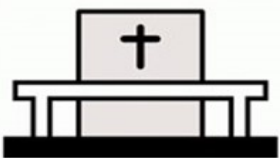


# Waterlooville Baptist Church



## Annual Report 2023



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# Waterlooville Baptist Church Reports

Year ended 31st December 2023

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## **Church Leadership**

Minister - Rev Sandra Platford (until Dec 2023)

Secretary - Mrs Rachel Nassif

Treasurer – Mr Mike Davis

### **Deacons**

Mrs Gill Cawte

Mr. Mike Davis

Miss Pat Knowles

Mrs Rachel Nassif

Mr. Richard Ostler

## ORGANISATION LEADERS

<b>Art Group</b>	Leader Helper	Mr Steve Phillips Mrs Pam Gray
<b>Boys' Brigade</b>	Captain Lieutenant	Mr Chris Ware Miss Pat Knowles
<b>368 Community Café</b>	Volunteers	Mrs Anita Clement Mrs Pat Crease Mrs Dorothy Earley Mrs Rachel Nassif Mrs Pam Nelson Mr Richard Ostler Mrs Christine Reilly Mrs Poh Yong Tan Mrs Sandy Weston
<b>Home Education Group</b>	Co-ordinator	Miss Pat Knowles
<b>Junior Church</b>	Co-ordinator	Miss Pat Knowles
<b>Life Groups</b>	Leaders	Mrs Gill Cawte Mrs Rachel Nassif Mr Richard Ostler
<b>Re-Tyred</b>	Leader	Mr Alan Perry
<b>Tea@3</b>	Leader Helpers	Mrs Anita Clement Mrs Christine Reilly Mrs O'Linda Giles Mrs Karen Foster Mr Steve Foster Mr John Everett
<b>Toddlers at WBC</b>	Leader Helpers	Miss Pat Knowles Mrs Pam Nelson Mrs Gill Cawte Mrs Elspeth Lynch Mr Darrell Griffin Mrs Sandy Weston Mrs Dorothy Earley Mrs Pat Davies Mrs Margaret Ward (until July 2023)
<b>Women's Prayer Group</b> (Closed July 2023)	Leader	Mrs Gill Cawte

## CHURCH OFFICE HOLDERS

<b>BMS Birthday Scheme</b>	Co-ordinator	Miss Pat Knowles
<b>Church Cleaning</b>	Co-ordinator	Miss Pat Knowles
<b>Church Flowers</b>	Co-ordinator	Miss Pat Knowles
<b>Church Grounds and Gardens</b>	Gardeners	Mr Steve and Mrs Gill Phillips Miss Pat Knowles
<b>Church Office</b>	Administrators	Mrs Sandie Davis Mrs Anita Clement
<b>Church Refreshments</b>	Co-ordinator	Mrs Elspeth Lynch
<b>Church Stewards</b>	Co-ordinator	Mrs Anita Clement
<b>Communion</b>	Steward	Mrs Poh Yong Tan
<b>Fabric</b>	Steward	Vacant – overseen by Mr Mike Davis and Mr Richard Ostler
<b>Finance Administration</b>	Administrator	Mr Steve Foster
<b>Fire Prevention</b>	Officer	Responsible Deacon – Mr Mike Davis
<b>Food Bank</b>	Co-ordinators	Mr Steve Phillips Mrs Gill Phillips
<b>Health and Safety</b>	Officer	Responsible Deacon – Mr Mike Davis
<b>Leprosy Mission</b>	Representative	Miss Pat Knowles
<b>Marriage Registrar</b>	Officer	Miss Pat Knowles
<b>Membership</b>	Registrar	Mrs Karen Foster
<b>Operation Agri Link</b>	Co-ordinator	Mr Darrell Griffin
<b>Pastoral Care Groups</b>	Co-ordinator	Miss Pat Knowles
<b>Safeguarding</b>	Safeguarding Trustee Designated Person	Mr Mike Davis Mrs Gill Phillips
<b>Video Projection System PA and on-line services</b>	Co-ordinators	Mr Mike Davis Mr Steve Foster
<b>Worship</b>	Leaders  Accompanists	Mrs Sandie Davis Mrs Annie Harding Mrs Karen Foster Mr Richard Wort

## Secretary's Report

As we entered 2023, dare I say there was a feeling of optimism. Rev Sandra Platford had completed her first year with us in ministry, the pilot of the Community Café had been successful and the plan was this would now be a permanent part of the outreach in the life of the church. I had taken on the role of church secretary, following a time with no one in that role.

Unfortunately Rev Sandra became unwell in February and then following a repeat episode of COVID and already suffering from long COVID, even when her health was improving, was not able to work for more than four hours a day for the first half of the year, only able to preach occasionally during this time.

Following the service on July 23<sup>rd</sup> Rev Sandra and Bryan Platford met with Mike Davis and myself to inform us that she had been advised on health grounds that she needed to take a prolonged period of 6 months off work, in order to give her body the best chance of recovery.

An agreed statement was read to the church prior to the commencement of the service on the 30<sup>th</sup> July, explaining the situation. A whole range of emotions were apparent on the faces of the congregation: shock, surprise, disappointment. The fellowship prayed for Sandra and Bryan, for rest and for healing and that she might be able to come to terms with this enforced time of rest, away from the church. I was keen to not question why this had happened, but to emphasise that despite how it might feel God was, and is, still in control and followed an amazing service of praise and worship, led by Sandie Davis, which united the church in a way that to my joy, continued throughout the year.

Mike Davis and myself were drawn to the name of someone who God had placed on our hearts to support us in preaching at this time. Martin Mant rose to the challenge to support us, delivering sermon series in three or four week blocks through the year, providing continuity. I am extremely grateful to Martin for bringing God's word to us faithfully and it has been good to share worship with his family and adopt them into our church family.

With the support of the regional ministers, Rev Simon Gray supporting Rev Sandra and Rev Hayley Young, supporting me and the church, the four of us met regularly through the latter half of the year. It was apparent that there was no improvement in Sandra's health. In November Sandra was advised that she would need an even longer period off sick, maybe up to two years. At a meeting in November it was agreed that Sandra's ministry would end with the service on 31<sup>st</sup> December. This was led by Rev Hayley Young and we were able to give thanks to God for Sandra and her ministry with us. Sandra and Bryan were presented with a gift from the fellowship and we sought to bless her as she moves into the next chapter of her life, seeking healing and restoration.

I am thankful that Martin Mant agreed to continue to support us on Sundays and I am indebted to the other Ministers who open God's word to us on the intervening weeks. I also need to thank Sandie Davis and Annie Harding who plan and lead worship each week and the musicians who lead us in worshipping God. The preparation that goes in to each service is time consuming and a labour of love and much appreciated.

During the year five members resigned their membership. There were two baptisms which Rev Sandra was able to conduct and we welcomed three new members into our church family.

The process of becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation moves onwards very slowly. The new constitution was agreed by the church membership at a special church meeting, and proceeding to the next step is in the hands of the solicitors.

The youth work of the church continues to grow; Toddlers, Home Education Group and Boys Brigade all flourishing. This does not translate into families in church on a Sunday, but it is good that so many young people come onto church premises and receive Christian teaching. We hosted the QI Christmas service again and the church on that occasion is full to capacity with children and their families.

As has been said in previous years the buildings are a blessing and a responsibility. Visitors are envious of our space, but the layout is not suitable for multiple groups meeting at the same time. The fabric of the building is tired and will need significant investment in the coming years. The deacons are therefore seeking a suitable architect to suggest ways of adapting our current premises to be more appropriate for our needs. The aim would be to embark on a project for a more adaptable building, more cost efficient to run, that can become a real hub for the community.

Through the year I have been indebted to my fellow deacons, particularly Mike Davis who as treasurer has enough to do without pointing me in the right direction. Sandie Davis, Anita Clement and I met regularly to look at the admin tasks that are necessary to keep the life of the church ticking over.

I am delighted that Sandie Davis, Karen Foster and Geoff Reilly were elected to serve on the diaconate from 2024. The church could not function without our treasurer, Mike Davis. We are all indebted to Steve Foster for the endless patience with us lesser mortals when it comes to finance and technology and the seemingly endless hours he puts in supporting Mike and the church.

I must pay tribute to the support, guidance, and care I, and the fellowship received from the Rev Hayley Young, one of our regional ministers. Last year was challenging. During the latter half of the year Hayley was always on the end of the phone when I needed advice or support. Without fail Hayley imparted wisdom and enabled me to see a way forward. I am grateful for her attendance at deacons and church meetings and her preaching, which cannot fail to inspire all who hear it.



As a relatively small and aging fellowship, I feel we punch above our weight. That is due to all the leaders of groups who diligently serve, along with the teams that support them. There is so much that goes on behind the scenes: the cleaning, the gardening, the pastoral care team, those who arrange and distribute flowers, serve refreshments, and all the members of the fellowship continue to support and show love and kindness to one another.

As we said goodbye to Sandra and Bryan on the 31<sup>st</sup> December, we enter 2024 in a period of pastoral vacancy.

We are united in love for one another and for our heavenly Father. We come together to worship, praise, honour and serve Him, and we call on His name to guide us into the coming year.

We pray for listening ears and a spirit of discernment as we seek God's will for us as a fellowship of believers in Waterlooville

**Rachel Nassif**

## **Membership Registrar's Report 2023**

### **Membership statistics**

Membership on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 was 71

Membership on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 was 69

### **New members added in 2023:**

We began the year by welcoming Mr Roy Heather into membership in January.

Following the wonderful occasion of his baptism in May, we welcomed Mr Damien Walker into membership in June.

Mrs Christine Reilly joined the membership of WBC in July.

### **Members who left in 2023:**

At the beginning of the year we heard from Mr Len and Mrs Pam Vickerstaff that they were resigning their membership, followed in February by the resignations of Mrs Brenda and Mr John Bennett after nearly 50 years in membership of WBC. A further resignation was received in October from Mrs Sheila Freemantle. Messages of thanks for their service to WBC were sent to them all and we wish them all the best.

**Karen Foster**

## Church Administrator's Report

Sandie Davis, Anita Clement and our Church Secretary, Rachel Nassif, work together to cover the administration tasks of the church, along with the Treasurer, Mike Davis. This includes picking up phone messages, answering emails, compiling rotas, overseeing room bookings, producing the church monthly news and ordering hand towels!

There are the more complex tasks, e.g. converting our governance to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), safeguarding, finance and fabric and we are so grateful for a number of people who take on these tasks and ensure we comply with everything we need to as a church of our size.

Anita can be found in the office on Café day, but Sandie and Rachel mainly work remotely and we aim to keep church matters running. There are some things that take a little longer and when we appoint our new minister, there may be a need for more hours to be spent in the church office, but at the moment, we are treading water really quite effectively!

A huge thank you to anyone who supports the administration of the church in whatever way – you are truly appreciated.

The number of groups using our church premises during the week has grown, both church groups and external hirers of rooms who use our church building for community provision – not only does this make us a centre for community activity but it brings in income to support the work of the church. There may be challenges in hiring out church rooms, but this raises awareness of WBC in the community and supports our work. Our weekly diary includes sessions from Toddlers to The Steady and Strong exercise group and from home education provision to model car racing! Even our car park is used by other groups during the week; we aim to be open to our neighbours and hopefully this is a way to be a witness in the community.

We aim to keep our church members and friends informed about the work of the church through the monthly news, we are always on the look out for content and will promote any church activities, always making sure we keep your personal details private. The church office is a centre for dropping off information or random things found in the church – it may look a little messier than usual, but we do check regularly for additions.

Anita co-ordinates the stewarding team; this is such a valuable role as the stewards are often the first people who greet newcomers and support with directions to the toilet or the crèche and handing out our visitor gift bags! We do thank all our stewards for their commitment. If you are thinking of volunteering as a steward or in any capacity in the church, we will help you find a role – just ask us and we can point you in the right direction.

**Rachel, Anita** and **Sandie** would like to thank all our fellowship for keeping in touch, for patience and for feedback on the work of the church

## CHURCH ORGANISATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### Art Group

A mixed year for the Art Group, we advertised for new members and had some people come and try but unfortunately did not stay, but we did get 3 new people come and join us and they have settled in well and become valued members of the group. We still have room for one more person if anyone is interested; please contact Steve Phillips or Jan Peck.

We also had some illness during the year and some people were absent for a few months but by Christmas we were back up to full strength. We had lunch together at Northney Tea Rooms in May , end of term Coffee and cakes at Blendworth Tea Rooms in July and again in December at Blendworth Tea Rooms. We do also spend time doing Art or crafts anything in the 'arty' genre is acceptable, and just enjoy spending time together. The group are very supportive of each other. Help is also available for those who seek it regarding their art work from those more experienced.

**Jan Peck**

### B.M.S. Birthday Scheme



Have you ever thought about joining the B.M.S Birthday Scheme? It's a very simple way you can help some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world have the life-saving medical treatment, preventative health care, education and so much more, that we can so easily take for granted. You will also be supporting those ministering to them, and bringing them the wonderful news that God loves and cares for them.

So many instructions, these days, begin with the word "Simply" but can be very confusing! However, if you would like to be involved in the Birthday scheme, it really *is* simple. Just come and speak to or email me. All I need to know is the day and month of your birthday. (Year optional!) On the Sunday before your birthday, I will give or send you a birthday card, with a gift envelope enclosed. Donations of any amounts will be most gratefully received for the vital work of the B.M.S. These can be sent directly to the church bank account, if you wish, alternatively, cheques or cash can be given to me, to forward.

**Pat Knowles**

## Boys' Brigade

2023 was a busy year of activities for our Boys' Brigade group, embracing the mission of encouraging our boys to 'Live life to the Full'. It was also another year of growth with new members joining across all age groups.

The Boys' Brigade is celebrating its 140<sup>th</sup> year of working with children and young people, the increased support and provision of activities in the programme helps the leaders provide quality and consistent activities while they build lasting relationships. We took part in a couple of the national 140 activities in October. The Junior Section had a '140' Sleepover which included a Zoom meet up with other Junior groups and a magical message. Whereas our Anchors planted a grass 140 as part of the Anchor 140 Challenge for their anniversary celebrations.

In May, Company Section members headed to the Unite UK camp to join with BB members across the country for a weekend. The sun made an appearance, although it was cold at night. There was plenty to get stuck into from kayaking to silent discos, inflatables to video games along with some great times of worship.

Our own Company and Battalion programme has been busy. We were awarded with the Battalion Proficiency Shield for 2023 as overall best company and also the Barry Mills Sports Trophy. We have also been:

- 10-pin Bowling at Gunwharf Quays – a firm favourite
- A visit to Waterlooille Lawn Bowls Club
- Anchor Indoor Games
- Company Section Sports afternoon
- International Team Games
- Summer BBQ at Queen Elizabeth Country Park for boys and families



We head into 2024 optimistic that we can continue to improve the quality of our programme offered and are currently working with Boys' Brigade HQ on the Building Stronger programme which aims to support and help Companies build on their existing work. There are lots of positives but also several challenges that do not seem to be moving particularly along quickly:

- We only have 2 Lieutenants appointed
- We do not have a Chaplain
- Leader training is in progress
- We are not visible to those outside our doors. We need to be letting Waterlooille know that there is a group meeting for boys. The more of us that can do so the more families we can reach.

Thanks to all the leaders, parents and those behind the scenes supporting the company.

**Chris Ware**

## 368 Community Café



It seems incredible that the café has been running now for over a year.

We have our loyal customers who come week by week and we are slowly building up relationships and fostering confidences. We regularly serve between 20 and 25 people, about half of whom are non church attendees. Some of them came to Carols by Candlelight and some to the new years eve service, when they were able to say farewell to the Rev. Sandra Platford. We have also had the opportunity to pray for some individuals, particularly regarding their health concerns.



We were nominated as the SCBA church of the year for 2023, a scheme where churches within the association donate to another church to enable them to pursue a project. We are extremely grateful to Rev. Hayley Young, one of the regional ministers who sought help from a minister/ film producer friend to produce a video of the café, interviewing customers and volunteers. This enabled other churches to see and understand what we are trying to achieve.

One of the memorable comments from one regular was “ each slice of cake is served with a slice of love”, which is exactly what we try to do. The over £2000 received will go a long way towards replacing the carpet in the coming year.

I am truly grateful to the loyal volunteers who serve so faithfully. In addition to building up relationships with customers, we are building and strengthening relationships within one another.

We would love to welcome more volunteers, whether in the kitchen, serving, or acting as a listening ear. A second team would enable us to open for longer or on an additional day.

**Rachel Nassif**

## The Leprosy Mission

The Leprosy Mission was founded in 1834, and is the oldest and largest group working to treat and support suffers from the disease and seek ways to eradicate it, and has the aim of zero transmission by 2025. Leprosy is a mildly infectious, easily cured disease, but it can so easily lead to blindness and disability, if its symptoms are disregarded or not recognised, due to ignorance, fear or discrimination. T.L.M. is funded almost entirely by donations and very much relies on prayer, as it works, in many parts of the world, to see “leprosy defeated, lives transformed.”



W.B.C. members have supported T.L.M. for many years, both financially and in prayer, and this is much appreciated. If you would like to know more about the Mission’s work, receive an annual or quarterly Prayer Diary or make a monetary contribution, please speak me. Any help will be most gratefully received.

### Pat Knowles

## Life Groups

Three Life Groups started in 2022 and continued meeting through the year, with between 5 and 9 members in each group. Each person comes with a range of experiences and interests, but each appreciates the more intimate fellowship that meeting in a small group affords, particularly in the warmth and informality of a home. Trust and relationships are deepened and strengthened.

Groups have covered a wide range of subjects as selected by the group members. Two groups have watched short DVDs covering guilt, anger, and the lives of two Christian business men William Hartley and Thomas Cook.

Materials from the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity and a series which uses a DVD to introduce each session, entitled "God's Big Picture" which develops the amazing theme of God's love and purposes from Genesis through to Revelation. The DVD stimulated questions and discussion in a relaxed way.

Embrace the Middle East Lent and Advent guides have proved useful prompts for study. One group chose to look at and identify the gifts of the Spirit which coincided with a sermon series on the Holy Spirit. It is incredible how new aspects and truths are discovered in familiar bible passages.

Whether new to the faith or a mature Christian you will be welcome to join a group to be encouraged and get to know others and study scripture more deeply.

**Gill Cawte**

**Rachel Nassif**

**Richard Ostler**

## **Pastoral Care Groups**

As part of W.B.C.'s care for every member of the church family, we have six Pastoral Care Groups. The aim of the Group leaders is to ensure that each member of their group should have someone to look out for them, and be there for them, if needed. The six leaders try to stay in touch with those in their group by chatting, visiting, telephoning and writing. Membership of the Pastoral Care Groups is open to everyone who feels part of the family at W.B.C. If you are not in a group and would like to be, or you would like to know more about the groups and how they function, please speak to me or one of the deacons.

**Pat Knowles**

## **Re-Tyred Men's Group Lunch**

Every second Thursday of the month men of the Church gather at the Red Lion, Horndean, for lunch usually at 1pm. We don't get together in August because of holidays. On average between 15 and 18 men attend each month and the numbers include a few past members of WBC.

The invitation to attend is only to WBC men and not to other churches.

At Christmas time some of the ladies of the church also attend that lunch and this year there were a total of 30 people who took over the main dining room area of the Red Lion; a great time was had by all. We did enjoy singing grace before our meal for all in the pub to hear.

Meeting together for lunch gives us an opportunity to get to know one another more, to talk about world and church affairs and to try and put the world to rights.

Alan Perry looks after all the booking arrangements and the collection of monies to pay the overall cost which is always in cash. This helps the Red Lion staff who are grateful to have the bill sorted out in the way we do.

Apart from the period when covid stopped us meeting together the lunch group has been in operation for 8 years. It is hoped that it will continue to be popular within WBC as we move into 2024 and that numbers will grow. This will also help our church family grow together.

Alan's contact details are in the church directory. You will find us listed in the Church Monthly.

**Alan Perry**



## Tea@3

When the former leader left I was rather disappointed. As a newcomer to the Church, I had enjoyed those afternoons because it had been a good way to meet and get to know members of the church.

I offered to try and run Tea@3, making it absolutely clear that I didn't feel capable of doing it on my own. Those who had helped before and some new recruits enabled a new **Tea@3** team to be formed.

John Everett kindly said that he was willing to continue looking after the finances, O'Linda would continue her excellent work in the kitchen joined by Christine, and Karen and Steve also said that they would continue in their work serving out the teas and, occasionally taking on the responsibility of running the afternoon by organising games or quizzes; and quietly in the background Geoff who would set up the tables and chairs. Last but not least Pat Crease who is willing to help out any time we are short on numbers.



We had a meeting to decide on a programme for the following year which comprised: a 'Show and Tell' afternoon, a quiz by Derek, a music quiz by Karen, a film theme music quiz by Steve, Jim and Barry 'The Neverlys' sang songs from the 60s, Coronation memorabilia and King Charles III quiz, an afternoon of games, a Beetle drive, Who am I? Guess who this baby is, poems read by Jackie Whitehead, Christmas craft led by Karen and finally a Christmas tea and carols.

The numbers have been fairly constant ranging between 30 and 14. We have lowered the attendance age from 60 to 50 to be more inclusive.

What we may lack in numbers we definitely make up for in quality!

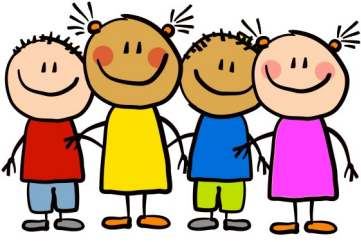
We would be delighted to welcome more members of the church and/or anyone outside the church to join in our informal afternoons.

We have a varied programme planned for 2024, including an outside speaker:

- A talk by David Allport "What did you do during the war Mum?" with strawberries and cream!
- Our 'home grown' afternoon with David McDowell and his band "Changing Tunes"

**Anita Clement**

## Toddlers



We've had another busy, but happy year at Toddlers, with an average of 35 children, and their adults, joining us each week during term time. Harvest, Christmas, Mothering Sunday and Easter have been celebrated, along with the Teddy bears' Picnic at the end of the summer term, when Leaving Certificates are presented to those setting out on the big adventure of school. This year a special activity was making gold crowns, decorated with "jewels," early in May, so as to be properly dressed for the first Coronation for seventy years!

We now use the Lancaster Room for our meetings during the Autumn and Spring Terms, where the farm, floor puzzles and matching games are enjoyed in a quieter space. In the Owens Hall there is usually a making table, along with puzzles and a wide range of toys, bricks, dolls and their clothes, prams and pushchairs, as well as a dolls' house, train set and our Book Corner. In the Summer term, the children enjoy being outside (weather permitting!) where a sand pit, water table, tent and ride in cars and trikes all add to the fun.

It is both a joy and a privilege to welcome so many little ones at Toddlers each Thursday morning, and we would value your prayers for them and their families, and us as we seek to serve them

A sterling team of helpers: Pam Nelson, Gill Cawte, Elspeth Lynch and Darrell Griffin ensure a good time is had by all, while Sandy Weston, Dorothy Earley, Pat Davies and, until July, Margaret Ward make sure that Snack Time goes smoothly. Their support is very much appreciated.

**Pat Knowles**

## Waterlooville Food Bank Donations

It is a difficult truth that poverty, and hunger exists in the UK today, however it is a growing reality. Many individuals and families in our local community struggle with day to day living and all it takes is a sudden unexpected event – illness, redundancy, a late pay cheque – to throw people into genuine crisis.

Food banks are community organisations that can help those who cannot afford the food they need.

*Waterlooville Food Bank is in Wecock Church, Kite Close. PO8 9UX .*

*It is open Mondays 09.30 – 11.30 and Friday 12 – 2pm where collections and donations can be made.*

Food hampers are made up for those who are genuinely in need. You will need to be referred by someone who works within a recognised organisation such as Children's services, Social Worker, Housing association, CBA, or Church Minister. If you are already getting support or help with your finances from a front-line agency, you can ask them to refer you to the food bank. For those people wishing for a referral from Waterlooville Baptist Church the named person to contact is **Gill Phillips**.

You can get a referral for yourself and any family members you live with. Once a referral has been accepted and processed you will get a text or email notification letting you know when you can collect your hamper.

### **DONATIONS**

All donations are welcome; large or small, regular, or one-off, they all help support local people in difficulties.

Easiest for small donations: Drop off your food/ toiletries donation at one of our collection points in the front and side entrances of the church.

Larger donations: If you have a larger donation of food/ toiletries, please give **Gill or Steve Phillips** a phone and we can arrange a collection.

WBC donations are delivered to the food bank on the first Friday of the month where the food is checked, sorted, and packed by a team of volunteers.

During the year 2023 – 2024 the giving to the food bank has increased especially with the Harvest and Christmas appeals. The giving has been truly generous and has helped stock the shelves at the food bank especially at difficult times during the year. Each month we are delighted that we still have more to collect; how amazing is that!

During 2023 Waterlooville Food Bank helped 180 families who struggled during the year.

Waterlooville Baptist Church has made 1 referral.

**Gill and Steve Phillips**

## **Waterlooville Home Education Social Group**

This group certainly lives up to its name! Each Wednesday morning, during term time, the Marshal Room, Owens Hall and, weather-permitting, patio area buzzes with activity and chatter, as the “Home Ed” group meet for fun, friendship, sharing (mostly amicable ☺) and the using up of lots of energy. Most weeks, between twenty and thirty, sometimes more, meet up to have fun together and socialise. The majority of them are primary school aged children, although there are some younger and older ones too, all accompanied by at least one parent. Some come occasionally, whilst others are there almost every week.

In the Autumn term we rearranged things, so the Marshal Room became a quieter area, used for playing board games, building with Lego, craft, reading, chatting and so on, while more energetic pastimes benefitted from the space provided by the Owens Hall.

The outside space is also much appreciated. The group is organised by a small number of parents, who also take it in turn to help set up the activities each week. The wider group contribute to our collection of items for the Food Bank at Harvest time and respond to the Shoe Box appeal at Christmas. Several of the boys are very regular at Boys’ Brigade.

**Pat Knowles**

## **Women’s Prayer Group**

Prayer Group continued to gather on Monday mornings from January to July, when we had a break for the summer holidays. Unfortunately, two of our members, (half of our group), were very sad to be unable to continue attending for personal reasons, so it was decided to close our meeting.

Our 30 years of Monday morning prayer time had come to an end, the last of the five prayer groups started by Doreen Simpson, a previous minister's wife.

**Gill Cawte**

## Worship Report

As a church, we exist to worship God and we do this in many ways; through song, through reading his word, through prayer, through witness and through joining together as a community of believers.

We are blessed as a church to have gifted musicians and worship leaders to ensure we offer a regular Sunday morning service. We are also very blessed to have our 'tech' team, who make sure that the services are streamed so that people who are unable to attend in person are still able to share in worship with the fellowship.

Sincere thanks go to our tech team: Steve Foster and Mike Davis; our keyboard players: Richard Wort and Karen Foster; our bass players: Ray King and Steve Harding; our drummer man: Roly Wort and our worship leaders: Annie Harding and Sandie Davis.

At the beginning of the year we had our minister, Rev. Sandra Platford preaching regularly to explore the scriptures and bring the word of God for our church. During the year she was absent due to sickness and finally accepted that full time ministry was not sustainable for her. We thank her for her leading of services, particularly with new services at Easter and the previous Christmas, and for her spiritual leadership through the Sunday services.

Later in the year we benefitted from a number of guest preachers and we have been particularly fortunate to have Rev. Hayley Young, previous Baptist Together President in 2022/23 and now Regional Minister and Co-Team lead for SCBA, preaching regularly with us – thank you to her for all the support.

We are also grateful for the preaching support from Martin Mant and thank him and his family, Louise, Evie and Olivia for becoming part of our fellowship.

We continue to stream our services, and sermons can be listened to again from our church website. We continue to take advantage of technology developments, the most visible improvement being our new big screens that have taken the place of our old and blurry projectors! This has helped us use visual short films and songs as part of worship to help us use innovative ways of worshipping God. Although we bring in the new, we also cherish the use of our organ regularly and in particular, the Christmas services have resonated to the sound of the organ played at full volume.

Thanks go to all those who lead us in worship, through music, by bringing the word, by reading the Bible, by leading church prayers, by preparing and serving communion, by setting up the microphones, by compiling the order of service, by arranging the flowers and by using their God given gifts for us all.

We look forward to making a joyful noise to the Lord in 2024 and continuing to be a worshipping community that we hope will grow as we faithfully worship our Father God.

**Sandie Davis**

*If you are interested in joining any of the above organisations and activities or helping in any way to keep our church and grounds neat and tidy then please speak to the organisation leader or one of the Deacons.*

*Thank you*