

# St Leonard's Church, Swithland



Report for the Annual Meeting  
30<sup>th</sup> April 2023

St Leonard's Church, Swithland  
PCC Annual Report

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## **Chairman's Introduction to the report**

Welcome to the St. Leonard's Church PCC Annual Report for 2022.

It has certainly been a year to remember and a read through this report will remind you of many of the highlights and challenges we have faced as a local Church, as a Diocese, as a nation and indeed even globally.

Early in the year we were shocked with the Russian invasion of Ukraine and our hopes of a short war were not to be as the conflict is still raging. In our churches, we set up a 'Pray for Ukraine' board which remains to this day and here at the Vicarage, we welcomed our Ukrainian guests after they fled from their war-damaged home. The psalmist writes, 'Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?' Ps 2.1

2022 also saw the end of Covid regulations and we felt it was time to reintroduce the common cup at our Communion services which we did just before Easter. At the last supper, '[Jesus] took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to [his disciples], and they all drank from it.' Mk 14.23

In the Summer, church members joined with the village community in marking the extraordinary milestone of the Queen's platinum jubilee. The simple act of being a disciple in the midst of our community is such a good witness to the village and will continue to bear fruit amongst our neighbours. Jesus said, 'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.' Mt 5.16. By letting ourselves be seen in our community, others become attracted to Christ and come to know his love.

On 8 September 2022, we learned of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Coming so soon after her platinum jubilee, the nation united in grief and we marked her death in our Churches with prayers and services and books of condolence. Our earthly, temporal monarchy has passed from Queen to King in much the same way as it always has; but we have an eternal King, a servant King who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Let us Continue to give him thanks for all he has done for us this last year and for all that he will continue to do as he blesses us for all that is to come.

So, we have indeed had a full year that included all the usual church activities, an adjustment on the Sunday services we offer bringing back some of the 8am services, and one or two new initiatives (such as the Jazz carols). I am personally extremely grateful to all who assist with the leading of worship, preaching and serving in any capacity at St Leonard's. Thank you all.

Do enjoy reading through the various reports that follow. I commend them to you.

God bless you all, Colin Resch

## **Electoral Roll Report 30/04/2023**

The Church Electoral Roll has been reviewed this year in keeping with the requirements of the Church Representation Rules.

There are 67 members on the roll.

A.R.Wright Electoral Roll Officer 08/03/2023

### **The Parochial Church Council of St Leonard's Church Swithland Financial Review - 2022 Account**

We are fortunate to still have a good core of regular givers and we have again met all our commitments. Our congregation numbers have increased marginally during the past year but still not to previous levels and this is a worrying trend for the future.

#### RECEIPTS

Total receipts on the General Fund were £50078 (an increase of £6317 over 2021) of which £27779 was unrestricted planned giving and receipts from collections at services amounted to £3717. Gift Aid recovered totalled £7772. Marriage and Burial fees income was £6509 and investment income for the year totalled £893.

Collections at services are up on the 2021 figure (£2432) but nothing like receipts enjoyed prior to the pandemic. Marriage and burial fees were good compared to 2021 (£5038) when there were fewer weddings. Our Gift aid claim was over £700 more than the previous year.

The Friday Club parents continue to be very generous and are our biggest users of the hands-free terminal for donations.

We now have two restricted funds one being the Bell Restoration Fund which at the year-end stood at £3088 after having the bell rope guides installed earlier last year and I believe there is one further item of expenditure and the fund can be wound up. The new restricted fund is the Gas Meter Replacement fund which following our appeal attracted a number of generous donations and together with the proceeds from the Jazz Concert in September and the Ride and Stride income now stands at £2962.

## EXPENDITURE

Total expenditure on the General Fund amounted to £54415 (an increase of £5734 over 2021). Our Parish Contribution for the year was £34000. General Church running expenses were £13318 and this included insurance premium of £2758 with utility bills totalling £4491. The net result for the year on the General Fund was a deficit of £4337.

Expenditure on the various Designated accounts totalled £14974 the majority of which (£13335) was spent on the refurbishment of the kitchen and toilet areas. Our Mission Giving and donations totalled £1571 and included our regular donations of £250 each to CMS fund and Train a Priest. We also gave £100 to Christian Aid from the Lammas Service collection, £800 to The Childrens' Society from collections at the Bluebell Service and the Jazz Carol service. Smaller donations were made to Macmillan Cancer Support, World Vision, The British Legion Poppy Appeal, Launde Abbey and Friends of Leicester Cathedral.

Overall our total funds have diminished by a total of £17817 over the course of 2022 but much of this was for the kitchen and we had already earmarked the legacy from Ian Hammond for this purpose. Our combined monetary assets totalled £108904 at the year end. Please see the Financial Statements.

## Reserves Policy

It is the PCC Policy to try to maintain a balance of unrestricted funds in the General Fund which equates to at least 6 months and if possible 12 months of unrestricted expenditure. This would be a maximum of £50000 and although currently our reserves are in excess of this figure the PCC are mindful that we continue to lose regular givers, we have a large commitment in our Parish Gift, balances are diminishing year on year and collections at services are unlikely to improve.

Val Capewell ChurchTreasurer

# Balance Sheet

St Leonards PCC, Swithland

Statements of Assets and Liabilities as at 31st December 2022

## MONETARY ASSETS

	General	Designated	Restricted	Total 2022	2021
<b>General Funds</b>					
General Funds	72,251			72,251	76,588
	<hr/>			<hr/>	
	72,251			72,251	76,588
<b>Designated Funds</b>					
Fabric Fund		18,151		18,151	32,002
Friday Club		3,322		3,322	2,882
Mission & Outreach		751		751	1,033
Organ Fund		4,140		4,140	4,085
Tower Fund		4,240		4,240	4,184
		<hr/>		<hr/>	
		30,603		30,603	44,186
<b>Restricted Funds</b>					
Bells Restoration			3,088	3,088	5,946
Gas Meter replacement			2,962	2,962	
			<hr/>	<hr/>	
			6,049	6,049	5,946
Total Cash in Hand at end of Year	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	72,251	30,603	6,049	108,904	126,720

## Debtors

## Liabilities

Mens Club Carol Singing Chq #103653				-	30
Accountancy Fee	204			204	195
	<hr/>			<hr/>	
	204			204	225

**St Leonards PCC, Swithland**

**Financial Statement for the year ended 31st December 2022**

	Unrestricted £	Designated Fund £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021
<b>Voluntary Receipts</b>					
1 Planned giving	27,779			27,779	27,072
3 Collections at Services	3,717	21		3,738	2,432
4 All other giving/voluntary receipts	1,671	963	1,476	4,110	1,004
6 Gift Aid recovered	7,772			7,772	7,102
7 Legacies					1,001
8 Grants	1,087		491	1,578	
	<b>42,026</b>	<b>984</b>	<b>1,967</b>	<b>44,977</b>	<b>38,611</b>
<b>Activities for generating funds</b>					
9 Fundraising Activities	650		1,708	2,358	925
<b>Investment Income</b>					
10 Investment Income	893	406	79	1,378	73
<b>Church Activities</b>					
11 Fees retained by PCC	6,509			6,509	5,038
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>50,078</b>	<b>1,390</b>	<b>3,754</b>	<b>55,222</b>	<b>44,647</b>
<b>Payments</b>					
<b>Church activities</b>					
19 Parish Gift	34,000			34,000	33,000
21 Staffing costs	1,306			1,306	1,526
18 Mission giving and donations	1,300	271		1,571	2,100
<b>Church expenses</b>					
23 Church Running expenses	13,318	1,368	704	15,390	12,774
24 Church Utility bills	4,491			4,491	2,839
<b>Cost of generating funds</b>					
17 Cost of generating funds					
<b>Major capital Expenditure</b>					
27 Major repairs to the Church		13,335	2,946	16,281	2,749
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>54,415</b>	<b>14,974</b>	<b>3,650</b>	<b>73,039</b>	<b>54,987</b>
Excess/Deficit of receipts over payments	- 4,337	- 13,583	104	- 17,817	- 10,341
Transfer between funds				-	-
Cash at bank at 1st January	76,588	44,186	5,946	126,720	137,061
Cash at bank at 31st December	<b>72,251</b>	<b>30,603</b>	<b>6,049</b>	<b>108,904</b>	<b>126,720</b>



## **Churchwarden's General Report**

With the easing of the Covid rules at St Leonard's Church, Swithland, analysis of the entries in the Church Register records that we were able to hold a service on every Sunday throughout the year with the additional special services held on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Ascension Day, Remembrance Sunday, All Souls' Day and a Crib Service. Recorded in the church entries are the Platinum Jubilee Songs of Praise and the Celebration weekend of the Bells' restoration and school services. Due to the pandemic the Mothering Sunday service was very poorly attended.

Two children were baptised throughout the year, nine marriages took place, seven funeral services, two memorial services and seven burials of ashes.

In September with a limited number of staff, parents and pupils taking part, the school held a Harvest Festival Service and likewise a Carol Service in December which was very well supported. Friday Club resumed meeting in the autumn and continues to meet on Friday mornings. The Christmas Eve Christingle service was a great success with over ninety adults and thirty children attending. Also we must record what a great success was the Jazz Evening in December. Sadly the Crib Festival was not very well attended but enjoyed by those who did.

Reports on the Health & Safety Policy, Safeguarding and the Church Fabric have been submitted separately and forwarded to the PCC Secretary.

Outstanding was a request that Revd Colin Resch raised at last year's Annual General Meeting, that a planned revision of the Churchyard Plan was needed, and this has now been undertaken.

I will close this report and thank you all for your help and support in what has been another difficult year.

Sally Allen, Churchwarden

## **Fabric Report 2022**

All yearly services have been completed which include the Gas boiler, the fire extinguishers, PAT testing all appliances, the organ and clock have been serviced. No issues were found.

The church required its Quinquennial Inspection (QI) in 2022, which was completed in June. No major architectural issues were found but the church still has a long list of remedial work to complete. Eight urgent works recommendations, twenty works to be carried out within twelve months, seventeen works required over a period of 18-24months and finally nine works needing attention. For this QI a full electrical test was completed, a Disability Audit and a Health and Safety review completed. All the above works will be progressed within the budget available to the church funds.

To have permission to do some works to the church it needs to go through the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC). Currently the church has a faculty to complete work on the Gas meter Bunker which is awaiting action.

The kitchen and office area has been reordered. Restoration of the Danvers monument was also reviewed in discussion with the family, but to date has not been progressed. To comply with a more eco environment all old bulbs are being replaced with LED equivalents.

A check of the Headstones will be made with the H&S officer during the year.

A check of the church silver and Terrier will be updated and completed during the year.

Fabric Churchwarden, Chris Watts

## **Health and Safety Report 2023**

Since the last ACPM report of 2022 there have been no accidents to report. Covid restrictions have been lifted but anyone entering the church is still expected to take necessary precautions. Hand sanitiser is available and situated in key areas for use, namely the Porch, Chancel, Church wardens' station, Vestry and Kitchen.

Inspection of fire extinguishers, emergency lighting and electric ATT test have been carried out by competent authorities.

Gravestone tests for safety and stability will be performed in the Spring when the weather improves.

At the PCC meeting following the 2023 ACPM, the Parochial Church Council are to confirm that the Health and Safety policy is being correctly implemented.

Martin Greenwood

## **Deanery Synod Report**

Meetings are held around our deanery of Akeley East.

June 21st 2022 Meeting held at All Saints with Holy Trinity Loughborough: Synod heard a talk from Vicki Offin from Upbeat Communities on their work with refugees across derby, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire with a particular emphasis on how they are extending this work in the light of the Ukrainian Refugee Response.

Deanery Synod received a report of the Diocesan Synod meeting including an update on the two Minster Community pilot schemes following on from Shaped by God Together.

Clergy changes included a welcome to Revd Tim Day who had been appointed to All Saints Thorpe Acre and saying farewell to Revd Sue Willets who is to become Diocesan Director of Ordinands, and Revd Lydia Humphreys (retiring).

October 13th 2022

A talk on Cursillo by Adrian Trotter, from the Parish of Great Bowden, Market Harborough and Lay Director of Leicester Anglican Cursillo talked about Cursillo (a Spanish term meaning short course).

The talk was followed by a discussion on current challenges for churches, the Treasurer's and Diocesan Synod Reports.

February 8th 2023

The talk was given by Chris York from the Exaireo Trust – Helping the Homeless a local Loughborough charity formed about 15 years ago.

We had an update on the Minster Communities and discussed the current challenges around the Diocesan finances.

Deanery Synod Representative Chris Watts

### **Safeguarding of Children & Vulnerable Adults Report 2023**

We, the PCC, have adopted and reviewed up to date policies for Child Safeguarding and Safeguarding Adults. We have adopted the model diocesan Child Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Adults Policy issued in March 2018. The policies are scheduled to be reviewed at next PCC meeting. Safeguarding is regularly on the agenda at PCC meetings as a standing item.

We have Coordinators in place for Safeguarding Children and Adults. Our Child Safeguarding Coordinator is Ali Wright. Our Safeguarding Adult Coordinator is Chris Watts. Ali Wright submits a written report to the PCC secretary prior to every PCC meeting.

We are clear about what activities are taking place with children, who is responsible and where and when they take place. We have no activities specifically with adults with additional needs.

We make clear our commitment to safeguarding by displaying the policies and helpful information. The Child Safeguarding and Safeguarding Adults policy statements are posted on the church noticeboard. The safeguarding poster with the Childline phone number is displayed in places where children can see it. Relevant information about help for adults (eg. In relationship to domestic abuse) is available. Contact details are displayed for the Safeguarding

Coordinators, Churchwardens and the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. A hard copy of the Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook is available.

We know who is working with children and / or vulnerable adults. The number of people authorised to work with children and young people is seven. The number of people authorised to work with vulnerable adults is three.

We ensure that everyone who is eligible has a DBS check. We are registered with CCPAS for online DBS checks. The lead recruiter is Ali Wright. We have a record of DBS checks. DBS checks are renewed every 5 years in line with the Church of England policy. In addition to DBS checks we use safer recruitment for everybody we recruit to work with children / young people and or vulnerable adults, both paid staff and volunteers. It is clear who is responsible for making the appointment decision. All new appointments are subject to a recruitment process which includes a role, application form, references, interview/conversation, and confidential self declaration.

We ensure that all people who work with children/young people and/or vulnerable adults attend safeguarding training. We are currently working to achieve 100% as per Diocese of Leicester Safeguarding training requirements.

We ensure safe working practice in work with children/young people and/or vulnerable adults. The number of current authorised leaders and helpers is sufficient and the OFSTED staffing ratios are maintained. Adequate insurance and a risk assessment is in place for all activities. All volunteers and paid staff have received the relevant safeguarding policies and the Pocket Guide to Safeguarding Children. The number of leaders and helpers who are qualified First Aiders is one. Volunteers and paid staff are advised on appropriate use of social media, mobile phones and texting.

We ensure that any information / disclosures / concerns about possible abuse are passed on to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor. All volunteers and paid staff have received instructions and /or training in what they do if they receive information or have concerns about possible abuse. All information known to the leadership has been passed on to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor.

We ensure that any blemished disclosures are passed to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. There have been no blemished disclosures for 2022.

We ensure that information about convictions and about people who may pose a safeguarding risk is passed onto the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. There have been no such instances.

We keep information safely and maintain appropriate confidentiality. All personal records (consent forms, recruitment information, safeguarding records) are kept locked away. Where necessary, computer files are password protected. Shared e mails are not used for correspondence on confidential matters.

We ensure that external bodies who use church premises have appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place. There are currently no external bodies using Church premises.

We act to improve safeguarding arrangements and to respond to new and revised policies and guidance.

Ali Wright, Safeguarding Officer. 08/03/2023

## **Report of the Worship & Education Committee for 2022**

This report covers January to December 2022 but it is worth reporting that the timing and pattern of services has been discussed at all three meetings in 2022 and lockdown having finished the future pattern of services has been decided as follows starting from March 2023. Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer) on 1st and 3rd Sundays at 8 am, Holy Communion (Common Worship) at 9.30 am on 1st and 3rd Sundays, Family Service at 9.30 am on 2nd Sunday and Morning Prayer at 9.30 am on the 4th Sunday.

Regarding services on the 5th Sunday of the month the January date fell on the 30th when Candlemas was celebrated with a service of Holy Communion. In May, on the 29th, the Chaplain to LOROS, Rev'd Andrew Martin, conducted our service and talked about the work of LOROS. For the 5th Sunday in July a special service was devised to revive an agricultural tradition of Lammas. In view of the war situation Ukraine was emphasised and a loaf of bread was blessed at this service. October 30th fell on All Saints Day when a service of Holy Communion was held at 9.30 am and an All Souls service at 4 pm.

An Ascension Day service was attended by pupils from Swithland School and it is felt important to maintain the connection between the church and the school. The Jubilee was celebrated on 6th June and the bells were rededicated the following Sunday with some members of the Danvers family in attendance.

A topic discussed at our meetings has been 'Bibles for pews'. With no pew sheets now being produced it was felt that the congregation might like to have bibles to hand to follow the lessons. The question of which version to choose has been discussed and is being pursued in 2023.

Another topic discussed was the possibility of a Day Retreat at Launde which is still being looked into.

With Traditional and Jazz Carol Concerts and a Crib Festival having been held in December it has been a busy year. We were sorry that the Rev. Colin was out of action due to illness but we were grateful for the support that was given by many people that enabled us to maintain a vibrant worshipping community and we wish Colin a complete recovery.

Olga Harris

## COMOT Report 2022

An extremely active year for COMOT committee members which began at the January meeting with suggestions for a Platinum Jubilee Service, an Art Competition, a Bellringers Dedication Weekend, a Guided Walk, a Concert Evening and a Christmas Festival – all of which took place, in some shape or other, throughout the year. In addition, five Open Church Saturdays, 'Ride and Stride,' a Harvest Lunch and a second Guided Walk were also organised.

The first of our Guided Walks, led by Jerry Griffith, took place during Holy Week on 13th April in Swithland Woods and proved to be so enjoyable that an Autumn Walk in Cossington Meadows was organised for 10th October. Both were followed by refreshments in church.

On May 14th our 'Beauty of Swithland Woods' art competition entries were displayed and judged at a well-attended Open Church afternoon. A new visual presentation of the history and artefacts of St Leonard's, created by Virginia and Chris Aspinall, also made its debut on this date, greatly enhancing our 'visitor experience.'

June 5th saw committee members participate in a Platinum Jubilee Service which was followed by fizz and cake and at which everyone received a copy of the book "Our Faithful Queen – 70years of faith and service".

The Bellringers Dedication Weekend of 10th/11th June, to which guests who had donated to the Bell Restoration Project were invited, also coincided with an Open Church date and enabled our visitors to learn about the project from all the information displayed by the bellringers.

The committee decided to donate half of the funds raised from 'Ride and Stride' on September 10th to St Leonard's Gas Meter Appeal in the hope that this would encourage more participants. Regrettably this did not prove to be the case, but over £800 was raised and divided between the Gas Meter Appeal and The Historic Churches Trust.



On 16th September we welcomed Richard King and his Jazz Quartet to entertain us and again raise funds for the Gas Meter Appeal. The evening was enhanced by wine and canapés and was extremely successful and well attended, raising the magnificent sum of £1,300.

Our annual Harvest Lunch at the Memorial Hall on 25th September was another happy occasion organised by committee members.

Concluding the year, over the weekend of 10th/11th December, we held our Crib Festival when over 50 large and small nativity scenes were enjoyed and admired by our visitors. This event prompted the anonymous donation to St Leonard's of a beautiful set of large nativity figures. These were displayed beneath the altar and will be used and treasured for future years.

Committee members also helped with the publicity promotion of the Jazz Carol Service on 21st December and assisted in the provision of wine and mince pies at the event.

Throughout the year 10 issues of The LINK magazine have been distributed and have kept the Parish informed of our activities. Liaison with the St Leonard's CofE Primary School again produced our Christmas card. Meetings are always extremely well attended and a great deal of effort is given by all committee members to keep the profile of the church high within the community.

Mary Toone

### **Friday Club (Toddlers Group) 2023**

It is a Christian based toddler group held in church, and is for babies and preschool children. We run every Friday from 9.00am until 10.30am, during the term times of Swithland St Leonard's C.E Primary School.

It is run by volunteers Sally Allen, Chris Watts and Ali Wright and helpers.

We offer a space for children to play and for their parents / grandparents to meet and chat with others. We provide coffee and tea.

9.00am Free play, jigsaws and taking part in crafting activities

10.00am Offer the children biscuits and drinks

10.10am Bible story and a short story, action prayer, nursery rhymes and songs

10.30am Close

We welcome new mums and children and currently have 25 toddlers on our register. It is good to see the toddlers and their families in church on a Friday morning and it is encouraging to see some come to Family and Harvest Services. One family have been married in church and another child has been christened in church.

Ali Wright

## **Bell Ringers APCM report 2022**

During January we did not have our normal Thursday practice while there were high levels of Covid. Ringing on Sunday was confined to chiming a single bell.

We were determined to have a ring of our 6 bells to mark the 70th anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne and had a wonderful ring, all the more pleasing as we had not rung together for nearly 2 months.

During February, we resumed our Thursday practices and started to ring on Sundays again, when we had enough ringers available. We had rope guides fitted by Whites as part of the bell restoration project. As our tower is considered to be 'long draught', having rope guides will make the bells easier to ring, particularly for learners.

On 11th/12th June, we held a Bell celebration weekend, coinciding with Open Church on the afternoon of Saturday 11th June. In the morning there was a full peal of the bells, which involved continuous ringing for approximately 3 hours. This was organised by Richard Bimson and 4 of the team had participated in the final peal of the bells in January 2019. During open church, there was a photographic display of the work carried out, the ringing room was open and refreshments were available. From 5pm onwards, there was drink and nibbles to thank the donors to our appeal. During this event, Revd Colin Resch received a bell rope from Graham Clifton, Whites Church Bell Hangers, to mark the end of the restoration of the bells. The Leicestershire Diocesan Guild president, Sally Brown, was also present, having rung in the peal in the morning as well. Interestingly, some American ancestors of the Danvers family coincidentally visited our church that weekend, which enhanced the occasion. This was followed by the annual bell ringers' service on Sunday 12th June, giving thanks for the restoration of the bells.

We joined in the national ring for the jubilee on Friday 23rd June at 11.30am.

We had 9 weddings this year, several of which were on a Friday. This included two at St Paul's, Woodhouse Eaves. Due several ringers not being available, we were joined by some ringers from the Thurcaston tower, to enable us to ring for 2 of the weddings.

The protocol for ringing the bells and the lowering of the flag following the death of the Queen is set out in the document 'Operation London Bridge'. The bells were double muffled by Chris Newman on Friday 9th September at 10am, with Val Capewell in attendance. One bell was tolled by Guy Jibson and Graham Sharp at midday. Following the proclamation of King Charles on Saturday morning, the bells were required to ring open i.e. not muffled. The Swithland band rang open bells for a wedding on Saturday afternoon at St Paul's, Woodhouse Eaves, fulfilling this part of the protocol.

We rang from 10am on the morning of the Queen's funeral. The team included Marc Wainwright, our oldest ringer and Jo Wilkins, one of our learners. We rang rounds and call changes, one of which is called 'Queens.'

Our joint ringing outing with Thurcaston tower was expertly organised by Guy and Barbara Jibson and we visited seven local churches finishing with tea and cake at St Mary's, Woodhouse. Due to the pandemic, this was the first outing since 2019.

During the year, John Roberts was teaching Jo and Tim Wilkins to ring. Jo had started before the pandemic and rang for the Queen's funeral. Tim made good progress during the Autumn when John was available. We are hopeful that we will have more learners in the New Year.

Janet Beeby Tower Captain

## Swithland Church Women's Group Report 2022-2023

We were delighted to be able to resume face to face meetings this year. We were very grateful to receive a grant from the Church which helped us to arrange speakers.

We have 20 members and several members who attend as guests.

We started the year with a talk held in St Leonard's Church, when Anne Horton told us about the monuments and artefacts in the Church. We held our other meetings in the Memorial Hall and were joined by guests from The Men's Club and Swithland Village.

Mark Temple gave a talk on The Mountsorrel Quarry and the railway with interesting slides to illustrate the presentation.

For the December meeting Yvonne Meadows showed us some lovely ideas for Christmas Foliage decorations. Members enjoyed mulled wine and mince pies.

Our January dinner coincided with a night of freezing rain but in spite of this a group of us enjoyed a very warm and tasty dinner at The Wheatsheaf Pub.

In February Vince Jupp explained to us how to Speak Volumes without words and taught us how to interpret body language.

We ended our speaking programme in March with a lively talk by Alan Dayman about running a nursery. Alan brought a selection of plants with him for sale.

We are in the process of arranging an outing to a garden later in the Summer.

It has been a very enjoyable year and we are starting to book speakers for next autumn.

Jan, Sarah and Val

## Swithland Church Men's Club

On March the 8th 2022 we had an excellent talk by Councillor Andrew Brown (no relation) on being the high sheriff in Rutland. This was a fascinating talk on the largely ceremonial role of High Sheriff and how Andrew had used his position to show support to the excellent work of the emergency services.

At last year's AGM in October a number of decisions were taken on the longevity of the Men's Club. The membership numbers have now reached a level where it is not possible to fund speakers on a regular basis. It was therefore decided to remove the speaker programme this year. The primary fund-raising activities would therefore remain as.

- o The Fruit and Vegetable Show and
- o The Men's Club Christmas Dinner

A suggestion was made to retain some activities in addition to this, should there be the impetus to do so.

The Fruit and Vegetable show had its most successful year in 2022, through the amazing efforts of the Chair, Duncan Keates, with over £11,000 raised, the bulk of the proceeds going to LOROS and Rainbows with smaller donations to other local causes.

The level of entries was most encouraging and the enthusiasm from the participants in the various events was positively infectious. It was great to be back. As always, the auction was a great success, with some entertaining bidding. All in all, a very successful day.

The Men's Club Christmas dinner raised £360, £260 from the raffle and £100 in customary fines for interruptions in the carol singing. With the sad passing of David Parkes-Bowen, accompaniment to the carol singing was provided by Ron Gould on acoustic guitar which went down very well.

Jeff Harrison as always wielded the gavel to great effect at the Fruit and Vegetable show Auction and the wooden spoon as Master of Ceremonies at the Men's Club Christmas Dinner, keeping the men in order during the Carol singing, with summary fines where necessary.

The Men's Club Supported the Jazz Carols at the Church which was an excellent event.

We also held our ever popular "Pike Supper" in February 2023, which was well attended at Rothley Fisheries.

The Men's Club have been invited to attend speakers organised by the Church Women's Group and these have been enjoyed by our members. Thanks are extended to Sarah, Val and Janet.

Andrew Brown 24th March 2023

## Christians in the Forest Bible Studies 2022

Another full year with studies almost every week of the year apart from our summer recess during August. Our year began with a study of the Book of Ruth, “Loving Kindness in Action” by Elizabeth Rundle.

Our Lent course was, “The Prayers of Jesus” by Amy Boucher Pye

For the Spring /Summer course we looked at Paul’s Letter to the Philippians by John Houghton. This was followed in the autumn with a study of Paul’s letter to the Galatians – also by John Houghton

The Advent course was again written and devised by our own Hilary Ayling and was a look at the roles of Elizabeth, Joseph and the Shepherd’s in the Christmas story.

2023 began with a study of Isaiah, chapters 1-39 and we have just celebrated the return of our Shrove Tuesday event. The event was a concert by Resound Worship and the focus was the environment and climate change. 100 people attended the concert and £200 was raised for the work of A Rocha (Christian environmental charity).

Gary Lee February 2023

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