ST LEONARD'S CHURCH SANDRIDGE PARISH MAGAZINE NOVEMBER 2025



DIARY FOR NOVEMBER

LETTER FROM OUR VICAR

HARVEST FESTIVAL REPORT

WHATS ON AT CHRISTMAS

VICTORIAN RESTORATION OF THE CHURCH

REMEMBERING ERIC POTTS

PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

NOVEMBER DIARY

Sunday 2 Nov All Souls

10am All Saints service with communion

3pm All Souls service with afternoon tea

Tuesday 4 Nov 10am Traditional Holy Communion

Sunday 9 Nov Remembrance Sunday

10am Holy Communion 10.30am Refreshments in church

10.50am Act of Remembrance at the

Lychgate

Tuesday 11 Nov 10am Traditional Holy Communion

Sat 15 Nov 10-12 Craft Church session for

children and families with

11.30am Christingle service

Sunday 16 Nov 10am Holy Communion with hymns

Tuesday 18 Nov 10am Traditional Holy Communion

Sunday 23 Nov 10am Holy Communion with hymns

Tuesday 25 Nov 10am Traditional Holy Communion

Saturday 29 Nov 10.30-1.00 CHRISTMAS FAIR IN CHURCH

Sunday 30 Nov Advent Sunday

10am Holy Communion with hymns

DECEMBER DIARY

Tuesday 2 Dec 10am Traditional Holy Communion

Sunday 7 Dec 10am Holy Communion with hymns

Tuesday 9 Dec 10am Traditional Holy Communion

Sunday 14 Dec 10am Holy Communion with hymns

4pm Christmas concert with Alban Duo

HARVEST FESTIVAL WEEKEND

Here are some of the beautiful displays we had in church for the Harvest

Festival weekend in October. Huge thanks to our wonderful Flower Guild for the imagination and thought they had put into each and every one.













Letter from our Vicar

Dear Friends

As I get older, I seem to forget more things than I remember. I suspect that it's because, as we age, we expect our brains to hold more and more stuff. Eventually the filing cabinets in our brain just get too full. I'd be very surprised if you didn't identify with that particular issue.



I seem to forget details, and names, and dates. And I don't always help myself: why, for example, did I write 'Wait for delivery' on my calendar without writing down what was being delivered? Does that sound familiar? It's so annoying.

But so far I still remember in great detail, and with great affection, those I have loved who are with me no longer. I think about and miss my dear dad every single day. I often think about my wonderful grandma who has been dead almost 40 years. I think about my friend and mentor Richard who sadly took his own life nearly 30 years ago - I've never quite accepted that he is gone. These are people I don't want ever to forget. They were people who were important to me, with whom I had an emotional connection. They helped shape who I am. We shared fun and laughter, and serious discussions and tears. You too will have had people like that in your life - people you still miss years after they have died.

For Christians, there is the sure and certain hope that death is not the end, that we will see our dear departed ones again when we also are dead. God keeps the promises he makes - which is why the hope is 'certain'. However, that doesn't stop us missing them or wanting to ensure they live on in our earthly memories.

In November we mark the session of **Remembrance**. **On Sunday 2 November** at St Leonard's we mark **All Souls Day at a service at 3.00pm**. It's a simple and short service during which we read out the names of the departed and light a candle for them. If you'd like a name read out, then the list of names will be at the back of the church, or names can be added at the service itself. Lighting a candle is a traditional and moving act of remembrance which many of us find helpful. It reminds us of Christ's light which shines in everyone and can never be extinguished. Nothing is expected of anyone at this service however. It is intended to be a quiet and safe space in which to mourn and grieve and remember.

Letter from our Vicar (cont)

After the service we share refreshments, if you'd like to stay.

If you prefer to remember someone privately, the church is open daily for you to write a name to go on the prayer tree, or offer a prayer to God.

Although our memories may fade, and we may become more forgetful, God never forgets. He remembers each and every child of His. He recalls each act of love and kindness. He grieves with us in our loss. And He offers this hope:

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16, KJV)

Amen. Revd Wendy Sellers

Harvest Festival Update

Our Harvest weekend in church was a great success, with many visitors coming to see the lovely floral displays (see page 3). We had a large congregation on Sunday at our Harvest Festival service, many of whom stayed on for our first ever Harvest brunch!

Donations on Sunday for our chosen charity *Open Door* totalled a magnificent £424. Thank you to all those who gave so generously to our local night shelter, taking



care of the homeless and helping them rebuild their lives in the community.

Here is our curate, the Revd Ritah Namakula, with the wonderful display of harvest gifts donated by the children of Sandridge Primary School at their Harvest service, conducted by Ritah and the Revd Wendy Sellers.

From the Registers

Burial of Ashes:

24 September 2025 - Beryl Mary Nigh



Priory Women's Club October meeting

On Tuesday 14 October we had a very informative and fascinating talk from Michael Barbakoff, a volunteer guide at Bletchley Park, entitled: *The Secret War in St Albans 1939-1945.*



His talk gave us an insight into how important St Albans was to the war effort involving the various secret services: the Secret Intelligence Service MI6, the Government Code and Cypher School, the Radio Security Service, the 'Y' Service, Special Operations Executive (SOE), Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the Polish Government in exile, and the War Office Directorate of Prisoners of War.

In total, twelve properties in and around St Albans were requisitioned by the Government for use by military services for clandestine purposes:

- On Gorhambury Estate there was a PoW (prisoner of war) camp, together with Prae Wood House being used by MI6.
- Gorhambury House was SOE Station X1, and the basement was used to house Buttercup Studio which was a radio station.
- Glenalmond House was acquired by SIS.
- Brescia House SIS; this is now part of St Columbia's College.
- Smallford was part of the signalling network.
- Sandridge was also part of the RSS (radio security service).
- Ayot House was requisitioned and used by MI6.
- Bride Hall was SOE Station V1.
- Rothamsted Manor in Harpenden was a major radio station with 30 powerful receivers.
- The Warren, another large house in Harpenden on West Common but no longer in existence, was also requisitioned.
 - In Batford was PoW Camp 95.

Mike's book, *The Secret War in St Albans* 1939-1945, is available from Amazon. *Kathy Tilney*

Left: Michael Barbakoff delivering his talk





Eric Potts RIP 1935-2025

Eric Potts, who died on 23 September aged 89, moved to Sandridge from County Durham in 2014, to be near his daughter and family after the death of his wife Lee in 2000. He had lived across northern England and the Midlands for much of his life and had attended many different churches since a boy. However, he told his family that he found the members of the congregation at St Leonard's particularly interesting, talented individuals!

He loved joining in with special events such as the Flower Festival, as well as the seasonal services. Anyone who talked to Eric would know about his background in mining, his career in engineering and his love of politics, economics, current affairs and football. He loved meeting people and discovering their careers, geographical origins and interests. His curiosity of others crossed linguistic and cultural barriers and, coupled with his deep knowledge of politics and economics, ensured lively and varied conversation.

Communicating and connecting with people from all walks of life was what motivated Eric. He continued to do so in Orchard Nursing Home earlier this year after two months in hospital due to a fall. It was a great sadness that, once living in Orchard, it was no longer possible to bring Eric to the church for services due to his various medical needs. Instead, he enjoyed the services at the Home. It wasn't the same as visiting St Leonard's but, true to form, Eric did not complain.

Carrying himself with dignity and stoicism throughout illness and health, Eric was a steadfast pillar of his family and will be sorely missed by those who loved him: his daughter, son-in-law, three grandsons and the friends and colleagues he remained in contact with over the decades.

His energy, perseverance in the face of adversity and dignified acceptance of changed circumstances were exceptional. A decade ago, Sandridge parish welcomed Eric with a warmth and generosity of spirit only to be found in very special people, who live out the words of Ephesians 4:32 (ESV): Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Katharine Gibbons and Elliot (daughter and grandson)



What's happening this Christmas at St Leonard's?

Saturday 29 November 10.30-1.00:

Our ever popular Christmas Fair with stalls, raffles, refreshments and general Christmas joy! Free entry, bag a bargain, win a prize or buy a homemade treat or two.

Sunday 30 November 10am:

Advent officially begins today, so why not join us at morning service to mark the start of the season?

Sunday 14 December 4pm:

The very welcome return of the super talented piano duet **Alban Duo**, with music for four hands on one piano. Refreshments will be served afterwards.

Saturday 20 December 10-12:

Christmas Craft Church for all the family, with activities and refreshments.

Sunday 21 December 4pm:

Candlelit Family Carol Service, followed by hot chocolate and gingerbread.

Wednesday 24 December 3pm:

Crib Service with carols, candles and an interactive retelling of the story of the first Christmas.

Wednesday 24 December 5pm:

Repeat of the candlelit Family Carol Service (no refreshments)

Wednesday 24 December 11pm:

Traditional Midnight Mass with Holy Communion and carols.

Thursday 25 December 10am:

Join us to celebrate the birth of Christ at Holy Communion.

St Leonard's is just magical at Christmas, with our wonderful historic church decorated for the season. Many services are candlelit and sure to get you into the Christmas spirit by reminding you of the reason we celebrate this special time of year. We hope to see you soon.

Revd Wendy

The Victorian Restoration of Sandridge Church in 1886

This talk was given by Professor Vivian Nutton at our first ever Heritage Open Day on 20 September. Photographs by Peter Hyde.

Much of what you see today in St Leonard's is not as old as it looks but is the result of the major restoration in 1886-7. But what was done then and why?

Telling the difference

The Revd Dr John Griffith, the vicar, wanted to keep as much of the medieval fabric as possible. So he chose a different coloured stone, brown Ancaster limestone, for the new bits instead of the white limestone from the Abbey's Totternhoe quarry. The two colours are best seen together on the west wall of the nave, or on the column by the

pulpit that once held a rood screen.

God's own colours

William White, the architect of the restoration, filled many windows with subtly coloured glass. The medieval 'squint' window, which originally would have illuminated an altar and allowed people outside to see it, has a beautiful range of colours. On a summer morning they come together wonderfully on the white plaster of the wall.

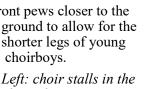
One size doesn't fit all

Attendees at the midweek service in the chancel may be surprised at the difference in height between the level of the seats in the choir stalls. White deliberately made the front pews closer to the

> shorter legs of young choirboys.

Left: choir stalls in the chancel

Right: roof support above the screen







Saving the pig

On the chancel side of the 15th century screen you can see carvings of flowers and animal heads, including a pig and a sheep. Before 1886 the whole space above it was filled with stone, the weight of which was causing the screen to buckle (see the tops of the north arches). White's ingenious solution was to erect a wooden trellis to hold up the



roof and to set it on the side pillars where its pressure was transferred away from the screen.



Preserving the roses

Most of the medieval tiles with roses and other designs had become damaged over the centuries. Dr Griffith had many of them collected and placed on the floor of the sanctuary, where fewer people walk over them and where they can be seen more easily.

Keeping the old timers

Sandridge tower in 1877 was a ramshackle affair, a replacement of 1836 for one that had fallen down in 1693. White's replacement is more reminiscent of Sussex (where Dr Griffith had previously lived) than Hertfordshire, but it still houses the clock of 1847 with its distinctive blue clock face.

A much older timer can be discerned on the outside south-east corner of the chancel, a medieval scratch dial (a form of sundial). Alas, weathering has worn much of it away and you now have to look hard to find it.

An oversight?

White's original plans envisaged bells in the tower, but they show no access by stairs to the belfry, either inside or from outside. Until the recent

reorganisation of the back of the church, bellringers had to climb a tall ladder. Even today, when it is divided into stages to allow for the mezzanine floor, it is enough to frighten anyone with a fear of heights.

St Leonard's is a beautiful church, not least because of the way in which old, Victorian and modern fit together. Look carefully and see how many generations have contributed to its life over the centuries.

Vivian Nutton







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PARISH COUNCIL SUPPLEMENT (ABRIDGED DRAFT MINUTES)

AT A MEETING OF SANDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 8 OCTOBER 2025, THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE DISCUSSED

TO RECEIVE AND FORMALLY ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors White, Thomas, Twidell and Oakley.

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONSThere was none.

TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 10 SEPTEMBER 2025

The minutes of the meeting were duly approved.

QUESTIONS TO OFFICERS

There was none.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was none.

CLERK'S REPORTS

Monthly Accounts

Members reviewed a schedule of creditor payments for the period 11 September to 8 October 2025. It was unanimously resolved to approve payment of the online transfers on this schedule on 10 September 2025 and to ratify the payment of standing charges and debit card payments already made.

Benches at Jersey Farm Community Centre

At Full Council in September a request to install benches outside Jersey Farm Community Centre was discussed. Cllr Wells visited the location to assess suitability for the placing of a bench(es) and provided a plan of such which was previously circulated to all Members. Following discussion, it was unanimously resolved to purchase and install one 3 metre bench, at the agreed location adjacent to the southern facing exterior wall where the ground runs flat.

Use of Electronic Tablets at Full Council Meetings

Members were informed that the Committee for Sustainability recently discussed moving from hard copy agendas and minutes for Full Council to issuing electronic tablets for Members to receive their papers electronically. Cllr Lambert found some research strongly demonstrating that the quantity of paper currently printed in the production of agendas, minutes etc produced significantly less CO2 than the production of an electronic tablet, even when measured over a life of four years. As a result, it was agreed that three Committee for Sustainability members would receive all future documents electronically as a trial. This would be using their own existing tablets/laptops. It was noted that the option to also use the television screen on occasions was potentially helpful for some documents. No recommendations were made to Full Council at this time

EXTERNAL AUDIT

It was reported that the Parish Council's External Auditor, PKF Littlejohn, has finalised the 2024/25 external audit. A query raised by them in August was subsequently found to be an error on their part. A copy of the auditor's report with one reference to an unchecked box on Section 1 (box 8) of the return was circulated. There were no matters arising. The Finance Committee reviewed this report at a meeting held on 22 September. The Notice of Conclusion of Audit notices have been published in accordance with legislation. It was resolved that Full Council formally note the external auditors report as circulated.

Community Centres Biannual Report

A copy of the Centres Manager's biannual report on the community centres was circulated to all members. The Centres Manager also reported on two recent amendments to the hire agreement concerning additional cleaning and overrun charges.

CCTV Policy

A copy of the Parish Council's CCTV Policy was circulated to all Members for review. It was resolved to re-adopt the existing policy.

A verbal update from the PACE Officer

The PACE officer informed Members of recent improvements in the parish play facilities including:

- Two new ground trampolines installed at Harness Way
- A second mini goal installed at Sherwood Park

A verbal update from the PACE Office (cont)

- Waiting on the imminent installation of a replacement swing set at William Bell Open Space
- The Sports & Recreation Committee is considering scope for an adventure trail aimed at older children/adults from potential future S106 funding.

Members were also informed that following the recent closure of the Sandridge Village Store, the Spencer Meadow sports courts are now booked out of the village café.

Funding for the Jersey Farm Woodland Park Pond

Members were informed that on 8 September the Jersey Farm Woodland Park (JFWP) Joint Management Committee resolved to proceed with the installation of a pond, with bee and butterfly mounds built from the spoils, on the eastern corner of the Woodland Park adjacent to the Jersey Lane entrance. However, as the original concept was for a much smaller pond, since made larger following encouragement and advice from wildlife experts, the earmarked funding in the annual JFWP budget of £3,500 is not sufficient. Funding from external sources has been secured, including a contribution from the Committee for Sustainability (£4.25k), and external grant providers including Affinity Water (£4k), Herts County Council (HCC) Countryside Management Services (£3k), Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust (£2k) and a HCC Locality Grant (£500). Despite these extra funds a shortfall remains.

The JFWP Committee resolved to approach Full Council to request a further £10,000 towards the project. A question was asked and responded to, following which a proposal was made by Cllr Wells, seconded by Cllr Chalkley, and it was resolved that the Parish Council provide a contribution of up to £10,000 towards the costs of installing a pond, and bee and butterfly banks, on the Jersey Farm Woodland Park. This includes up to £7,337 of project costs and the remainder for use as contingency.

Shottfield Close Development Section 106 Projects

Members were notified that an outline planning application for a development of 84 dwellings in Sandridge has now been submitted and can be viewed on the SADC planning portal reference 5/2025/1556. The Parish Council has been approached by SADC to submit suggestions for any Section 106 funded projects for play Areas, open spaces and leisure/cultural centres that would serve

the locality of the area, should the application be successful. Discussion ensued, following which it was agreed that the Planning Committee would draft a formal response to SADC at the next meeting on 13 October. This will include a list of general suggestions as discussed but will also emphasise the need to ensure that all future funding is used to benefit Sandridge village and is not diverted elsewhere.

Matters of Note

- Cllr Roberts has joined the Finance Committee and Cllr Wells has joined the HR Committee. Two places remain on the Planning Committee.
- At a meeting held on 22 September, the Finance Committee approved the release of funds to allow air source heat pumps to be installed at Marshalswick Community Centre as approved (subject to funding) at Full Council in September.
- The Ollie Foundation has notified the Parish Council that it
 will no longer be involved with the community garden. One
 of their volunteers will continue to manage one of the beds
 on an informal basis.
- The Sandridge Cemetery (churchyard extension) water tap has been completely overhauled at the Parish Council's expense.

COUNCILLOR AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Grant Applications

There were no applications this month.

MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES:

Committee Chairs spoke briefly on committee meetings as below:

- Committee for Sustainability 16 September 2025
- Sports and Recreation Committee 17 September 2025
- Finance Committee 22 September 2025
- Planning Committee see below

MATTERS OF NOTE ARISING SINCE THE CIRCULATION OF THE AGENDA

The Clerk has been informed of delays in delivery of Neighbourhood News magazine to a couple of addresses. This will be monitored with future issues. The Clerk provided an update regarding on-going efforts to establish St Albans Community Pantry (SACP) as a long-term hirer of Spencer Hall from which to run its operations. This requires coordination with existing SYSCA members in the first instance to ensure conditions on the ground are appropriate for SACP's residency, before looking to review and update the current SYSCA constitution to ensure clarity of arrangements going forward.

PLANNING MATTERS

The Planning Committee met on 1 September and 24 September. The Committee meets every three weeks to review and respond to planning applications received from the Planning Authority, St. Albans District Council.

Planning applications objected to/commented on since the last Full Council meeting were:

- 159 St Albans Road AL4 9LN 5/2025/1501
- 27 Highfield Road AL4 9BX 5/2025/1414
- Land at Ardens Rise AL4 9HE 5/2025/1537

Please note: Planning applications received at the Parish Office from the Planning Authority *after* the Parish Council agenda has been published may also be discussed at the meeting as may applications of complexity or applications likely to impact heavily on the Green Belt.

SUGGESTIONS AND/OR MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION AT FUTURE MEETINGS

- Meeting with County Highways team Cllr Hale will arrange a meeting before end of December.
- Update on the larger building development applications: Oaklands/Taylor Wimpey, Shottfield Close, Sandridgebury Lane.

Note: In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, Parish Council meetings will be open to the Public unless the Parish Council resolves otherwise

Next meeting date – 12 November 2025 at 7.30pm Marshalswick Community Centre

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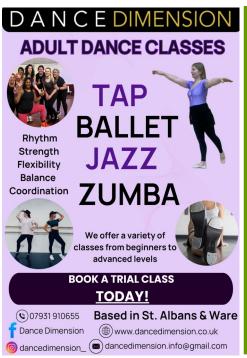


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Paper copies are available free in the church, at Carpenter's Nursery, at JTB Butchers and Marshalwick Library.

Alternatively, please contact Peter Hyde via the church website for a copy to be delivered.

Family History Research in Hertfordshire and London

All Enquiries Welcome

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Church Directory

Vicar: Revd Wendy Sellers 01727 301542

(Wendy usually works Saturday through to Tuesday lunchtime)

Churchwardens: Catherine Bailey and Lee Myers

We have a new generic church email address, which is:

sandridgechurch1@gmail.com

or you can use the contact form on the church website:

www.sandridgechurch.org.uk

We welcome enquiries about our services, including weddings, funerals and baptisms. We can also help with other enquiries; for example, about bell ringing, flower arranging, Young Church or our church music.

For enquiries about the parish magazine please contact the **Magazine Editor:** Rosamund Adlard on **news.stleonards@gmail.com**

Our Safeguarding Team can also be contacted via the website contact form, or contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser directly on: 01727 818107 or 07867 350886 or:

safeguarding@stalbans.anglican.org

Publication notes

The magazine is edited by Rosamund Adlard. Contributions of local interest are welcomed. If you have such an article, or photographs, please do send to the Editor by

14 November at the latest

news.stleonards@gmail.com





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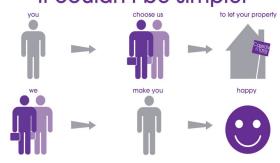
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