



AGENDA

THE PARISH OF THE RESURRECTION ALTON

Thursday 25th May 2023

St Lawrence Church Alton

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISHIONERS

1. Bible Reading & Prayers
2. Election of Churchwardens

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

3. Vicar's Report
4. Report on new Electoral Roll
5. Elections to PCC
6. Financial Statements of Parish for period up to 31st Dec 2022
7. Reports on Fabric
8. Report of the Deanery Synod
9. Safeguarding
10. Appointment of Sidespersons
11. Appointment of Independent Financial Examiner
12. Parish Conversation on Charitable/Mission Giving

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

The Parish of the Resurrection Alton is part of the Diocese of Winchester within the Church of England. The correspondence address is: The Parish Office, All Saints Hall, Queens Road, Alton GU34 1HU. The office is open during week day mornings.

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of The Resurrection is a Registered Charity No: 1136970.

The Churches of the Parish are The Church of the Holy Rood, Holybourne; St Peter's Church, Beech; All Saints Church, Alton and St Lawrence Church, Alton

Licensed Ministry team:

Vicar - Revd Andrew Micklefield

Associate Vicar - Revd Gordon Randall

Assistant Curate - Revd Wendy Burnhams

LLMs - Mrs Debbie Thrower, Mrs Elaine Brown

PTO Ministry Team:

Revd Lynn Power, Revd Bruce Nicole, Revd Peter Brown, Revd Martin East

Churchwardens:

Mr Clive Muller, Mr John Vivian, Mr Alan Armstrong, Mrs Helen Walters, Mrs Angie Briggs, Mrs Sarah Neish

Elected members of the PCC:

Robin Kemp (St Lawrence), Lisa Hillan (Church of the Holy Rood), vacancy (All Saints), Vacancy (St Peter's)

Deanery Synod Members:

Tori Hewitt, Matthew Bayliss, Elspeth Mackeggie Gurney, Derk Gurney

Hon Minute Secretary: Mrs Sue Hubbard **Hon Treasurer:** Mr Colin Aiken

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) for the Parish of the Resurrection is the governing body of the Parish. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules and the Parish Scheme. The PCC met six times during 2022. The PCC was supported by an Executive Group (Standing Committee), Finance & Administration Group, Worship & Spiritual Life Group (Ministry Team) & Community & Outreach Group.

The Constitution of the Parish of the Itchen Valley and the supporting Policy Guidance document can both be found on the parish website.

AIMS AND PURPOSES

The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Vicar, to promote the whole mission of the Church - pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical - in the Ecclesiastical Parish and the area

of the Itchen Valley. It is the duty of the Vicar and the PCC to consult together on matters of general concern and importance to the parish.

OBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our churches and to become part of our parish community. The Parish Ministry Team and PCC all acknowledge the need to consider public benefit in planning activities and guidance on the advancement of religion.

We work under our Vision Statement of 'Proclaiming the Risen Jesus, Steadfast in Faith, Active in Service'.

This Vision is upheld by our Parish Values:

As a welcoming, worshipping community of disciples of Jesus we are:

Rooted in prayer – learning the practices of being in conversation and relationship with God our Father through Jesus Christ our Lord. In everything we do prayer comes before, during and after.

Rooted in the Bible – believing that The Word of God directs and guides our individual and our communal lives. We read, mark, learn and apply it to all our decision making and parish life

Rooted in the gifts of the Holy Spirit – sharing what we all receive from Him to encourage and build each other up. We always want to be open to the possibilities of the present and future whilst valuing our heritage.

Rooted in partnership – looking to work with and alongside others who are building and extending the kingdom of God. We will work with each other across our parish, with other local churches and with community groups who have kingdom values at their heart.

Rooted in quality – seeking that whatever we do is the best we can offer and is attractive to those in our communities.

Rooted in fun – enjoying the life that we have and presenting the Church and our faith in Jesus with liveliness and boldness

Rooted in our care of creation – being good and wise stewards of the world's resources and our environment. We will work towards the A Rocha Eco Church awards and Fairtrade status.

Main objectives for the year:

- To embed a rhythm of sustainable and varied services across the parish and extending Bentworth, Lasham and Shalden
- To recover regular and growing attendance at worship and events in the parish following the experiences of COVID lockdown
- To establish more small groups for discipleship, prayer and pastoral care
- To commit to a weekly focus in services and other events for children/young people and families
- To improve and optimise internal and external communications and publicity
- Improve the use of our Parish Resources

Strategies used to achieve our objectives:

- Focal ministry was re-introduced to give continuous pastoral and liturgical leadership in each congregation
- Greater use of email and social media to inform our parishioners of the activities of the church
- Further updating of our database and website to make them more useful to our administration and communication
- Funding of a full-time Youth, Childrens and Family Worker
- Formed a community of small group leaders
- Further development of the church-based database for communication and increased use of social media
- Undertook an ongoing review of our Parish Administration and office

Vicar's Report - Annual Parochial Church Meeting

2022 was a year marked by not having to comply with COVID lockdown restrictions and so we began by introducing a new service pattern which was felt both to be sustainable and varied. This was important as we were aware of the wellbeing of our Ministry Team and also that we would now have to begin to offer worship and pastoral commitments to the parishes of Bentworth, Lasham & Shalden. The Winchester Diocese has embarked on a series of pastoral reorganisations and I have been so grateful to the generosity of so many as we have worked to allowing this not just to happen but to thrive. The reorganisation is not yet formalised but this system is working although I am sure it will need tweaking along the way. The service pattern is now embedded and there are signs of strength and growth within it. Thank you for your forbearance and commitment to our common worship and discipleship.

Throughout 2022 there has been a growth in the number of small groups that meet for study and prayer. I cannot name them all but there are about 18 groups of varying sizes and styles. They not only provide a growth in faith but a continuous and integrated way of pastoral care. If you are not part of one – then do please ask? We have held Alpha Sessions led by the very able Bruce Nicole and these and other courses are a fantastic way of people exploring and renewing their commitment to Jesus. Alpha has become a regular feature of our parish life and we will continue to offer it alongside other churches in the community.

Martha Lloyd has been a key member of our Ministry Team throughout 2022 – the PCC agreed to employ on a full-time basis which is such good news. It is true to say that she has added and expanded our contact with children, young people and families and there are more opportunities during each week for them to get to know us, the Church and Jesus. Martha is still able to give some time to the Kings Arms which works with young people in our community from its base at The Tannery in Vicarage Hill. We have people from the parish who are regular volunteers there and I am a trustee.

Kate Powell has been such a joy as our Anna Chaplain and I know many who have been so touched by her enthusiasm, care and organisation. It is a joy to see the groups of older people in the various residential homes, in the afternoon events, and being offered one to one visits. A particular gift from Katre has been the development of the Anna Friends and it was a very special service when we celebrated their ministry in a service of Evensong in The Church of the Holy Rood.

I have highlighted two of our Ministry Team yet what a wonderfully strong and supportive team we have. It is my delight to sit alongside such a group of talented and dedicated individuals. I am so grateful that they come together and work out how to use their God-given gifts. It is very much a

'I am because you are' Ubuntu approach. We are very well resourced in our parish and we need to give thanks to God that he is blessing us in this way. This also has its challenges. The main one being how can we always be generous with what we have in way of team to others. I hope you will understand that we all offer our time and gifts to other organisations, the Diocese, the Cathedral, our ecumenical partners and our Deanery – this is to be encouraged, I believe.

Our mission vision statement remains unaltered – 'Proclaiming the Risen Jesus, Steadfast in Faith, Active in Service'. Jesus has to be first and central – we are nothing without Him and we must offer Him to others in all that we are and do. Ensuring we are grounded in the faith of Jesus is important – we find our strength in the reading of Scripture, in our praying and in learning. Serving our community is the practical example of all that we are in Jesus – we are not forming a holy huddle but wanting to be a people who help transform community and society. I have never met a church community which is so determined to live out the vision and thank you.

My two persistent prayers are that we continue to meet together and that we are united in this one parish. Please don't fall into a trap of holy huddling in our various buildings and friendship groups but move around, take part and grow together. Perhaps the verses to help are Hebrews 10: 24-25

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Thank you for another year which we celebrate.
Andrew

PCC Report 2022

January 2022

- Prayer of Jabez - A parish prayer for 2022 was presented
- Pilot of new development visiting introduced
- Butts Church Sharing Agreement still under discussion
- Review of Baptism Policy & Practice - Ministry Team to discuss further the idea of individual visiting
- Finance Report - expenses exceeding income by c £2k; Budget setting ongoing; Cash handing to be revised by committee; Increasing income from Butts Church and Busybees were necessary; plan to have a PCC meeting solely on financial matters; Review of hall rentals needed; Organist fees to review and agreed by Executive Committee;
- Task group to be established to review Parish Administration and possibility of Operations Manager
- BLS reorganisation update
- Agreement of transfer of LLM licence of Elaine Brown

- Permission for bench to be introduced in Holy Rood Churchyard given
- Permission for Grave reservation in Holy Rood given
- Anna Chaplaincy shortlisting to take place
- Children, Youth & Families Support group now established to give support to Martha

March 2022

- Update on Baptism Policy with change to suggesting families come to preparation and then a Church@4 or relevant church service
- Detailed Finance Report: 2022 due to increased CMF and utility bills deficit predicted of c., £24K; Organ restoration important and Elspeth Mackeggie Gurney to help Tony Willman with initial proposals; payments from The Butts Church and increase in hours proposal for Busybees now urgent; Generous June to be implemented; Administration/Operations Manager discussion to be taken forward by Peter Johnson; need new members of Finance & Admin Committee.
- Agreed to help St Peter's Buildings Work with any shortfall (1-2k) being made from the POTR Fabric Fund

June 2022

- Agreed the timetable for the Service Pattern Review
- Finance & Admin - Position healthy, need for review of fees and hire charges, Policy review and new timetable completed with thanks to Peter Johnson
- Discussion took place on the latest Talking Jesus Report - some of the finding to be fed into the service pattern review
- Agreement to continue with Youth, Children & Family Worker post
 - To find better ways to improve our support and management of Martha
 - Check on employment law situation regarding 1 year appointment
 - Decision needed before 28th June - small group established before a simple PCC Meeting.
 - Complete plan to at September PCC
- Discussion on BusyBees and The Parish Centre - recommended lease for 3 years for exclusive weekday use, a financial plan with increases and for utilities, cleaning arrangements
- Agreed to continue the move of The Parish Office to All Saints Hall following a detailed plan proposed by Philippa Penfold

September 2022

- Administration Review ongoing
- A cloud based system had been agreed by The Finance & Admin Committee for bookkeeping which would ease the communication of ongoing figures for income and expenditure

- Energy contracts referred to ombudsman
- Discussion on potential energy saving measures
 - Reduction in temperatures in buildings
 - Lighting to be changed to LED fittings across our buildings
 - Possible temporary church closures
 - Conversations about Warm Spaces with Alton Town Council
- Worship & Spiritual Life reported on The Ministry Team Away Day and the introduction of revised Focal Ministry areas.
- Agreed new signs for Commonwealth graves in Holybourne
- New LED Lighting underway for the whole of St Lawrence Church
- New pathways resurfacing agreed for St Lawrence churchyard with funding from The Fabric Fund, Alton Town Council and St Lawrence School
- Service Pattern review responses were circulated and discussed. Parish Conversation planned for 29th September.

October 2022

- Change of personnel to Finance & Admin Committee - Helen Walters now chair; Chris Scawan now fulfilling Stewardship with Tori Hewitt's support; Colin Aiken working as Treasurer for the time being.
- Utility pricing considered and agreed to use Utility Aid. Approximate projected cost is £64,000
- The Parish will add its activities to ATC's Warm Spaces initiative
- LED light replacement in St Lawrence ongoing, St Peter's reductions - need new painter; Bee removal for Holybourne vestry - permissions sought; plan for LED lighting in All Saints underway
- Report on Service Pattern Conversation fed back and an agreement to do the following:
 - Pattern could now stay until any change to clergy team.
 - Clergy well-being covenant should be expanded to include all those who serve, not just clergy. AM to provide the covenant for comment.
 - Need to train more people across the parish, and include BLS and others in the deanery. Paper from Brian Pritchard, Rural Area Dean, to be circulated to all PCC.
 - Statistical review of service attendance over the last 3-5 years. How else have we grown in this time? How can we measure this? Covid has had a big impact during this period
- Discussion on Alton Resilience Fund - agreement that conversation to take place with other local churches - Lisa Hillan to represent POTR
- Pop Up Carols and other Christmas events approved.

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

Alton Deanery Synod: a brief synopsis of 2022.

Deanery Re-organisation has been an ongoing topic of discussion and debate. This was influenced also by the vacancy in the parishes of Bentley, Binsted and Froyle - Revd Yann Dubreuil left to be Vicar of Headley. Kingsley and Oakhanger are to leave the Northanger Benefice and be joined to BenBinFro; Medstead is to join with Four Marks; Bentworth, Lasham and Shalden to form a new parish and be a new benefice with The Parish of the Resurrection. Informal and formal consultations have happened and we now await the final Church Commissioners permissions before we embark on the legal proceedings of new parishes and constitutions. These are times of upheaval yet the Deanery is resilient and there is much to commend in the ways in which parishes and people are working together for the sake of both mission and ministry.

Finances paid to the Winchester Diocesan Board of Finance in Common Mission Fund payments is strong in the Deanery with only a small shortfall. We are extremely grateful to everyone for that commitment.

We have had a strong focus on training for the Deanery in our discussions this year. There is a plan to look at training for leading intercessions; Bible Reading and prayer groups; home/small group systems; children and schools ministry; welcome and community involvement, communication. As things progress with the re-organisation we will establish ways in which people can engage with these areas. We are awaiting some input from The Diocesan School of Mission.

Clergy wellbeing has been a topic and early in 2023 the Archdeacon of Winchester made a presentation to the Synod.

We continue to support the Diocesan Training Centre in Karamoja. St Philip's Cathedral in Muroto has been completed and opening in March 2022. We regularly support the fees for students at the Centre and have sent £7500 to furnish the repaired buildings. We would like to find new members of the Deanery Karamoja Committee - would you be interested?

I am grateful to members of our parishes who are elected members of Deanery Synod and I encourage us to ensure our membership is complete. The Deanery Synod is an important point of contact and communication for our parishes.

The Revd Andrew Micklefield
Area Dean of Alton

ALL SAINTS CHURCH FABRIC REPORT

All Saints Church has continued to share the building with The Butts Church with mutual respect and now shares cleaning and grass mowing duties with them.

The roof lost a large number of tiles in Storm Eunice but it was repaired within a month and covered by insurance. A Buddleia sapling was removed from under stonework at the east end of the roof by a Stonemason. AVLAN look after the Gilbert White Memorial Bed and the church yard pots are filled with easy-care plants. Eco Church installed a Cycle Rack and we await a new notice board to show details of both POTR and The Butts Church. All routine maintenance checks have been done on electrics, gas boiler, sound system, church clock and fire extinguishers.

The Service Pattern has been well accepted. Average numbers of attendance have shown the Sunday morning Services to be 30, Afternoon Worship 16 and the mid-week Communion 20. The

twice monthly Coffee and Conversation Sessions have been very well supported and ably led by Elaine Brown and Anne Mason. Other services held have been 1 Wedding, 3 Funerals and no Baptisms.

The Butts School held Easter and Harvest services, the Hard of Hearing and Dementia Friendly Groups held Harvest and Carol services. Compline Services were held in Holy Week and the week before Christmas. We continue to have Ken Jackson and Yoko Hitches to play the organ for us for which we are very grateful. The Butts Church hold 6 services on Sundays each month.

All Saints Hall was prepared in August for the Parish Office to move into during August and hall bookings are now taken by the Parish Administrators as Judy Brown has retired from looking after the Hall after many years of work.

The All Saints Congregation are very supportive and enjoy times of fellowship after most of our services.

CHURCH OF THE HOLY ROOD CHURCH FABRIC REPORT

The Church of the Holyrood continues to thrive with a growing number of regular worshippers and busy mid-week activities.

A fabric committee (aka The Living Space Group) meets every 6 weeks to consider issues affecting the fabric of the building and the church community. Minutes go to the PCC regularly.

Fabric issues this year:

1. The Quinquennial Report has been considered and all issues flagged up as needing attention are now dealt with.
2. Energy – with the rise in energy prices measures have been taken to help control energy usage. A new thermostat has been fitted and is carefully monitored. Meter readings are regularly submitted, and the hot water has been turned off. Discussions are underway about the future of the gas boiler and more eco-friendly heating options.
3. Bees in the vestry ceiling – a bee colony needed to be removed from the vestry ceiling. This has now been completed and the opportunity taken to remodel the vestry storage and repaint. Eight other bee colonies continue to make their homes in the church, and we have decided to peacefully co-habit.
4. The churchyard wall continues to be a concern, especially with the road flooding that happens after heavy rain. We are awaiting the outcome of an application to the Heritage Lottery fund, though if that is not successful have PCC approval to fund some repair work. When this work is underway we will ask for advice on parts of the church wall itself which are showing signs of wear.
5. The churchyard continues to be kept beautifully by Arthur – we are most appreciative.
6. All gas, electrical and lightning conductor tests are up to date.
7. Graves – much work has been undertaken by Rob Law to clarify the burial records. The graveyard is almost full for burials and Rob is pursuing the opening up of a new area for burials, with PCC support.
8. The Andrews Endowed School planted a Memorial tree in 2019 as part of their 300 yr anniversary celebrations. This sadly died in spring 2022 and has recently been replaced.
9. A set of new chairs were donated last year which helps us to extend seating when needed. These stack away easily and match the benches in colour.

FABRIC REPORT FOR ST PETER'S CHURCH, BEECH

We aim to keep running costs to the minimum, ever mindful of repairs needed and rising energy costs..

Over the past year.....

A Local Church Group has met 3 times over the past year and proposes twice yearly from now on to undertake cleaning and maintenance work both inside and outside the church.

Mowing and hedge cutting continue and clearance of Ivy around the Chestnut and Beech tree was undertaken. Gutters are cleared twice a year.

Repairs and repainting to the woodwork and tin sheeting were noted in the Quinquennial Report. An asbestos survey was undertaken, none found, and painting was completed on the wall sheeting last June. The contractor left the site and a new contractor, Mr Nick Guy, was recommended, he quoted and has been appointed. Work is due to start when the weather improves.

This work is being paid for out of St Peters Fabric Fund. We have increased this fund with fundraising activities, a grant from Resurrection Furniture and the generosity of St Peter's and The Community of Beech. Thank you to all who contributed to this.

Plans for the year ahead.....

We plan to complete the works over the summer. A Quinquennial inspection is due in June.

Please pray for.....

The team of church volunteers, support from the village and the Parish Finance Team who all play their parts in different ways.....

Thank you

FABRIC REPORT - ST LAWRENCE CHURCH & PARISH CENTRE

Church

- Following long delays the roof damage was repaired satisfactorily.
- The lightning conductor system was repaired separately, summer 2022.
- Since 31 October 2022 one of the south windows has been subjected to 3 vandalism attacks. The first was repaired after a slow response from the architects only to be broken again within 7 days. We are still awaiting repair to that damage when it sustained a 3rd attack breaking up to 9 panes. Consideration needs to be given to a protective mesh screen to all windows without protection.
- Following the snow this winter the east and south tower guttering has collapsed. Again there have been lengthy delays but the repairs required are in process.
- The pathways around St Lawrence will be removed and replaced in a joint initiative between POTR, St Lawrence CE Primary School and Alton Town Council. This should enhance the safety and appearance of them. Work is planned to take place in the school summer holidays.
- The lighting bulbs in St Lawrence has been replaced with a eco friendly solution.
- We are looking into pest control as pigeons are roosting/nesting in the organ loft and causing a health risk for the choir.
- A new hot water boiler has been installed in the pod kitchen.
- The heating system timings have been adjusted with energy saving in mind.
- The quinquennial inspection has recently been conducted.

St Lawrence Parish Centre

- Lighting issues have been addressed and repairs made
- Negotiation with Busy Bees (Tenants) have resulted in increased income
- A smart energy meter is due to be installed
- Electrics have been repaired during the year
- Storage has been reconfigured to better suit POTR and the tenant
- The car park now has restricted access during Busy Bee's term time
- Liaison with Busy Bees and POTR have greatly improved in both terms of structure and points of contact.

Eco Church Report to APCM



Eco Church – Caring for God's earth

It has been a busy 12 months since our last report, a period which saw the continuation of some existing initiatives and quite a few new ones.

For those new to POTR or to Eco Church, it is a programme designed by the Christian charity, A Rocha, which guides churches of many denominations through a series of steps under the headings Worship, Land, Buildings, Community & Global Engagement and Lifestyle, the purpose being to demonstrate our Christian response to God's charge to humanity to care and steward his creation.

So, what has happened in the last year?

July saw the second Eco Service at which we welcomed Billie Anderson from Tearfund who talked about the impact of climate change on our neighbours in the Global South. Activities for all ages were devised by Julie; the service was brilliantly led by Gordon with creation themed music led by the choir.

Prayer has to be at the heart of whatever we do and each month a new Eco Church prayer is sourced by Jenny & included on Parish Matters each week for use by Intercessors and in private prayer. Prayer Stations were set up in three churches at the time of CoP 27, the IPCC conference held in Egypt in November 2022 which did not get the profile of CoP 26 in November 2021 but needed our prayers as much, if not more.

Carbon footprint - one of the biggest challenges of the A Rocha programme is to reduce the carbon footprint of POTR, not just that of our buildings but of all our activities. In addition, the Church of England has set a target for the whole church to be net zero in carbon by 2030 – a tough target, especially with little funding available from the national church at this stage.

The starting point is to measure the carbon footprint as it is stands, plan how it can be reduced and then reduce it!

The travel to church survey, devised by Martyn, has shown that POTR's carbon footprint in this respect is low as most people walk to church and church related activities.

Led by John, we are now gathering data to measure the rest of the carbon footprint and hope to have a plan for reduction to go to PCC for consideration by Autumn this year. 2030 will then be only 7 years away!

One focus of 2022-23 has been Land. We were sorry to lose Rob Simpson from the team during the year but two new initiatives were started in 2022.

Our first, Count on Nature event happened in the beautiful sunshine of June at Holy Rood churchyard. With the wonderful support of Cathy & Izzy from Alton Natural History Society (ANHS), a group of enthusiasts, recorded the plant species present and these were returned to the National Biodiversity Network for inclusion in the national database. In the space of a couple of hours, 106 different plant species were found.

Churchyards, because of how they are managed (quite often not managed much at all!) and used, may form the ideal ecosystem for plants and other wildlife. ANHS also provided advice as to how management could be tweaked to improve the space for wildlife.

Secondly, a project was started to improve the sustainability of St Lawrence churchyard. A review of the space was carried out; although it is not as sterile as it may appear - just a vast area of grass - but look closely and there is much more there than can be easily seen. To improve it both for environmental sustainability and to make it more attractive for community use, plans have been made, with the blessing of the Town Council (who are responsible for a lot of its maintenance) and the first phase was to plant spring bulbs at the east end of the church. A team of 14 people, including Nick Hinson and Derek Gurney who have given hours of expertise to this project, turned up in the late October sunshine and the resulting display in March & April was lovely to see. More bulbs will be planted in the autumn of 2023.

A wildflower space was prepared and sown in April near the south wall. A Quiet Garden is being developed to the north of the church which will provide seating and the planting will include as much drought resistant as possible.

Fiona Walke came up with the brilliant idea of a Toy Bonanza which had the aims of both reducing the amount of waste that goes to landfill, at the same time as helping at the time of the cost of living crisis. Two bonanzas have been held so far; the first at the end of November 2022 focussed on Christmas gifts and the second in March 2023, ahead of the Easter school holidays. Toys, books, games, puzzles and craft activities were donated in vast quantities from across Alton and the villages and made available for free. Any items left over were either donated on to charity shops or kept for the next event. Very little was disposed of owing to condition - books and jigsaws were recycled and only two bags of plastic toys were dumped - not bad when donations filled the Galilee Chapel and more.

Also under the headings of Community and Lifestyle, Eco Church put together A Greener Christmas event, held twice in November, at St Lawrence and at the Library, which aimed to demonstrate ways in which Christmas can be more environmentally friendly; ideas ranged from gift ideas including second hand, sourced from the Monthly Market and Resurrection Furniture, or handmade; and wrapping & decorations that were recyclable. A static display is planned for Christmas 2023, sited in Resurrection Furniture and a booklet of ideas will be made available.

Another Craft Swap, an idea originally from Sue and this time ably managed by Jackie Epps & supported by a great team, was put on in April. Watch out for an expansion of this into a Hobbies Swap, scheduled for November.

Throughout 2022-23, the Eco Church Team has been supported by a great team of volunteers – we could always do with more. Ruth, among other things is the Team contact at Holy Rood; to have a similar contact at All Saints and St Peter's would be of huge benefit. Whatever time, interest or talents you have to offer, please let one of the team know or email ecochurch@potr-alton.co.uk

Eco Church has also been blessed to continue to work alongside ACAN, the brilliant and ceaselessly hardworking environmental group Alton is blessed with – POTR was privileged to host their exhibition "Listen to the Children" in February.

Although undertaking the Eco programme is not just about winning the awards, POTR's current status is:

Land – Silver

Buildings – Bronze

Community & Global Engagement – Silver

Lifestyle – Silver

Worship - Gold

Please continue to pray for the work of the Eco Church team and for all work, local, national & international to reverse the effect of climate change – with God's help it is possible!

Elsbeth Mackeggie Gurney

April 2023

Meet and Eat – women's group for Fun and Fellowship. Report for APCM 2023

Meet and Eat is a group for women of the Parish, we meet on the first Monday of the month excluding Bank Holidays and January. There are nearly fifty members with an average of 20 attending the monthly meetings; it is a great way to meet other women from the Parish.

April - Bee Keeping Talk - with Lucinda and Bob Yelland. We enjoyed a lovely selection of home-made cakes lots with a honey theme. The WBC hive was invented by and named after William Broughton Carr in 1890, Lucinda's Great, Great Grandfather.

We were able to try several different types of honey all with natural flavours of heather, thyme, rosemary, eucalyptus and cactus. The cactus honey had an interesting after burn. There are usually two crops of Holybourne Honey, the Spring crop will be from rapeseed and the 2nd crop will be from the gardens of Holybourne.



Honey Bee



WBC Hive



June – we enjoyed a walk around Holybourne, followed by a picnic in the Vicarage garden. The weather stayed dry and we were able to enjoy each others company. July – a walk around Flood Meadows, then a well deserved supper in the Ivy House. August – another sunny evening to enjoy the views from Windmill Hill. September – a walk from Sarah Neish’s house enjoying the beautiful countryside with a well deserved picnic, cakes and hot drinks. We were so fortunate with the weather for our walk and picnic, there was a huge thunderstorm just as we all got home.

October - David Allan talk - My Stamping Ground. David has collected stamps since he was a little boy. One of the first stamps was from one of his Grandmother’s lodgers who came from Kuwait, David was fascinated by the different designs and this became a lifelong interest to ‘squirrel’ away stamps.

Alton Boy’s Brigade have delivered nearly 92,000 Christmas cards since 1984! If you would like yours delivered this year please take them to the Methodist Church and they will be delivered at the cost of 30p per card, a saving of 38p for a regular 2nd class stamp! (2022 prices, there may be an increase for 2023)

November - talk from Claire Denman who was born and raised in Alton and works for the charity Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) which seeks to protect the freedom to choose and practice a religion of choice. Claire is their United Nations Officer, working in Geneva, London, New York and Brussels.

Claire’s lovely Mum Mary Denman chatted about the CSW resource booklet, this was followed by a time to chat and enjoy refreshments. We then broke into smaller groups for those who wanted to write cards of encouragement and pray.

December - Twenty eight of us met in All Saints Hall for a Bring and Share supper, we had a delicious variety of dishes J Sue Dell kindly set us the table quizzes to complete, some found it more difficult than others! Who would know that Martha’s specialist knowledge was Quality Street!



Thanks Sue for setting the quiz and making our brains work out! We had special guests Mary and Joseph as part of their Posada travels!

We make a £2.00 contribution to M&E when we attend. As a group we have given donations to MAF and Connect and Encourage as well as Holy Rood for the refreshments. We gave a donation of £75.00 to Sue Dell for Home Start in December, little did we know that our donation would be doubled by The Big Give Scheme that ended the following day at 12.00! In total Home Start have been donated £20,000, including the generous doubling of all donations.

February – Martin East spoke about his life as an RAF pilot, and of his conversion to faith and his subsequent ordained ministry. There was a time for questions and time to chat to each other with a drinks and cakes.

March - Speaker Jackie Nelson. Whilst many parts of the world celebrate International Women's Day on 8 March, it appears to be relatively unknown in the UK. In fact the date has been marked since 1909, mainly in communist and socialist countries where it's considered a focal point in the women's rights movement, bringing attention to issues such as gender equality, reproductive rights, and violence against women as well as an opportunity to celebrate women everywhere for their contributions to the world. The bible reminds us that men and women are made in God's image and woman was created to reflect a part of God's character, as a helper ('ezer) to man. The word 'ezer' was used to describe God when he rescued His people from oppression. There are many examples of women in the bible who God used for His glory including Rahab, Esther and Mary.

So What Can We Do?

Spur one another on,

Speak words of life to women and girls,

Thanks and bless those women in our communities, who are serving families, organisations, communities ...,

Look for ways to serve women who are oppressed, hurting and denied the opportunity to thrive.

Pray, give, and even go to marginalised women in Jesus' name.



Please do chat to Kathy Norkett at All Saints, Sarah Neish at Beech, Ruth Randall at Holybourne, Elspeth Mackeggie Gurney and Alison Parr at St. Lawrence about the group.

If you would like to be added to the distribution list or need any further information please email Lyn Baines at meetandeat@btinternet.com

Other Parish Activities are recorded on the parish website which details information.