

Lighthouse 2025 – the 20th year of Lighthouse Marlow



At the start of 2025, although there was strong support for Lighthouse Marlow to continue, with the end of the term of office for the previous Chair of Trustees, a new structure was required to make it happen. The dilemma was resolved by the creation of an Operations team, comprising experienced Lighthouse volunteers each responsible for one aspect of Lighthouse: Site, Registration, Activities, Age Groups and Welfare, and Communication. A trustee is also a member of the Operations Team and the group was kept on track by an excellent facilitator.

Through monthly meetings from October to July, Lighthouse was planned and run as a Team effort.

Site

Following a very successful first year at St Peter's School in 2024, Lighthouse Marlow was held at the same venue this year. Once again, the headteacher, leadership team and caretaker 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.

The use of four large marquees, as well as the school buildings, enabled us to provide excellent spaces for all the Lighthouse activities. We once again appreciated the generosity of the Round Table for the loan of three of their marquees which provided a prayer tent and both storage space and a 'home' for the sports team. Our total costs for running Lighthouse was just under £12,700, against income of £13,770. However we have also invested in a new, larger storage shed in the grounds of St Peter's School. The cost of this, including construction of a concrete base, was £3557.

Activities

The Lighthouse theme this year was 'Make Space for Jesus' and each day the story of the day was introduced using short dramas of space travel and astronauts during Mainstage. The daily stories were based on the book of Daniel, and children and volunteers were shown how much Daniel loves God and wants to do the right things and how God works through Daniel to do amazing things, so even the kings of Babylon have to admit Daniel's God is the Greatest!

The memory verse was taken from Proverbs 3: 5-6

*Trust God from the bottom of your heart;
don't try to figure out everything on your own.
Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go;
he's the one who will keep you on track.*



During craft, drama and discovery sessions, children continued exploring the story of Daniel and the theme 'Make Space for Jesus'. Rev'd Sami Watts met with the volunteers leading the discovery sessions to share wisdom and ideas using the excellent teaching materials provided by Lighthouse Central. The children learnt the memory verse with actions during Drama.

The craft team was again very grateful for the generous donations of craft materials from the community and the helping hands with preparations from people across different churches. Via the collection points run in All Saints Church and the Ark Cafe boxes full of useful recyclables as well as pens, glue and other useful things came together. The children from Creche to Trinity House enjoyed taking the Christian message and confidence in their creative abilities home in self made rockets, candle holders, magic wallets and more.

Each age group had the chance to run around and have a lot of fun in their sports sessions and these activities are designed for full participation and to encourage teamwork and fairplay. In all areas of Lighthouse the teenagers are encouraged to lead parts of the sessions, helping them to grow in confidence and hopefully, one day, become leaders themselves.

Three more essentials for the Lighthouse week were our First Aid team looking after the children's physical wellbeing, our 'Lifeboat' supporting the children's general wellbeing and our prayer team underpinning the week with prayer and offering prayer support for the volunteers.

Registration

Lighthouse was staffed by 222 volunteers, of whom 69, almost ⅓, were aged 12-15. A few older teenagers took on leadership roles, supported by other members of their age group team. We limited the number of children attending to ensure that we did not over-stretch our volunteers, we also increased our support for them. Emily Clarke provided full support for the under-18 volunteers, from initial face to face training to ensure they understood their role, to on-site support and additional training for those who had just completed year 7 at school and who were volunteering for the first time and also by helping to organise and run monthly social sessions throughout the year. New adult volunteers are supported by their team leaders following pre-Lighthouse training sessions. This proved to be a successful strategy and led to overwhelmingly positive feedback from team leaders.

Lighthouse was once again oversubscribed, and 31 children were not successful in getting a place. Most of these did not live in Marlow or attend Marlow schools. In the end 260 children attended during the Lighthouse week (248 in 2024). Of these, 164 had registered by the end of the first week of children's registration being open and 111 had a parent or carer helping at Lighthouse.

Communications

This year we had a dedicated resource to focus on all communications from Lighthouse Marlow to cover emails, local school & business interaction as well as social media. With this increased focus it allowed us to communicate important information more frequently and across more platforms. A detailed and scheduled plan was developed at the beginning of 2025 for our communications to cover pre-, during- and post-Lighthouse. This included broadcasting key dates, fundraising events, social events, promoting volunteering, sharing information about different roles as well as providing insights into the Lighthouse week on a daily basis so parents can get a glimpse into the programme of events. We also introduced a Lighthouse Marlow TikTok channel in 2025 to appeal to our younger Lamplighter audience.

Feedback was sought from team leaders, other volunteers and parents. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive; suggestions for improvement will be considered by the Operations Team.

Age Groups and Welfare

Liz Ball headed up the Age Group Leaders. Of the 260 children who attended, we had 16 children in Creche and 4s, 3 Lighthouses in ages 5 (30 children) and 6 (36 children) and 4 Lighthouses (48 children) each in ages 7, 8s and 9s and 40 children in Trinity House. Each age group was resourced with an Age Group Leader, Age Group Teacher, and for each Lighthouse in an Age Group- a Lighthouse Keeper and three Lamplighters. We had a good range of Lighthouse Keepers, from those with lots of experience to those taking on the role for the first time. We also had a good range of Lamplighters from 12 to 17. Age Groups were based in a classroom, mostly cleared of tables, and decorated with bunting and the children's creative work through the week. Feedback was that strong collaboration and teamwork, mentoring and morale was in evidence through the week.

Sophie Earnshaw is Designated Safeguarding Lead for Lighthouse Marlow and Emma Howarth is Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. During the week there was a safeguarding incident involving an adult volunteer and 5 children attending Lighthouse. The incident was reported to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) by the Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead, who followed the LH Safeguarding policy and the volunteer was instructed to not return to the Lighthouse site whilst the investigation was completed. Both the LADO and police praised LH Marlow for its systems of DBS checking, reference checking, Safeguarding training and policy.

Trustees

In April 2025 the terms of office of several trustees also came to an end and the need for new trustees was critical. Rebecca Steele joined as Treasurer and three new trustees joined the trustee Board, Alison Rae, Clare Sturdy and Deborah Southam. Their role is to ensure that the Lighthouse Marlow Charity delivers on its objectives and manages finances sensibly. We had some turnover in Trustees in September and October with Rebecca and Deborah leaving and four more joining, these included Hilary Hunt, an experienced Trustee who had had a year out, Pat Reading who has been Director of Lighthouse Central, Colette Murphy responsible for Admin in the Operations Team and Kim Walker who was a member of the Trinity House Team this year. The team are now drawn from several different Churches in Marlow.

Unfortunately with Rebecca's departure we desperately NEED a new Treasurer. Relative to other charities this is not an arduous task with activity focussed around the summer holiday activity week. We appeal to anyone with money management skills to email us at marlow@lighthousecentral.org to chat through what is entailed.

Recognition of local support

Lighthouse would not be possible without the support of our wonderful local community and we wanted to recognise some of the support we received this year.

Thanks are due to Graham Everitt of Chives café who allows Lighthouse to use their building free of charge for Lighthouse events during the year.

Many thanks are due to the two volunteers, Adam Baskott and Mike Skingle, who built the shed on a wet Sunday in July. The Town Council is thanked for its donation towards the cost of the shed.

To the various venues who allowed us to host social evenings during the Lighthouse week, one on site at St Peter's and the other in the Methodist Church hall – both were very successful and helped the young volunteers develop the friendships made at Lighthouse.

Thank you to the Marlow Methodist Church for hosting a Soup & Pancake lunch, Sharon Gunn and the Marlow Donkey for running quiz nights in July, and all those from the Marlow ArtXtra group for their fundraising efforts, all proceeds helped to fund activities at Lighthouse.

And finally, our 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.

Lighthouse 2026 will take place at St Peter's School from 3rd-7th August – please put the date in your diaries now!

Lighthouse Operations Team

Claire Andrews, Liz Ball, Sophie Earnshaw, Rachel Hearnshaw, Sarah Jones, Sandra Lutz-Brown, Colette Murphy

Financial report year ending 30th September 2025

MARLOW LIGHTHOUSE ACCOUNTS

Financial year 1st October to 30th September

Income & Expenditure Account

| | LHM 2025 £ BUDGET | LHM 2025 £ ACTUAL | LHM 2025 £ Variance |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Gift Aid donations | 5,500.00 | 4,935.00 | (565.00) |
| Gift Aid tax rebate | 1,375.00 | 1,240.00 | (135.00) |
| Donations from churches | 2,000.00 | 1,400.00 | (600.00) |
| Corporate donations | 600.00 | 1,890.00 | 1,290.00 |
| Other donations from individuals | 1,000.00 | 1,706.00 | 706.00 |
| T shirt sales | 1,000.00 | 942.50 | (57.50) |
| Other fundraising | 2,000.00 | 1,655.58 | (344.42) |
| Tea tent plus cafe | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Total income | 13,475.00 | 13,769.08 | 294.08 |
| Marquee hire/hall hire | 3,784.00 | 3,783.78 | (0.22) |
| Insurance | 460.00 | 336.77 | (123.23) |
| Lighthouse Central and DBS | 3,200.00 | 4,190.00 | 990.00 |
| Contribution to HT or St Peters | 3,000.00 | 2,500.00 | (500.00) |
| Stationery & printing for teaching/TH | 150.00 | 43.35 | (106.65) |
| T Shirts | 800.00 | 618.02 | (181.98) |
| Mainstage expenses | 300.00 | 400.04 | 100.04 |
| Site expenses | 1,000.00 | 3,952.68 | 2,952.68 |
| Craft | 120.00 | 46.47 | (73.53) |
| Misc expenses | 200.00 | 333.01 | 133.01 |
| Sports equip | 50.00 | 39.95 | (10.05) |
| Teen event | 150.00 | 0.00 | (150.00) |
| Creche/Little LH/4s | 50.00 | 0.00 | (50.00) |
| Expenses from prior years not claimed | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Total expenditure | 13,264.00 | 16,244.07 | 2,980.07 |
| Reversal of prior year accrual for storage | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| SURPLUS FOR YEAR | 211.00 | (2,474.99) | (2,685.99) |

Income

- **We have received +£294 income vs budget**
- This has been driven by corporate donations (detailed below) and non giftable donations.
- Donations from local Churches is down vs budget (detailed below).
- Fundraising is down vs budget.
- Notes:
 - o Income slightly lower than previously shared due to some items still being estimated. Items included all correct and reconciled.

- o Income is slightly higher than previous years as I have recorded excluding Goodhub fees which have then been recorded in “misc expenses”. Previous Treasurer just put the Net amount into income therefore showing a lower income but no associated cost.
- o Roughly I would estimate if we had 200 children at the event only 44% of parents contributed financially.
- Detailed Church and Corporate donations below.
 - o Shanley have agreed to donate £1500 which will be received in March 2026 and therefore is not included below.
 - o Note: I would not share this beyond immediate Trustees and core Operations Team due to GDPR

Donations from churches

Baptist

100.00

All Saints

700.00

Marlow Methodist

600.00

1,400.00

Donations from corporates

Masons

300.00

Marlow Town Council

500.00

Friends of CTM Cooida

90.00

Chiltern Molecular

1,000.00

Shanly Foundation

0.00

1,890.00

Expenditure

- **Expenditure is £2980 above budget.**
- Shed has been a significant overspend as agreed at £3557.
- Contribution to Lighthouse Database was a significant overspend as agreed. £850.
- Misc expenditure higher due to including Goodhub fees as noted in income section above. Excluding this miscellaneous expenses claimed by the team totaled £110 and therefore under budget.
- Costs inline with budget – marque hire.
- Costs under budget – Contribution to St Peters (£500), stationary and printing (£107), craft (£74), sports (£10), teen event (£150) and creche (£50).
- Costs over budget – mainstage expenditure (£100).

Net position

Net loss for 2024/25 of £2475 vs expected surplus of £211.

Expected loss after Shed cost and contribution to Lighthouse Database £4196.

Therefore vs expectations our position is better than expected largely due to cost savings detailed above.