

## **APCM 2023**

### **St Leonard's Church Hall**

Now that the Covid restrictions have been completely lifted, St. Leonard's Church Hall has become a very popular venue for both regular and individual hirers as well as church groups.

#### **Use of the hall for Church Activities**

The regular church groups using the hall have been:

- Little Fishes which is a baby and toddler group and uses the hall on Thursday mornings during term time (except for the second Thursday of the month).
- The Coffee Mornings which are held monthly on the second Thursday of the month.

The Holiday Club held five sessions in the hall including the Easter Egg Hunt.

The Hall was opened twice in December 2022 as a Warm Space Area but, unfortunately, there was very little interest in this. There has been some discussion about running a drop-in café for light refreshments and/or lunch as an alternative to the Warm Space Area.

#### **Seasonal Lunches**

These started again in July 2022:

30 people attended the Summer Lunch in July and St. Leonard's School Choir sang at it. .  
47 people attended the Autumn Lunch in October 2022. For the entertainment, Coram who played his ukulele.

In January 2023 48 people attended the Winter Lunch and Richard Page and Trevor Hooper provided the entertainment.

These lunches would not be able to go ahead without the support of the 18 extremely hard working volunteers and the Axe and Compass pub that provides the excellent meals at cost.

Other church events that ran in 2022-2023 include the:

- May Fayre in May
- SLAP Evening of Music and Laughter in May
- Men's Breakfast in July
- Jumble Sale in September
- Christmas Bazaar in November
- History Cream Tea in February
- SLAP Evening of Music and Laughter in February
- 50/50 Auction in March.

#### **Enquiries about hiring the hall**

In the last year there have been 145 enquiries about hiring the hall. These have predominantly been from individual hirers but several have been from regular hirers.

#### **Individual hirers**

The hall was hired out to about 70 individual hirers in 2022-2023. It has been used for: birthday parties; christening parties; wakes; meetings; weddings; graduation parties; ballet exams; craft fairs; ballroom dancing; video recordings and band practice.

After several problems last year with the individual hirers, resulting in the revision of the Terms and Conditions and Cancellation Policy, there have been no real problems with the individual hirers this year.

#### **Regular Hirers**

During term time the hall is booked out nearly every day to regular hirers and on some days it is booked out in the morning, afternoon, early evening and evening. The number of regular hirers reduces during the holidays as many of them are term time only.

During 2022-2023, the following groups have continued, started or stopped hiring the hall:

<b>Continued</b>	<b>Started</b>	<b>Stopped</b>
Little Luvvies Ballet Class	Razzamataz Theatre Schools	Step in Time Line Dancing
Art Class	Isla Mandirigma Kali Exercise Class	Rollerdance
Perform Children's Drama Group	Leighton Buzzard Circuits Club	Juke Box Junction
Jazzercise Exercise Class	Leighton Buzzard Martial Arts	Razzamataz Theatre Schools
Zest Pilates	Argentine Tango School	Leighton Buzzard Circuits Club
Leighton Buzzard Drama Society	Key Creatives Music Classes	Argentine Tango School
Leighton Buzzard Art Society		
Carers in Bedfordshire		
Ragdoll Annas		

The vast majority of regular hirers have been excellent. They have left the hall in a clean and tidy state and have paid their invoices on time. The only exception to this has been the Argentine Tango School who just disappeared without paying their invoices or returning the hall key. The PCC have therefore revised the hiring arrangements and policies for regular hirers to prevent this being repeated in the future.

### **Maintenance**

- A team of volunteers from the Payback Team painted the hall during August 2022. They did a wonderful job especially as none of them were qualified painters and decorators. It would be good to get the rest of the hall painted by a professional particularly the entrance hall and toilets.
- Steve McGiff, a local electrician, installed new LED lights in the hall in October 2022.
- The new heaters are working much better now and are set at a regular temperature which appears to suit most of the hirers.
- A SMART meter is being installed to monitor the electricity usage in the hall.
- The Fire alarms and extinguishers are checked regularly by Chubb.
- The windows are now cleaned (inside and out) every six months by Wayne Norris.
- The kitchen equipment was given a deep clean by CA Cleaning Solutions Limited in early 2022.

### **Pricing and Marketing**

The hourly price has stayed at £15.00 to keep in line with increased costs and to cover the cost of running the new heaters. Regular hirers continue to receive a 10% discount. With the increase in the cost of heating, it may be necessary to increase the hourly price or to charge a winter surcharge. This would make the hire charges comparable with those charged by other local church halls.

The majority of people enquiring about the hall have been using the booking form on the St. Leonard's Hall website and the HallsHire.com website.

### **Suggestions for the future**

The number of bookings for the hall continues to rise but there is still some capacity to increase them further by:

- sending flyers to local groups and schools

- advertising in free papers and magazines distributed in Leighton Buzzard and surrounding areas
- putting posters in local shops particularly on the new housing estate.