term were themed: Chinese New Year - Year of the Rabbit (activities using chopstick, making a rabbit from hearts); Spring - planted bulbs, plant care, designing a dream garden, decorating a cupcake to look like a sheep, sowing cress seeds. The Brownies also celebrated Pancake Day by decorating a mask, having a pancake tossing relay race and eating ring doughnuts tied on a string. Cards and tissue paper flowers were made by the Brownies to give to their mums for Mother's Day. Easter was celebrated by making shredded wheat nests with mini eggs and making a card. The highlight of the term was a Superhero Adventure themed Pack Holiday at Sparsholt Memorial Hall.

Take Action was the overarching theme for the Summer Term. The Brownies worked for/gained the Speaking Out interest badge, Influence Level 2 Skills Builder and took part in related Unit Meeting Activities (All Creatures Great and Small, Local Munch). Also, during the term, the Brownies celebrated the King's Coronation and took part in Girlguiding Winchester Division's Town Trail. The last meeting of the term was a celebration to mark one of the Brownies gaining her Gold Award.



During the Autumn Term the Brownies had lots of fun working on the PawPrint Family Games Challenge. Activities included: making a Jigsaw Puzzle and Ball in a Cup game, playing classic games ie Snakes & Ladders and Dominos, transferring peas from a bowl to a plate by sucking them up using a straw. The Brownies also celebrated Roald Dahl Day, World Animal Day, Recycle Week and Nursery Rhyme Week.

The Pack now meets at St Lawrence Parish Room on a Monday evening during term time and welcomes new members - for further information email 5thwinchestercitybrownies@gmail.com

3rd Winchester City Guides

Weekly meeting during the Spring term saw the Guides working on/gaining a Skills Builder, taking part in related Unit Meeting Activities, celebrating Chinese New Year (Year of the Rabbit), celebrating World Thinking and celebrating Easter. To encourage the Guides to work on their own to gain Interest Badges a "Kick Start" evening was held where the Guides completed one clause from four badges (Fixing, Investigation, Saver and Upcycling).



The light evenings during the Summer Term saw the Guides taking a walk along the River Itchen, walking from Winchester Science Centre & Planetarium to St Giles Hill, walking from St Lawrence Parish Room up the River Itchen through the Winnall Nature Reserve ending at North Walls Park and cooking in the Hall's car park. The Guides also enjoyed doing crafts, having a recycling fashion show, a beach themed evening and taking part in Girlguiding Winchester Division's Town Trail. One Saturday in July five of the Guides (accompanied by two of the Unit's Leaders) travelled to Foxlease to take part in the Girlguiding Hampshire West's Food Festival - food related challenges were completed to gain points.

Autumn Term weekly meetings saw the Guides working on a Skills Builder and taking part in a variety of themed activities - Animals, Five Senses, Autumn, Remembrance Day and Christmas. The term ended with a Christmas Party.



The Unit welcomes new members - for further information email 3rdwincityguides@gmail.com

Sarah Wild