

PARISH OF COLLINGHAM WITH HAREWOOD

2024 ANNUAL REPORT (for financial year 2023)



Purposes:

Collingham and Harewood Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with the Priest in Charge to promote, within the community of the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

The Churchwardens and PCC are also responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the Grade II* listed building St Oswald's Church, Collingham and the surrounding churchyard.

Objectives and Aims:

The PCC is committed to ministering and reaching out to as many people as possible through the provision of a variety of styles of worship, by extending an open and welcoming attitude to those who seek baptism for their children or wish to marry in the church (provided they meet the legal requirements), by offering a Christian funeral and/or burial to any residents of the Parish whose families request this (or have an existing family grave), and through the offering of pastoral care and friendship to all.

In addition, many members of both the PCC and wider congregation live out their Christian commitment through involvement in social and community activities within the parish and beyond – including supporting our schools, children's activities, sporting clubs, activities for older residents, and those in need.

Structures:

The PCC consists of the Vicar, The Revd Carolyn James, two Churchwardens – presently the office is held by Tim Wood, who is also Lay Chair of the PCC, and John Newby - up to 4 Deanery Synod representatives (presently 2 in post), and up to 12 elected members (presently 6 in post). A number of individuals can also be co-opted in any PCC year should that be considered appropriate and agreed by the Council. The PCC is responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish, for working together in mission and ministry, and is responsible for the managing of funds and of how the monies are spent.

Membership:

Members of the PCC are in some cases *ex officio*. Otherwise, they are elected by the annual parochial church meeting in accordance with the Church Representation Rule, or may be co-opted as stated above.

During the year the following served as members of the PCC:

Vicar (*ex officio*): The Reverend Carolyn A James

Church Wardens (*elected 2023*): Tim Wood and John Newby

Deanery Synod Representatives (*elected 2023*): Jan Robinson and Amy Lowe

Further Elected Members:

Marcus Griffiths (*elected 2021*)

Diana Lee, Doug Masterton, Helen Barrett and Julie Frankland (*elected 2022*)

Sandra Dean (*elected Sept 2023*)

The Standing Committee:

The Standing Committee of the PCC has power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings subject to any directions given it by the Council. During this past year the Standing Committee has consisted of those in office as Churchwarden, Secretary, Treasurer and Vicar.

Working Groups

There have been a number of meetings of groups of individuals who are involved in specific areas of ministry and mission within the life of the church – for planning, reviewing and organisational matters – namely, Social and Fundraising; Worship, Nurture and Outreach; Children, Young People and Families. These are intended to bring together PCC members, and non-PCC members, to work together around a particular area of the Church's ministry and mission. The work of the second two of these groups has also led to the beginnings of a small working group around preparation for All Age Worship.

Safeguarding

The PCC members believe they have continued to fulfil their duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults) in relation to the business and activities they have undertaken during this past year. A separate Safeguarding Report highlighting any specific actions taken or matters addressed is included later in this document.

Reports

1. PCC

Jan Robinson (PCC Secretary) reports:

In 2023 there were the 4 usual business meetings for the PCC, as well as a brief meeting following the APCM to appoint the officers for the coming year, with the Standing Committee meeting in advance of these meetings in order to agree the agendas. We were notified by the Bishop of Leeds that it had been decided that with effect from April 1st, 2023 the Benefice of Collingham with Harewood and the Benefice of Spofforth with Kirk Deighton should be held in plurality by one incumbent, which also means that our Priest in Charge is now known as Vicar. The main items under discussion at PCC meetings were always finance, fabric, safeguarding, and health and safety; particular items last year were the renewing of our Safeguarding Policy, St Oswald's new website, the sale/rental of land adjacent to the graveyard, and the maintenance of the church bells.

2. Finance

The accounts for 2023 are attached as separate documents.

Doug Masterton (Treasurer) reports:

The figures cover all transactions in the general church account from the 1st January to 31st December 2023 inclusive. They are not accrued, in that no adjustments are made for any receipts or payments expected between those dates, but which took place outside the precise accounting period.

The classification of income and expenditure is in line with the format for reporting in the Annual Return to the Diocese. Income figures for 2023 are untypical as they have been augmented by receipts from the funds of the former Churches Together in Collingham following the organisation of the Coronation celebrations. Half of the total remaining surplus was shared with the Methodist Church. Additionally, the church received grant support towards the car park surfacing from the Emmerdale Fund managed by Leeds City Council. An appeal to pay for repairs and maintenance of the church bells has also been started and money donated in 2023 is shown under Donations. Two legacies were received from the estates of P Bailey and M Jackson. Due to the hiatus in stewardship recording, no

Gift Aid Tax refunds were claimed in 2023 and, in consequence, the total giving received from worshipers is significantly lower than in 2022.

It was possible to increase the proportion of the requested Parish Share paid in 2023 but the amount paid fell well short of the total requested by the Diocese of Leeds. Gas bills in 2023 were higher partly because of a failure by our supplier to collect and predict readings from a newly installed gas meter.

The accounts have been operated almost entirely through on-line banking. As a safeguard, the Churchwardens and the Revd Carolyn James are authorised to monitor all transactions. The financial assets of the church remain substantial. Savings and investment in shares provide important revenue. The value of the shares held by the church show a modest improvement. During 2023 £15000 was withdrawn from one cash investment account to meet the deficit in income compared to expenditure.

St Oswald's Church has grown as a lively worshipping Christian Community. Although not under threat, its finances are not yet balanced and church work continues thanks to the generosity of previous generations. Through the dedicated work of our Parish Priest Carolyn James, supported by unstinting commitment from regular worshipers, our church carries forth the Christian mission in Collingham with increasing visibility. I would like to thank our Churchwardens Tim Wood and John Newby who, in addition to their other duties, have banked cash collections and worked hard to secure additional income.

Stewardship Report

Please see the attached separate document.

3. Fundraising Report

John Newby and Tim Wood (members of Fundraising Committee) report:

A quiz night was held in April at which £655.40 was raised.

St Oswald's undertook the organisation of a very successful lunchtime picnic on the Glebe Field to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles. We supplied cakes and scones free of charge and sold commemorative mugs. It was estimated that 450 people attended.

Our celebration of St Oswald's patronal day in August took place again this year. Once again teddy bears and other children's soft toys were able to parachute from the top of the church tower, receiving a certificate for their bravery.

A Wine and Cheese evening was held in the Memorial Hall in October which 40 people attended and we raised approx. £580.

Our thanks to all those who were involved in the organisation and implementation of all these activities.

4. Electoral Roll Report

Sandra Dean (Electoral Roll Officer) reports:

The revised Electoral Roll has increased to 126. This includes 5 new additions and 2 deaths.

5. Fabric Report

Tim Wood and John Newby (Churchwardens) report:

Quinquennial Inspection

We are due a Quinquennial inspection in 2024. There remains some work of a minor nature, basically cracks and repairs to pointing from the previous report in 2019.

Church Building

Remains in good condition after redecoration in 2021. The Emergency Lighting unit has been replaced. There are a number of periodic inspections which we are mandated to carry out and these continue as usual, e.g. heating boiler, fire extinguishers, lightning protection, and Electrical Installation and PAT testing is due in 2024.

Bells

We have continued to provide bell ringing for weddings when requested, and as a result of the training class we are now able to ring at least twice a month in St Oswald's.

A survey undertaken in 2023 indicated that maintenance was required for all of the eight bell clappers. Bells 1 & 2 have been completed with the remaining six, bells 3 to 8, being undertaken in February 2024. The cost of this has been supported partially by a Grant from the Emmerdale Fund and an appeal to the parish. We are grateful for all the donations received. The window in the Ringing chamber was also successfully repaired and repainted, significantly reducing the draft experienced.

AV System

We no longer live stream our regular Sunday services, and to date we have received no complaints. Acoustic Solutions continues to support us in its operation. The system requires some minor updates and improvements relating to its operation and which will not be apparent to the viewer.

Churchyard

Once again, a number of informal memorial items in the form of garden pots have appeared during the year and are making grass cutting difficult. The contract for maintenance is due for renewal in 2024.

Car Park

The area adjacent the Glebe field fence has been overlaid with a plastic mesh to prevent damage to the surface in wet conditions. The wall adjacent to the Vicarage requires rebuilding and continues to lean. This is scheduled for March 2024. Both the plastic mesh and rebuilding of the wall is being financed by a grant from the Emmerdale Fund.

Field and Maintenance

The PCC agreed to sell a small part of the field to allow the Coach House to extend its garden, and to rent another, an adjacent part across the access track, allowing them to extend their car parking area. This will bring an income of approx. £110pa to the PCC for the rental, and a single payment of £12000 for the sale. As of December 2023, the sale had been agreed and Solicitors appointed. We are still awaiting completion. The delay is due to awaiting a decision from the Diocesan Board of Finance.

The remaining area of the field remains loaned to the Ark and is currently being grazed by their animals. It has been a positive situation as the PCC has not been required to carry out any cutting.

The intention is for this situation to be formalised with a Grazing Licence. However, before renting we need to ensure that the fields are suitably fenced and in good order. Part of the money from the sale of land (outline above) will be put towards the work required to remedy the fencing aspects and cutting back of the hedge line. We have undertaken further planning and have a process in place to complete this once the sale is completed.

Website

The new website has been operating for a year and improvements are being undertaken. The website is updated on a monthly basis.

Health and Safety

The north west area of the churchyard has a significant number of depressions and holes that have appeared and will require filling.

6. Safeguarding

Val Masterton (Parish Safeguarding Officer) reports:

"Promoting a safer church"

"The care and protection of children, young people and adults involved in Church activities is the responsibility of everyone who participates in the life of the Church"

In May 2023 the PCC appointed a new Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) who has attended five safeguarding training courses delivered by the Diocese and CofE and in addition has taken ownership of the digital Safeguarding Dashboard provided by the Diocese to assist PSOs with their safeguarding responsibilities. It is a useful tool that has a structured approach to recording compliance with safeguarding requirements, including the ability to print off reports and Action Plans and gives access to safeguarding documents and resources.

The PCC renewed the House of Bishops Safeguarding Policy document, 'Promoting a Safer Church', a statement confirming this is displayed in the church porch alongside the 'Promoting a Safer Church' poster which provides contact names and numbers for reporting safeguarding concerns.

The PCC has approved a Procedure for Responding to Concerns and Allegations, to deal promptly with and report any safeguarding concern or allegation including any suspicion of abuse.

The PCC approved an Action Plan for Safeguarding which confirms a great deal of progress made and highlights areas for attention. A recent update shows that all areas of Safeguarding Dashboard Level 1 are completed except for some training.

Attention will now be focused on Level 2 of the Dashboard including safeguarding compliance for Church Activities and Safer Recruitment procedures.

7. Deanery Synod

Jan Robinson (Deanery Synod Representative) reports:

In 2023 Deanery Synod met on 4 occasions. At each meeting we share “Good news from the Deanery” and are updated on Deanery finances and any new incumbents, vacancies and opportunities there may be within the Deanery. In April Canon Liz Morton, Children, Young People and Families Team Leader spoke about the focus and work of the Diocesan Children, Young People and Families Team. In July our new Lay Chair, Dr Sue Atkin, from St Mark’s Church, Harrogate was welcomed to the role, followed by a food festival with dishes from 12 different countries all made by people worshipping within the Deanery. At the September meeting 3 representatives from different branches of Wellsprings Together told us about the charity which is in partnership with the Diocese of Leeds and exists to provide free additional resources to support faith communities in meeting social need and making a difference in their communities. At the final meeting in November our speaker was The Rt. Revd Nicholas Baines, Bishop of Leeds who spoke generally about the Diocese and the challenges facing the Church of England.

The Church’s Worship, Ministry & Mission

Worship and Prayer

Our pattern and regularity of Services has been sustained in the manner re-established in 2022 - offering a weekly 8.30am Eucharist (1st Sunday BCP Communion) and a weekly 10am Service (usually Eucharistic; sometimes specifically family/all-age focused), also on 5th Sunday and for Seasonal Specials an All-Age Eucharist, and a monthly All-Age Worship Service (on 4th Sunday) which is non-Eucharistic.

There is a weekly mid-week Eucharist on Wednesdays at 9.30am.

The All-Age being held on the 4th Sunday of the month has now run since September 2022. This linked in nicely with a Toy Service towards the end of November (in good time for collecting for Christmas) and also for the first time in 2023 we invited the Rainbows, Brownies and Guides to the 4th Sunday in February to coincide with Thinking Day and it was lovely to have nearly 70 people in Church for that – this has been further built upon this year.

Additional Special Seasonal Services have been held for Epiphany (Epiphany Carol Service), Ash Wednesday, each day in Holy Week (Stations of the Cross Monday through to Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday), Ascension, Patronal Festival (St Oswald’s Day Outdoor Worship, attendance 40), a Celtic Eucharist on the 5th Sunday in August, All Saints/All Souls (Memorial Service – attendance 35), Remembrance (a village wide Service this last year, again with Collingham Band, back in the Memorial Hall – estimated attendance 130), Christingle (attendance 124), Crib Service (attendance 125) and Carol Services (at St Oswald’s- attendance 130, and at Harewood Village Hall- attendance 63).

It was also a delight to have a Confirmation service back in St Oswald’s (September 2023) and to celebrate with our candidates Alice Holt and Nell Pickersgill, and their families – as well as to host the first ever Confirmation of our new Area Bishop, The Rt Rev’d Anna Eltringham!

After last year’s national marking of both the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee and her funeral, this year brought with it a Coronation Celebration. Amidst the Coronation Celebration Activities on the Glebe Field, very much planned, promoted and undertaken by St Oswald’s personnel, we held an Open-Air Act of Worship in the Glebe Field, at which members of the Methodist Church and of our two Church Schools were present and represented (with readings/prayers from the children), and an estimated 120 adults/children present.

Attendance. We continue to see a pleasing and gradual increase in attendance, both week by week and very much so at our seasonal ‘specials’.

All our core Festival Services increased in number this year – i.e. Mothering Sunday 43 to 67, Easter Sunday 64 to 98, Carol Service 58 to 130, Crib Service 85 to 125, Christmas Midnight 24 to 34, and Christmas Day 21 to 42.

We continue to be aware that the number who attend week by week are only ever a proportion of the number who do worship with us on at the very least a semi-regular basis, meaning that all-year round averages are always very

misleading in terms of the individuals we know and who are members of our St Oswald's family. However, numerically there has still been a slight increase in average weekly attendance – which in a small church continues to be encouraging.

Occasional Offices. During 2023, there were **12 (2022-15) baptisms**, **2 (2022 – 5) weddings** and **10 (2022-9) funerals** conducted at St Oswald's, **1 (2022-4) funeral** conducted at the Crematorium (by the Vicar of St Oswald's) and **a small number of interments of ashes** in family graves after a funeral at St Oswald's or elsewhere.

School Worship. During 2023 the School Family of LEH School Collingham, has held their Services in St Oswald's at Easter, end of School Year, and Christmas. This means that all the children of LEH, Church of England, Primary School, will have been to the Church for two or three Services this past year. As a way of addressing our inability to invite parents to these services (due to our limited space) we have, during 2023, begun a cycle of individual Class/Year Group Acts of Worship in the Church. We are in the process of completing those for the academic year 2022/23, meaning that by the end of July 2024 each year group will have had their own 'special class worship' in church during the year and parents/grandparent etc have been invited to join them. It has been lovely to see the reactions and hear the comments of some parents who have never been in St Oswald's before. The annual cycle of children's work from different year groups at LEH, Collingham, is also displayed in church and parents of those whose work is displayed are usually notified.

In addition to this Rev'd Carolyn goes into each of our two Church Schools in the Parish (Collingham and Harewood) alternate weeks during term time, to lead Collective Worship for the School Communities.

Group Study and Prayer During Lent 2023, study opportunities were offered, by way of both a morning gathering in Church after the Wednesday Eucharist, and an evening gathering. The C of E 'Dust & Glory' booklets were provided for those who wished to have them purchased and others used the material electronically. 'Big Questions' were also shared with the congregation and church family Sunday by Sunday drawing upon the 'Dust & Glory' themes, giving people a short something to take away and think about/discuss with others. During Advent 2023, we began a study group following some material produced by 'The Big Church Read' and focussing upon how we ***Hear God through Prayer***.... These sessions were spread out, running through Advent and into Epiphany (January 2024).

Eucharistic Practice/Liturgy & Ministers. The continual roll-out of a return to 'normal practice' has meant that the Chalice has been offered to people since Advent 2022. We have also reintroduced the Offertory Procession – not simply the monetary offering – meaning that the Eucharistic elements are again taken up by members of the congregation, representing our corporate offering of ourselves and all which we bring from our everyday lives and world, seeking God's touch of blessing and transformation in the celebration of the Eucharist.

We have also sought the necessary permissions from the Bishop for further Eucharistic Ministers to be Licensed to the Parish – and during this coming year the renewed and enlarged team will be evident and most helpful!

Seasonal Printed Service books. The full set of printed Service Booklets to cover the liturgical season of the year have been produced and we now have four individual seasonal booklets to cover the Christian year: one for Advent and Lent, one for Christmas and Epiphany, one for Easter through to Pentecost, and one for Ordinary Time (the in-between times!).

Worship with Collingham Methodists We joined together at the Methodist Church for their annual Covenant service in January and worshipped with them also at the Coronation Weekend Celebrations. Rev'd Carolyn has worked with Pastor Eileen to join together on Good Friday for the past 2 years – offering together a Good Friday refreshments and activities session leading into our Village Good Friday Walk of Witness which concludes with Family Worship at St Oswald's

Church Music. During 2023 we have continued to enjoy the musical provision of Paddy and Kyle Chow who are paid to be our 'Sunday musicians' and who between them play the organ (and sometimes the piano) on most Sundays of the year and also other specials services. It has been good to again feel there is some stability, going forward, in this important area of our Church's Worship life. On occasions when one of them cannot be with us due to other musical or family commitments, or ill health, we have been able to download and play music through our 'sound system'.

We continue to enjoy the input of our small Junior Choir who meet to prepare something for many of our All Age and Family Services, and this year we also had the added joy of our 'PopUp4Christmas' Choir of enthusiastic children too. This was one of those ideas which took off and became something which we think may have potential for development!

It has been delightful to hear the music of our Church Bells ringing out more often as a 'call to worship' during this past year, and to know that there are new members of the team too!

Pastoral Care

We have a joint Pastoral and Bereavement Group with the Parish of Spofforth and Kirk Deighton, with two visitors from this team specifically working in this parish. Working with the Vicar meetings are held to reflect and review, as well as meeting with colleagues in the Parish of Spofforth for mutual support.

Home Communion is offered where needed/requested (the housebound/those in care/temporarily incapacitated), whether that be an ongoing need for a period or a one off. However, needs of this kind, or situations where general pastoral care could be needed/offered is still heavily dependent upon people letting us know.

We are also aware, of course, of the less formal care and support which many people naturally and generously offer to their neighbours and those known to them, and which is greatly valued.

Mission and Evangelism

Throughout the year, the church building has continued to be open, usually on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am to 4pm, providing a space for people to visit, pray and reflect as they wish – and on many other occasions as well.

We continue to work hard at developing and extending links with the families, and younger people of our villages through the schools (see separate reports) and in addition to Rev'd Carolyn's work in the schools through leading worship, input to RE lessons, Governor and Foundation Committee work, we also seek to find opportunities to invite people to know and feel that St Oswald's is a place and a community when they can belong too.

LO:GO (Little St Oswald's : Great Outdoors). Our pattern of holiday-time activities of fun and activities, singing and games – usually one afternoon each half term holiday and on a number of occasions during the summer – has been sustained. Sessions were held February half-term, Good Friday, June, three times during the summer and again in November half-term. This is wholly dependent upon the volunteering of a small team who meet to plan, then prepare and run activities, as well as all the other oversight which is needed when working with children and families. Numbers of children have again steadily increased, and we are in the position of needing more willing volunteers to help in various ways to enable us to continue to offer and develop this significant and enjoyable work.

Lent 2023 Outreach. Our St Oswald's Give Away/Take Away Gift Bags were again hung in public places (on 3 occasions) as a way of reaching out to our local community with a visual and accessible message which may be taken by those who we would not ordinarily 'reach'.

Holy Week Outreach 2023 Together for Good Friday ran for the second year. Hot Cross buns and refreshments with seasonal crafts for children at the Methodist Church, followed by a Walk of Witness/Prayer Walk. This is a visual way of marking Good Friday, in and for the people of Collingham, as well as praying together for our community.

Patronal Festival Outreach On the weekend closest to St Oswald's Day, August 2023, we held again our afternoon of 'Teddy Bear' Parachute jumps from the church tower with other activities and afternoons teas to draw others, prior to our Open-Air Songs of Praise. Again, a mix of ages and faces old and new joined in and had a great time – despite the need to 'rescue' some teddies along the way!

Christmas Outreach 2023 December 2023 saw our first St Oswald's Christmas Tree Festival. Rather like the Flower Festival of 2022, groups in the village were invited to participate by decorating a tree and the church was filled with an attractive array of trees decorations and fairy lights – both a lovely backdrop to our Christmas Services this year, and also a way of inviting people in to 'come and see'.

Again, this event was only possible due to the hard work and enthusiasm of volunteers who 'ran with the idea', planned, liaised and oversaw the process leading up to the event and then staffed the church at agreed times so as to be welcoming to the wider community. Money was also raised for some of our Charities which we support throughout the year.

Later in December 2023 there was a Carol Singing event in the Village, this time gathering around some of the flats in the village, as well as a short period outside Tesco, before joining up with Collingham Band in CALSA where we tried to encourage others to sing with us, amidst the very noisy and jovial atmosphere of a Collingham pre-Christmas weekend!

Bell Ringing

Joanne Palin (Tower Captain) reports:

Throughout the year, our small but dedicated bell ringing team has consistently demonstrated their commitment to ensuring that the ancient art of bell ringing continues to thrive within our community. During 2023 the close links forged with All Saints' at Bramham were maintained and we continue to operate as a combined team in order to support Sunday services, weddings and special events. St Oswald's benefited directly from the national bell ringing recruitment campaign 'Ring for the King' to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III, with two new ringers joining our team, taking our number to 5.

The team continues to meet for Tuesday evening practices, alternating between St Oswald's Collingham and All Saints Bramham from 7.15 – 8.30pm. Fortnightly sessions have also been introduced on a Saturday morning to help advance our ringers to an intermediate level status. St Oswald's Sunday service ringing currently takes place on the second and last Sunday of every month.

We had no safeguarding incidents to report. Any child under the age of 18 that visited always had a parent present with them, and we are aware of the need to be vigilant to the needs of any vulnerable adult visiting us. Additional Church of England Safeguarding training will be rolled out across the whole team during 2024.

We are keen to ensure that the bell ringers become a more integral part of the church community and will be working closely with the Vicar and Church Wardens to increase the church service ringing involvement whenever it is requested.

Children and Schools

Teddy Praise

Amy Lowe (Teddy Praise Leader) reports:

Teddy Praise is St Oswald's baby and pre-school playgroup.

During 2023 we met on the first Friday of the month, during term time, at the Methodist church hall from 10-11.30am. We are open to parents, grandparents, and childminders to attend with their babies and toddlers.

We are grateful to the support of our friends at the Methodist Church and the use of their hall for meetings and the storage of toys/materials without which we would struggle to run Teddy Praise.

Teddy Praise meetings are a relaxed, informal way of providing carers with an opportunity to make links with others in the community, introducing young children and their families to the churches of St Oswald's and the Methodist Church and laying some basic foundations with the children (and their carers) about God's love for them and the teachings of the Bible.

We have lots of toys for babies and toddlers to enjoy and our craft activity is based around a Bible story/Christian theme. During the year we cover major festivals of Harvest, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent and Easter with stories from the New Testament about the life of Jesus.

Each session has a craft activity and includes singing. We have built a repertoire of simple songs and action rhymes which the children have learnt over time and our Teddy Praise prayer. The children particularly enjoy action songs and "This Little Light of Mine 'where they get to hold an LED candle each!

The group is run by Amy Lowe with support from Rev'd Carolyn James, and from Elizabeth Bates who kindly organises refreshments.

Most of our group hear about us through Rev'd Carolyn when enquiring about baptism for their baby. It is heartening to see parents return to the group with their second child during maternity/paternity leave. Many current and ex-Teddy Praise families also attend All Age services, LO:GO and special services throughout the year.

Sunday Club

Julie Frankland (Sunday Club Leader) reports:

Sunday Club is for 7–11 year-olds (or thereabouts) and we usually meet on the third Sunday of every month in the Methodist Church Hall in Collingham from 10.00 – 11.00am. Dates can vary because of school holidays and special events in the Church year, and the special events of the children. Since November the venue is a little haphazard as we are unable to use the Methodist Church Hall because of their repair work. However, this information is shared with all interested parties prior to meetings.

Because our numbers are low, we are unable to use as many drama and/or games to support our learning and understanding; however we do enjoy puzzles and craft activities, and we really enjoy doing these. We would love it if more children were able to come and learn with us.

The children generally choose the main theme. This year we have been looking at the journeys of Jesus around the Holy Land and the work that he was doing after his baptism by John. He did a lot of walking and his reputation spread very far and wide so that people from all over the Holy Land travelled to listen to him and be near him.

Some parents stay with their children, and they are very welcome. Needless to say, they all join in with everything that is going on and are very helpful!

Junior Choir

Amy Lowe (Junior Choir Leader) reports:

During 2023 Junior Choir continued with two children as permanent members. To make things easier for all concerned we switched to rehearsing at the children's own home on a Monday evening.

The choir sing at most All Age Services and some special services.

The girls very much enjoy their opportunity to worship through song and the congregation appear to very much enjoy their contribution to our services.

For Christmas 2023 we had an enthusiastic response to a 'pop up choir' idea. This involved local children (mainly attending Lady Elizabeth Collingham Primary School) singing 'Away in a Manger' and 'Little Donkey' at some of our pre-Christmas services. My thanks to Helen Barrett and her daughter Gemma Mercer for communicating with local parents to make the 'pop up choir' possible.

Collingham Lady Elizabeth Hastings CofE (VA) School

Mary Wood (Chair of Governors) reports on behalf of the Foundation Governors:

Lady Elizabeth Hastings School has 210 children on its role and serves the local community of Collingham and Linton. It has 9 Foundation Governors who support the Christian ethos of the school and are largely drawn from members of the congregation. The Vicar Reverend Carolyn James is an ex officio governor of both schools.

This year the school has continued to build strong links with St Oswald's and the community. The Pandemic had an impact on church links and attendance at St Oswald's and it has taken time to recover. Since April 2023 the school is really pleased to be back in the Church magazine and able to share their news with the village community monthly.

In March the children were able to attend Easter Services at St Oswald's. The Year 4 children had their work on display in the church - they had been looking at artwork based upon Peter and his part in the Easter Story. The children had also made Easter cards and gifts for members of the community who may be experiencing loneliness.

In May the school celebrated the Coronation of King Charles III in a very traditional way. They consulted the school record book which recorded that the children sent a telegram to Princess Elizabeth to congratulate her on the birth of her son Prince Charles on November 15th, 1948. This was then followed by a message of congratulation to her Majesty upon her Coronation on June 2nd, 1953. Another telegram was sent on May 14th, 1954 to the royal couple on their

return from their tour of the Commonwealth. As telegrams have now become obsolete in 2023 children sent letters of congratulations, with their individual hopes for the future, to King Charles. The letters were assembled in a bound folder and sent off to Buckingham Palace. The children had a celebratory picnic lunch on Friday 5th May (sadly, due to rain it was indoors). Excitement was certainly evident as the children were dressed in red, white and blue and decked in crowns they had made. Lunch was followed by Collective Worship during which children from each class were given commendations for 'Service' to others and the community. Representatives from the youngest children to the older children read their letters to King Charles. These were beautifully written and wished the King a successful Coronation and reign. They also thanked him for the work that he has done for the environment, the Princes Trust and the Commonwealth. They expressed the wish that he would serve his people and work towards a fair and just society. It was very moving to hear such sincere wishes from the children and their hopes for the future. Children from both Collingham and Harewood Schools read prayers and letters to the King at the Service of Celebration which took place on the Glebe Field, Collingham on Sunday May 7th. This was followed by the Coronation Big Family Picnic and many of the school children and their families came along to have fun and celebrate. Copies of some of the children's letters were then on display in St Oswald's Church.

Year 6 children began their SATS tests on the Tuesday 8th May until Friday 12th May. These are the first external tests they sit before they go on to High School. In July the SATS results were announced - Key Stage 2, Key Stage 1 and Early Years Foundation Stage results were excellent and well above other schools in Leeds and across the country. The children performed very well and must be commended for their hard work, resilience, and success.

A Leavers' Service was held at St Oswald's and children gave their personal reflections on their time at school. They spoke of the memories, the fun, the friendships and their respect and thanks for the teachers. Reverend Carolyn James spoke of the importance of the Roots that had been given to them by their family and school and the Fruits they will produce as they grow up. They were presented with Bibles from the Lady Elizabeth Hastings Trust and a jigsaw piece magnet with the reminder of the Roots and Fruits message from the service, from St Oswald's Church.

In September we were very pleased to see our new intake of Reception children arrive for the start of their education journey. They always look very tiny when they arrive! They very quickly found their feet and settled in very well.

The Autumn term saw a new link with St Oswald's when Year 3 had their first-class worship in St Oswald's Church. Parents and carers were invited to join the service. It was a great success. This was then followed by Year 6 who had their class Worship lesson in October. Every class is now going to attend a class worship at the church during the year. The message of the worship was "All are Welcome". Despite the logistical problems of getting the children from school to church, Mr Cook (Headteacher) is keen for the children to visit the church as much as possible.

On October 10th the children celebrated their Harvest Service. whole school was involved, and each class sang a Harvest Song. The service was attended by parents, grandparents, and younger siblings. Donations of food would be given to the Wetherby Foodbank and the monetary donations were shared with the Foodbank and Shelter Box (a charity that sends emergency supplies in a storage box to disaster areas around the world).

To further links with the local community the school have planned a new 'local history' unit of work. The children would try to investigate the enquiry question: 'How did Collingham contribute towards WW2?'. As part of this unit, the children used census records to find out about some significant individuals from Collingham who fought in the war. They used census records and maps to locate the houses in the village that these men and women used to live in and walked around Collingham to find these. Many are already marked by blue plaques. They used the old school record books to find out that evacuees were on roll at the school. They used the 'roll of honour' list to investigate how women from the local area might have contributed to the war effort. The school held a Remembrance Service to remember the sacrifice that was made by members of the Collingham Community who lost their lives in World 1 and 2 and their sacrifice allowed us the freedoms and peace that we enjoy today.

During the year the children also learnt about those less fortunate than themselves and they raised a considerable amount of money for charity. This year the school supported BBC Children in Need. The donations from non-uniform day, name the teddy and a bun sale meant that they were able to raise the grand total of £336.65. The

School Council organised a very successful fun day on March 15 to support Comic Relief. Everyone was asked to wear a red nose and something red instead of school uniform. The money raised was a fabulous £352.00.

At the end of the term the school went into full Christmas Mode. The Children in Reception and Key Stage 1 have two Christmas Performances followed by Key Stage 2 and another two performances. These events are very important for the children and much loved and appreciated by the parents and carers. The dress rehearsal for the Reception and Key Stage 1 children, was attended by guests from the local community. Every child played a part in the traditional Nativity. The term did end on a high with the four Christmas performances which raised a staggering total of £1077.63 and this went to the two school charities, Zarach and ShelterBox (Zarach provides beds and bedding for families in need).

The children had once again supported the brilliant initiative of Home Instead – “Be a Santa for a Senior”. This is the 5th year that they children have supported this cause by making an array of Christmas cards, decorations, calendars etc, that are donated to the charity, so that they can then be distributed to elderly members of the local community.

On December 19th the children attended Church Services at St Oswald’s to celebrate Christmas and have time to reflect on its true significance. After the service a group of children from Year 6 and staff formed a small choir to sing at the Collingham Community Lunch. It was a brilliant performance and brought tears to the eyes of the audience. It was a fantastic initiative and very much appreciated. Two groups of school staff have been attending the fortnightly Collingham Community Lunch at the Memorial Hall throughout the winter. This is an initiative run by volunteers to encourage members of the community to meet up and to help reduce loneliness during the cold and dark months.

The Spring Term began with Vision Week. The whole school took part in a special focus week all about the school Christian vision:

- We are family –
- All are welcome –
- You are loved.

The week began with Collective Worship and sessions to ensure the children really understand the meaning of the school vision and how they can live this out every day both at school and at home. Three bible stories were chosen to link with each part of our vision to embed them even further:

- We are family – The Prodigal Son
- All are welcome – Jesus welcomes the children.
- You are loved – The Good Samaritan

Each class was then tasked with creating a display board for the hall either representing the words of the school vision or the linked bible story. Reception impressed us with their excellent artistic skills and stained-glass windows, some of which depict the story of ‘Jesus welcomes the children’, as does the window in St Oswald’s. The children’s work is now displayed in front of this window.

The Rev Carolyn leads Collective Worship on a fortnightly basis and visits classes; she also leads the services for the children in St Oswald’s.

Harewood CofE (Controlled) Primary School

Val Masterton (Foundation Governor) reports:

Harewood CE (Controlled) Primary School has a Standard Number of 105; fifteen pupils per year group, divided into four classes. It has a mixed catchment with children travelling widely from the surrounding vicinity. The school has close links with the Parish Church of St Oswald’s; of the 12 members of governing board, there are two Foundation governors; one is appointed by the PCC, and the Vicar of the parish Rev’d Carolyn James, is a Foundation governor ex-officio. The Foundation governors hold a twice-yearly meeting focussing on Religious Education, Collective Worship and other aspects of the Christian life of the school; these meetings are attended by Jeanette Burnley, the lead teacher for RE, and a highlight is when she arranges for a group of children to talk to us about their learning in RE, Collective Worship or aspects of Christian values in the school. Headteacher Alistair Ratcliffe’s reports to the full governing board always include an item specifically relating to the enrichment of the Christian character of the

school. Academic achievements are high, with published results for Key Stage 2 assessments placing the school in the top 1% of primary schools in the country. There are close links with the Diocese, and governors have received very positive reports from the link adviser visits. The school is also an integral part of the local schools Wharfe Valley Learning Partnership. There are a wide range of other faiths represented by the children in the school, which, underpinned by its Christian ethos, fosters a loving, caring community, in which everyone, regardless of differences, feels valued, nurtured and secure. The school promotes tolerance, and the children are taught to respect and understand each other's faith and differences; this is reinforced by The Behaviour Code developed by the children:

Be kind Be honest Be respectful Be your best self

Ofsted recently reported that *'From the early years, it is clear that there are high expectations for behaviour'. 'Pupils treat each other with respect' and 'Older pupils are positive role models for younger ones'.*

Religious Education has a high profile in school life. The Diocese teaching resource "Understanding Christianity" is used as the main scheme; this is supplemented by material covering other faiths from Kirklees RE Resources Hub, Believing and Belonging. The children develop a knowledge of the Bible and Christian teaching and are encouraged to consider challenging questions about issues of right and wrong. In assessment data, high achievement in RE is shown to be in line with other curriculum subjects.

'Prayers for the King' – each child in Y3/4 wrote a prayer for the Coronation of the King, at the request of Ripon Cathedral. These were submitted and six children had their prayer put on display in the cathedral for two weeks over the Coronation period. All the prayers submitted by schools were included in books available for cathedral visitors to peruse.

Collective Worship takes place every day, led by a member of staff or Rev'd Carolyn. Tuesday's Collective Worship takes place in each classroom when the children can take the lead. Parents are invited to an afternoon celebration every Friday and this is well attended.

In addition to celebrating the Christian festivals, there is a focus on one Christian value each half term: e.g. Justice, Hope, Service and Truthfulness. This year also included a period looking at Diversity Awareness, embracing our differences: Dyslexia, Downs Syndrome, Diabetes and Autism, ensuring children experiencing these challenges felt 'special' rather than different and increasing the empathy of their peers. Kindness Week (NSPCC Kindness Challenge) resulted in each class nominating a 'Kindness Star' who received a reward for their acts of kindness and this was celebrated in front of parents at Friday afternoon Collective Worship.

Visiting speakers are invited to contribute to Collective Worship; this year school welcomed St. Georges Youth Work team (Easter), and a leader from Trussell Trust, Wetherby Foodbank (Harvest).

Mrs Jarvis our music teacher, sources a song with a Christian theme each week for Worship; Mr Ratcliffe always includes a link to and a commentary on the song in his weekly newsletter to parents so that they may share this with the children.

Community As part of a diverse SMSC programme offered, the children are given opportunities to take a lead in school life, School Council, Eco-committee and four elected Church School Ambassadors whose duties include helping collective worship run smoothly: setting up the hall, helping during worship, meeting visitors and leading on other faith related projects; they also sold poppies to children and families for Remembrance. Reception children made a wreath and laid it at Harewood village war memorial.

Y5/6 children worked to achieve the Archbishop's Trust Young Leader Award (Be the change you want to be); learning leadership skills, co-operating and building a team; this culminated with the children identifying charities they wanted to support and working in groups to organise fundraising activities for a successful after school event. The school has a close link with St Georges Crypt and were again invited to a Nativity production at St Georges church. This preceded their own school Nativity at the end of term. Some children from the school also took an active part in Harewood village carol service.

The children are passionate about raising funds for charity throughout the year:

- Brain Tumour Charity
- St Georges Crypt
- Trussell Trust Foodbank
- Royal British Legion – Poppies
- Children in Need
- Save the Children
- St Gemma's Hospice
- Hearing Dogs Charity

We thank Alistair, Jeanette, and the whole school team for their commitment to maintaining the Christian ethos of Harewood School and aim to ensure the children become thoughtful and caring citizens of the future.

Churches Together in Wetherby and District

Soraya Haselden (PCC CTiW Representative) reports:

Wetherby Churches Together is made up of representatives from the Church of England, Salvation Army, Catholic Church, Baptist and Methodist churches in Wetherby, Collingham, Spofforth, Kirk Deighton, Little Ribston and Follifoot. We meet every 2 months in addition to the annual AGM in January.

The group is a source of support and encouragement and enables us to share what is happening in our individual churches. Carolyn and I regularly attend the meetings.

The group has organized a wide range of activities and events in the last year including:

- World day of prayer service held at Collingham Methodist Church last March
- Good Friday Walk of Witness in April through the centre of Wetherby followed by a soup lunch at Wetherby Methodist Church
- Participation in the Mayor's Civic Service at St Joseph's in April
- Christian Aid Week observed in individual churches in May with coffee mornings at St James's and Wetherby Methodists
- Pentecost breakfast at St Joseph's
- Promotion and participation in Prisons week and a service at the Young Offenders Institution
- Wetherby Mission Group booklets delivered in Wetherby and Collingham
- Remembrance Day Parade & Remembrance Day service at St James's
- Christmas Appeal (Salvation Army and Foodbank)
- Christmas banners displayed in Wetherby with a link to information about Christmas services.
- Nativity scene displayed in Wetherby library
- Advent prayer cards given to Wetherby businesses
- Chair hosted Wetherby Business Association Town Carols
- Representatives attended the HMYOI carol service
- Churches Together Carol Service in the Horsefair Centre
- Financial contribution towards Wetherby YOI Christmas gift bag
- Representatives on Better Wetherby Partnership, the local Green Group, the Foodbank and the Local Care Partnership
- Coordination of the local churches' response to the cost of living crisis
- Working together to make Wetherby and surrounding villages toilet twinned town through Tearfund
- Try Praying initiative planned for Pentecost 2024
- Monthly prayer meeting on 1st Wednesday of the month at 9am in Margins bookshop.