

Lighthouse 2024 – report for Churches Together in Marlow

The biggest challenge for Lighthouse Marlow this year was the change in venue, from Holy Trinity School to St Peter's School. A new venue had been sought following our experience last year of trying to run a safe Lighthouse week on the same site as a commercial holiday club. The Head and leadership team at St Peter's were very welcoming and went out of their way to support us in running the Lighthouse week in their school and the school grounds.



One major impact of being allowed to use the school premises was that fewer marquees were required and we did not have to rent toilets (as we had done in the last few years at Holy Trinity). This reduced our costs substantially. In 2023 our total expenditure was £18,713; this year our total expenditure is estimated to be £11,777. The hire of marquees was still a major expense, but their cost decreased from £11,480 in 2023 to just £3,636 this year. Whilst Holy Trinity made no rental charge for our use of their field, we do, of course, have to pay a hire charge to St Peter's.

The theme this year was Jesus Rocks and, just like a stick of rock, the children were encouraged to 'let his name run through your life'. Each day the story and activities were linked to a Bible story. These were all focused on Peter ('the rock'). Each day the story was linked to a key word – Monday was 'Change', Tuesday 'Listen', Wednesday 'Trust', Thursday 'Forgive' and Friday 'Believe'. The children also learned a memory verse across the week based on Psalm 31:

I love you, Lord. You are my strength.
The Lord is my rock, my protection, my Saviour.
My God is my rock.
I can run to him for safety.
He is my shield and my saving strength, my high tower.



Lighthouse was staffed by 214 volunteers, 69 of whom were aged 12-17. Due to a shortage of adult volunteers a number of older teenagers took on leadership roles, supported by other members of their age group team. However, we decided to reduce the number of children attending to ensure that, on the new site, we did not over-stretch our volunteers as they also coped with the new surroundings. This proved to be a successful strategy and led to overwhelmingly positive feedback from team leaders. It did, however, have one negative impact. We were unable to accept all the teenagers who wished to help due to their impact on our adult: child ratio and also because we were not able to identify appropriate roles for them to do.

Lighthouse was once again oversubscribed, and 74 children were not offered places. Most of these did not live in Marlow or attend Marlow schools. Others were withdrawn by parents because a sibling had not been offered a place or the family's plans had changed. In the end 248 children attended during the Lighthouse week. Of these, 194 had registered in the first week of children's registration being open and 128 had a parent or carer helping at Lighthouse. Feedback from adult volunteers indicates that with this smaller number the children were more involved and engaged with activities and their age group helpers were able to get to know them better.



As might be expected, a lot of the feedback received focused on the new venue. Use of the school hall as the venue for 'Mainstage' was generally welcomed, though it was noted that the size of the hall does limit the number of children to around the number we had this year. The use of school classrooms as age group team spaces and venues for their teaching activities was very popular. The general atmosphere on site was calm and purposeful. This was probably partly due to the reduced number of children on site, but it is felt that the use of indoor space, and particularly the classrooms, also contributed to this. Smaller numbers, and quiet areas in classrooms developed by age group leaders, meant that 'time out' space, which we call the Lifeboat, was calmer and better used. The First Aid team also saw fewer children with complaints such as headaches and 'sore stomachs' which might be brought on by stress.

The positive attitude displayed by our teenage volunteers continues to improve. This can in part be attributed to the gradual raising of our expectations of their behaviour, but also to the training that the youngest (Year 7) volunteers receive covering aspects such as team working. This year these sessions were led by Emily Clark, youth worker for ASM, and she also took on the role of maintaining

contact with all the teenage helpers during the week. The monthly 'get together' sessions at Chives Cafe throughout the year that she and Cat Sweet have held for teenage helpers, and those interested in becoming a young Lighthouse volunteer, have also had a positive impact.

Whilst we are starting to plan for Lighthouse to be held the week beginning 4 August 2025, it is currently still unclear who will be taking over as Chair when I step down next April. We are also still looking for a new treasurer and more trustees to lead the Lighthouse Marlow charity. It is essential that we recruit more trustees as our constitution requires us to have at least four trustees. Unless more are recruited, by May 2025 we will have only two. We would also like to have as many Marlow Churches as possible represented on the Trustee Board. For those churches that are not represented, we will be seeking 'church champions' who will receive copies of minutes and other information to help keep their church members in touch with Lighthouse.

Thanks are due to our many volunteers and to the parents, churches, church members and organisations who have supported us financially, through volunteering and/or in kind this year.

Sarah Jones, Chair of Trustees



MARLOW LIGHTHOUSE ACCOUNTS

Financial year 1st October to 30th September

Income & Expenditure Account**LHM****LHM****LHM****2024****2024****2023**

£

BUDGET

Gift Aid donations	7,500.00	5,484.04	7,164.18
Gift Aid tax rebate	1,875.00	1,370.28	1,676.27
donations from churches	2,000.00	2,065.00	1,100.00
corporate donations	4,000.00	583.00	3,475.00
other donations from individuals	1,300.00	942.70	1,269.28
T shirt sales	1,000.00	982.15	1,004.50
other fundraising	1,000.00	1,365.00	2,933.67
tea tent plus cafe		0.00	46.90

total income	<u>18,675.00</u>	<u>12,792.17</u>	<u>18,669.80</u>
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marquee hire/hall hire	8,000.00	3,636.36	11,479.86
insurance	475.00	452.64	457.74
Lighthouse Central and DBS	2,550.00	3,477.00	3,008.50
Contribution to HT or St Peters	500.00	2,250.00	500.00
stationery & printing for teaching/TH	350.00	0.00	0.00
T Shirts	750.00	357.44	1,324.01
mainstage expenses	450.00	269.42	0.00
site expenses	485.00	890.35	1,755.53
craft	100.00	111.92	62.03
misc expenses	63.00	43.10	79.68
sports equip	0.00	172.55	0.00
teen event	100.00	25.99	45.89

Creche/Little LH/4s	0.00	90.00	0.00
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Expenses from prior years not claimed

total expenditure	<u>13,823.00</u>	<u>11,776.77</u>	<u>18,713.24</u>
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Reversal of prior year accrual for storage			1,500.00
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SURPLUS FOR YEAR	4,852.00	1,015.40	1,456.56
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Balance Sheet**2024****2023**

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£

Statement of reserves

reserves b/fwd	26,764.29	25,307.73
Capital transfer		
surplus for year	1,015.40	1,456.56
reserves c/fwd	<u>27,779.69</u>	<u>26,764.29</u>

Represented by

balance per bank statement	27,774.65	31,530.43
add uncleared bankings	5.04	138.32
less unrepresented cheques		-4,904.46
less prior year unrepresented cheques		

cash book balance	<u>27,779.69</u>	<u>26,764.29</u>
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