

Church Groups report 2025

Bellringing – Mark Pugh, Tower Captain

During 2025, our ringing group continues to be really supportive in efforts to maintain Sunday service ringing and when we can, to use the 8 or 10 bells for notable services throughout the year.

In February 2025 our own ringing group supported the 'light up Leominster' event with all 10 bells, a wonderful achievement.

Our Thursday night practice continues to be supported with our own small band and additional ringers joining from surrounding villages.

Whilst our Sunday service band is mostly well supported, when 1 or 2 are away, it is noticeable that we are now starting to struggle to meet with enough to ring, but continue to try.

The Priory bells are checked regularly for any issues but the bells and fittings are continuing to gain age and as within previous reports, I must reinforce the fact that work of some description, does need to be undertaken on the Priory bell installation, so we may maintain our ability to attract ringers and continue to call the faithful to worship as well as ringing for all the other occasions.

Efforts have been made to recruit and we are making small progress in this area with 1 recruit over summer and potential further interested people for autumn time. Whilst this may appear a low number, we appreciate time given by those who wish to try this ancient art and also personal time committed by those teaching, without cost.

In an overall summary is that we continue to make efforts to ring whenever we are able to secure numbers for both Sunday service and practice nights.

Church Cleaning

Keeping the church clean is always a challenge! Many thanks to the team who do a wonderful job, but more volunteers are always welcomed.

Chalice Assistants - Jean R Dickson

The Chalice Assistants continue to support and serve the Priory Church as they help to administer The Holy Sacrament on Sunday mornings. It is a joy and a privilege to be able to serve in such a capacity. Thanks be to God.
Jean R Dickson.

Church linens group – Ceri Hibbert

In 2025 the main activities have been general repairs, a major repair of a cope gifted to one of the clergy, and a new purple altar frontal. This was made from a wide altar frontal gifted to Fr Guy 40 years ago, when it was already at least 50 years old. It would have been splendid in its prime with ornate goldwork. Sadly, the main fabric was badly degraded as were many of the stitches securing the goldwork. It was a privilege to be able to restore the goldwork from one section of the original to give us a new purple altar frontal (with 15 minutes to spare before the Advent Carol Service!). It is hoped to restore and use some of the remaining goldwork to make a matching pulpit fall in 2026, hopefully in a more timely fashion.

Deanery Library – Diana & Jenny

Jenny and Diana continue to change the Library Books at the back of the Priory every month. We hope the selection meets your needs.

Fabric Report - Geoff Bricknell

During 2025, we have attempted to maintain the building as well as we can, although no major project work was carried out. The 5 yearly Electrical Installation Condition report was commissioned, and necessary remedial work was carried out. The cost of the report and work in total was £2581 plus vat. 2025 was also the year that the quinquennial report was carried out. The Fabric Committee has discussed the recommendations and are making priorities and obtaining estimates. In June repairs were carried out to the flashing on the toilet block flat roof at a cost of £580. More recently flashing repair and localised repointing was carried out where the tower east wall meets the norman nave roof, at a cost of £450. Localised water penetration above the Lady Chapel and close to the south wall has been occurring over the winter. We believe this to have been caused by the build up of debris beneath the rolled lead lapped joints. Remedial work has been carried out at a cost of £280. In last year's annual report, it was noted that we had received a structural report prepared for the "Futures" project, recommending that certain remedial works were necessary to ensure future stability of the south wall and the

arcade between the main nave and the south aisle. We have been investigating the costs involved and now have a plan and detailed specification for some of the remedial works required. The next steps are to obtain tenders for the work. Clearing of gutters and gullies, and removing ivy off walls was carried out regularly during the year.

FLOWER TEAM - Mandy Simpson

Sarah Gluyas takes on role as Treasurer. Bills and Invoices are processed promptly this year.

Funding.

Flower ladies DO contribute financially to flowers. But we work on a weekly allowance of £12.50 a week (£50 per month) AND £120 each for Easter and Xmas Flowers paid by the Church.

Generous donation of £200 this year for Easter by the Church " Friends" which allowed £53 on Superior quality silk Daffodils from Deco-Flora and £145 on Fresh Flowers from Les our local Leominster Flower Market man.

We will still occasionally use Van Vliet but General Consensus is to support our LOCAL flower merchant.

We will also buy from Penny Morris Flower Farm at Stockton bury as her hardy home grown flowers far outlast any Commercially sourced ones. Her Alstroemeria are superior in size, vigour and variety. Her Geums last weeks.

We bought Silk Xmas poinsettias this year. Adding to our stock of white silk Easter lilies and also the Daffodils.

The silk flowers bought for the Creation Exhibition are very useful. NB We decided, as there are so few Flower arrangers to Arrange and water displays and increased COSTS of fresh flowers, to concentrate FRESH flowers to the CENTRAL Nave and Lady Chapel. Using silk arrangements in the NORMAN Nave and GARDEN branches and greenery for Church Entrance Porch. Sadly items have been stolen from the Priory Church porch area.

A mix of silk and fresh flowers and fresh green foliage (garden donated) gives a longer lasting display .In the hot Summer months, silk flowers with fresh greenery work best. Mandy Simpson

Friends of the Priory – Bill Quelch

Membership of The Friends, currently totals 77, and Membership is open not only to the church congregation but to anyone in Leominster and beyond who have an interest in, and love of, our wonderful Church Building.

Founded in 1945, The Friends assist financially in the adornment, beautification, restoration and repair of The Priory, where appropriate, projects are progressed in conjunction with the PCC. In recent years the original remit has been slightly modified, where we do contribute to the general life of the Church.

Over the last year we have supported items such as flowers for the church, over Christmas (£150), Shoe Box Appeal (£350), grant towards the Time Line for the Priory 900 Event (£1000) and sundry items (£100).

Priory Friends' income is derived primarily from subscriptions (see Priory web site link and Friends' screen inside church entrance for application forms), donations, Gift Aid claims and fund-raising events. Significantly in 2025 we held a Cheese & Pudding Night (£604) and a very successful concert by the Hereford Police Male Voice Choir (£1310). If any existing Friends would like to revisit the amount of their Subscription, it

would be very much appreciated. My thanks to those of you who are Friends, your on-going support is truly appreciated. To those of you who are not yet Friends please do join so that we have the funds to continue supporting future projects in The Priory.

My thanks go to The Friends' Council, and we are very fortunate to have such a committed and supportive Council (New volunteers for Council are always welcome).

Fundraising/Social Committee – Geoff Bricknell

An enthusiastic group met a number of times in 2025 to organise events, not just to raise money, but to encourage social interaction and help develop friendships. It was a good year from a fundraising point of view, with a total of £12,259 raised. This was better than expected, particularly as we didn't have a major sponsorship type of event during the year.

The summer fete and Christmas Bazaar were successful as usual, as was a spring plant sale/coffee morning and a Christmas decoration workshop. Other social events included a bangers and mash evening, a curry night, the harvest lunch, an Easter Monday walk and tea, and an open garden in June at Carol and David Benson's. Regular Friday coffee mornings were held at the Forbury Chapel, which raised additional funds. We are indebted to Bill Quelch for continuing to organise the 100

club and to Hilary and Ken Roberts for organising and hosting the Easter Monday walk and tea. Not forgetting all those who help to organise these events and those who support them.

Those currently on the committee are Carol and David Benson, Barbara Jones, Bill Quelch, Ceri Hibbert, Richard Scott, Cleaver Symons, Jenny Logan and Helen and Geoff Bricknell.

If you would like to join the group, do please speak to Geoff Bricknell (07836 731293)

Lions – Ed Ceney

"Lions is an important part of our pathway from choir participation to the wider fellowship of the church. Attendance fluctuates but we regularly have 3-4 aged 9-15 for a short time of boardgames and cards"

Holiday Club Report _ Anna Quelch

We had another incredible week of fun this year with 101 children at this year's Holiday Club. The theme was Incredible Garden and each day the children saw dramatised stories from the Bible: the first was Adam and Eve in the Incredible Garden of Eden (when we thought about temptation), then the Parable of the Sower, the story of Zacchaeus, followed by the parable of a Rich Young Fool, and finally the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. The daily Bible stories were reflected in the crafts the children made.

We had some exciting events during the afternoons

- On Monday The children enjoyed a visit to our Pet's Corner where there was a selection of creatures - labradors Willow & Tess, 2 kittens, a duck with ducklings, a chicken with chicks, guinea pigs, rabbits, fish, an ant farm, crickets, grasshoppers, locusts, spider, caterpillars, an enormous slug and a tortoise called Speedy.
- On Tuesday a volunteer from Guide Dogs for the Blind visited us with her 2 Ambassador dogs, Will and Wooster, and explained how dogs are trained and how they work with their owners. Once again Community Police Officer, Steph, accompanied by three other officers came to talk to the children. This time they brought both a car and a police van with cage to contain difficult "customers." Some of the teenagers offered to be handcuffed and "detained" in the van, which proved to be quite an uncomfortable experience, one not to be repeated.
- On Wednesday the older ones went on a trail and visited a garden full of plants, and were given the opportunity to harvest a few vegetables. The younger ones were planting flowers in pots and identifying trees by looking at leaves in the churchyard.
- The usual sports afternoon was held on the Thursday, with teams of mixed ages of children competing against each other in a selection of games, some of which involved water, which always proves popular.
- The week was rounded off with a "village fete" with various activity stalls in the churchyard as well as an inflatable obstacle course, which the children loved.

It was a busy and entertaining week, and we were delighted when Karen Evans, Youth Hub Safeguarding Officer & Diocesan Safeguarding Administrator, accepted our invitation to witness our Holiday Club in action. She spent a morning with us and went away impressed with what she saw.

We had planned for an increase in the booking charge but on reflection decided against this due to the economic climate, knowing that some families are really struggling. Instead, we kept strict control of all our expenditure and did not spend much on replacement equipment. We are, of course, indebted to the Town Council for their generous grant that funded the cost of hiring portable toilets and the necessary fencing for the outdoor play areas. In addition we were fortunate in receiving two generous donations, one from a church member and an additional sponsor. Thanks to these donations and our prudent management of our accounts we will go into 2026 with a modest surplus. Of the 101 children attending, free places were given to 13 children who were either nominated by Leominster Primary School, the food bank, or known to us through Messy Church as well as an Iranian and 2 Ukrainian refugees. In addition, we also offered a total of 25 subsidised places to families who are in receipt of benefits. Well over half of the children attending were repeat bookings, and came from 15 different schools.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the support of all our wonderful volunteers. Namely:-

- 39 adults working directly with the children and 5 key adults not working directly with children – Holly (all singing and dancing, front of stage person), Christopher, Carl, Anthony, and Bill and myself on admin.
- 35 teenagers most of whom have attended Holiday Club as children themselves, and who come back to help the adults.
- Lesley, Stephanie and Ann who worked tirelessly in the kitchen keeping everyone refreshed with drinks and fruit.
- 9 additional people helped during the sports afternoon, and 19 people acted as door stewards during the week.
- And of course, the Holiday Club Committee this year comprising Yvonne, Christine, Sarah, Sally, Sue, Holly, Bill, myself and new member Kirsty. We meet on a monthly basis from January onwards and spend countless hours preparing for the event.

The Holiday Club team are an amazing group and, despite the hard work, it is a joy to hold this event every year.

House group reports:

Phillippa and Greg Wright:

Monday Evening House Group

A group of between 8-10 people still continue to meet every other Monday evening to discuss the scriptures and pray together. We use various study guides to aid our learning and are currently finishing the "Lent Wise: Spiritual Essentials for Real Life" course edited by Paula Gooder. God calls us to grow in righteousness, and our study of scripture is essential to this.

Helen and Geoff Bricknell:

The house group meeting held at the home of Geoff and Helen Bricknell, is on the 1st Thursday of the month at 7.30pm. At present we have eleven members; over the years, we have studied a wide and varied range of topics. Some of these have included: ethical issues, Bible study of Old and New Testament books, learning how to pray and Inclusive Church. In fact anything which people feel would enliven and deepen our faith! In recent months we have been following the course entitled 'Journeying with Jesus' by Denis McBride. The book contains seven short sessions where we journey with Jesus from the wilderness to the resurrection, stopping at various places and situations on the way. It includes discussion of modern day real life situations where we have been challenged to put ourselves into those places and weave our own lives into that of Jesus. Some very interesting and lively conversations have ensued!

We are a friendly group and enjoy the evenings of fellowship and discussion.... people can contribute as much or as little as they want to. We share the reading of material, prayers and decision making as to what we study. Our evenings always conclude with coffee and cake and time to chat together about life in general!

It would be good to see more House Groups being formed; if you would like to be part of a group please get in touch with Fr.Guy .

Intergenerational Pioneers – Kathy and David Bland

Pioneer report October 2025

Our Pioneering working in Leominster over the last year has focussed on Messy Church, Barons Cross outreach, supporting the Leominster Youth Hub and schools work.

We had hoped to have been able to apply for external funding to increase the youth and community outreach work at Barons Cross and Ridgemoor work through our existing Priory role, but this was not possible. Therefore more of this work is now being done outside of our Priory work.

Barons Cross Outreach – Winter of Wellbeing funding from Hereford Council (From DWP) enabled us to provide food and activity sessions at Barons Cross Community room over the winter.

Messy Church – Messy Church continues with a cohort of members who have been attending for several years as well as regularly seeing new families. We are taking part in Messy Momentum - national research about supporting the faith of young people aged ten and above in Messy Church. We have three young people in this age group who attend Messy Church regularly. We took them to the Pioneer Centre Diocesan Activity Day to enable them to meet and connect with other young people in the Diocese and will encourage them to be part of future Diocesan Gather events as part of the Messy Momentum project. Leading Messy Church includes pastorally supporting the Messy Church congregation. We supported both Leominster Festival and Leominster Food Fair with Messy Church activities on The Grange in June and September.

Messy Church Report – for 2025

Our worshipping community dropped quite significantly in September 2024 but has been growing again throughout the year. In previous years we have gained new families in September; the beginning of the school year is often a time when children try something new. Local schools seem to less reliably publicise Messy Church for us which may account for this not having happened in September. We returned to putting the Messy Church banner outside Leominster Primary School to remind people that it is happening and are making more use of local Facebook groups to reach families directly which has all helped to connect with new families.

We were excited to have been invited as key partners for a piece of national research, following our involvement in the Messy Church Discipleship research. Messy Church BRF secured Church of England funding to explore creative ways of engaging with 12-16 year olds. Recent data has indicated that 50% of Messy Churches nationally have no-one in this age group attending. Three of Leominster's Messy Church young people have attended a national consultation meeting where they listened to the ideas for the pilot projects and offered feedback and ideas about how they might be best implemented.

We are working with the Diocesan Youth Hubs team and other Messy Churches in the Diocese to establish a regular regional gathering for Messy Church young people, which will be shaped by our local Messy Church 12-18 year olds. In March 2025, three of our young people attended a diocesan activity day at the Pioneer Centre which

gave them a taste of what a regional gathering might offer i.e. a larger group of young people with whom to socialise, worship and learn about faith.

We shared expertise at the Messy Church International Conference in May 2025 where Jonathan Bland ran a ceilidh and Kathy, David and Jonathan all led workshops. Connecting with the international Messy Church leader's community is always inspiring and invigorating and this was no exception. Codie, from the Diocesan Youth hub team, was also able to attend the international conference.

The youth hub team have been able to regularly support Messy Church which has enabled them connect with more teenager and pre teens.

Schools Work – we continue to be part of the Open the Book team at Ivington School once a week and also lead Tuesday assemblies as part of the rota. We supported workshops for Priory 900 for Kimbolton, Orleton and Ivington Schools. We helped Bargates Nursery in leading their Harvest, Christmas and Easter services.

Youth Hub - It has been exciting to welcome first Ed and then Codie to Leominster and for them to be able to get to know the young people we work with at Barons Cross and Ridgemoor. We supported the Youth Hub's May drop in week at Leominster Moravian Church and subsequently have supported their Pizza XP and Wanderwood sessions.

Goats - We took on leadership of Goats after Revd Jonathan Roberts moved to his role at Hereford Cathedral. This small group continued to offer discussion, games and activities for its members until the end of the summer term. Three members of Goats started university in September which would leave only two. Since the membership of Lions is very small (meaning that if older members of Lions moved on to Goats it might lack a critical mass), Goats is currently on hold and we continue to pastorally support members of Goats.

Joint Council Report

For the year to April 2026

Finance

£10,000 had been donated to the Joint Council which enabled parish contributions to be frozen for 2 years and for essential equipment (such as laptops for clergy and a new printing system) with an amount also put aside for contingencies.

The method of calculating parish contributions was under constant review but a fairer way had not yet been found. Our Treasurer, Kerry Martin, planned to send a statement to each PCC with their invoices. Ways of reducing costs were continually being examined.

PCCs were encouraged to make their communities more aware of the financial burden on their local church and the fact that neither the Church of England nor the government contribute towards the running costs.

Funding was being sought to provide a Mission Secretary to support those parishes without Treasurers or Secretaries.

Safeguarding

Drop-in sessions were held at the Forbury on the last Friday of the month to help applicants submit their DBS forms.

Speakers

Hilary Norris, Director of Music at The Priory, spoke to the group about the events surrounding Priory 900, involving Norman churches in the Leominster Deanery.

Steven Baggs, Assistant Archdeacon of Hereford Cathedral, discussed the roles and responsibilities of clergy and PCCs and also the purpose of Triennial Inspections which, he said, most parishes had found helpful.

Mark Simmons, Parish Giving Advisor for the Diocese, spoke about how to be more welcoming to visitors and how to provide incentive for people to donate to their churches, including different methods of payment.

Shared Services

Recommendations had been made for contractors offering services such as electrical and lightening-conductor checks, general building work and decorators.

Mothers' Union – Phillippa Wright

Mothers' Union Leominster Branch continues to meet monthly. This year we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the foundation of Mothers' Union with two special Diocesan events; a celebratory service on 9th August in Colwall and Evensong at Hereford Cathedral on the 23rd August. It is impossible to say what the true extent of Mothers' Union has been, but the impact of our prayers and missionary endeavours are realised both locally and abroad.

Mothers' Union membership is open to anyone who has been baptised regardless of denomination or gender. I would encourage anyone who wants their faith make a difference beyond the church walls to consider joining us.

Music Report - Hilary Norris

The choir has continued to flourish. Support for Choral Evensong and other special evening services has been strong throughout the year. Thanks to all those that help to support these services – refreshments team, sound crew, stewards etc. We continue to work with small choirs in village churches, partly by giving them opportunities to sing in the Priory, for example joining us to sing for Choral Evensong, and sometimes by helping out for special events in their churches. During Priory 900 we were joined by members of several local choirs for a community celebratory service '900 Years and Beyond'. For our Advent Service

we were joined by seven choirs from the diocese. At all of these the Priory Choir provided a friendly, a strong foundation. Hereford Sixth Form College's choir joined us for a Choral Evensong in May and Stoke Prior School Choir joined us for our Civic Service in October. The Nine Lessons and Carols Service was a very well attended highlight, with the Junior Choir's rendition of 'Do you hear what I hear?' particularly appreciated. We also enjoyed singing Choral Evensong at Hereford Cathedral in February.

Members of the choir have sung at a number of funerals and weddings (at the Priory and elsewhere), and also at other community events and services including the VE Day service in May and the VJ service in August. They have also enjoyed several social occasions including the annual BBQ and Epiphany Party. My thanks to members of the choir who give so much help in sorting music, conducting, looking after the Junior Choristers, mending robes, assisting with rehearsals, conducting and a host of unseen jobs.

Most of the children in the choir come with little experience of music or of the church. As well as teaching the children musical skills to enable them to contribute to services through music, we also teach them about Christianity through discussion of readings, psalms, anthem texts, the church year etc at every rehearsal. Our thanks to the Rowlands Trust for a grant

towards a Choir Chaperone with safeguarding responsibilities to assist with the training and management of the children in the choir. We have also had generous contributions from members of the congregation to support the Choir Chaperone role in the coming year.

The children's learning is also supported by other adults in the Priory community in the preparation of special services eg Harvest activities, The Nativity, and through their attendance at the youth group, Lions, providing the youngsters with valuable time together to socialise, have fun and explore ideas. Thanks to those that lead these groups and for their collaboration in nurturing our young people.

Organ

The organs have been in fine form, and have been used by students of all ages for lessons, practice and workshops, including a visit from West Mercia Friends of the Organ in March. One young student has started to contribute to Family Services, and Choral Evensongs have also provided opportunities to nurture young organists. The Bevington organ has been used in small services in the Norman Nave, at various community events, and to entertain visitors at the Mayor-Making in May. A highlight was hearing the Nicholson organ with the brilliant trumpeter, Stuart Essenhigh, as part of in Priory 900, and it has featured in many concerts with visiting choirs and the Choral Society.

Concerts

Many concerts have taken place in the Priory. Requests from new visiting groups, as well as regular visits from local groups, and festivals, have ensured that the Priory has been very well used and appreciated as a major concert venue in North Herefordshire, including during the Three Choirs Festival. Thanks to all those behind the scenes who help to set-up, provide sound, welcome and help at all of these events.

Open the Book, Ivington School – Christine Hurdidge

This last year we have continued to work through our Storytelling Bible; we are currently on Year 3. Occasionally we revert to the original Stories in Bob Hartman's Lion Storyteller Bible, when the story is more in keeping with our theme.

The Bible Society Open the Book website provides helpful suggestions for practical tips to improve the story with stage directions and Bob's Top Tips, which are always helpful and I can then use the Bible notes during my Prayer Space sessions later in the week to guide our Prayers, but that's another story!

We still introduce new Makaton signs each week and have one of the children taking part as our Makaton Leader. I rehearse with the children and assign parts earlier in the day prior to the Assembly.

Our Key Stage 2 children take it in turn each week to take on leading roles which involves acting out and helping to deliver the stories and sharing the Prayer at the end.

We all, adults and children alike, enjoyed taking part in the filming and... drinking of hot chocolate, during the Advent JOY campaign run by Hereford Diocese.

Our Team consists of eight members from various Churches including, Baptist, Methodist and The Priory, as well as Ed and Codie from the Herefordshire Youth Hub.

New Story Tellers are always welcome to join our team of volunteers, who have a commitment of once a month for about an hour and a willingness to dress up and share The Bible Stories with our school children enthusiastically.

Thank you for reading.

Priory 900 Exhibition and Events Summary (14th June - 14th July 2025) – Rupert Fairclough

Leominster Priory celebrated 900 years since its refounding by King Henry I in 1125 with a festival of exhibitions and community events. The celebration featured a variety of activities such as heritage walks, art workshops, concerts, drama, and services, drawing local and national attention.

Key Figures:

Total Event Attendance: Approximately 5,220 people attended various events, including concerts, workshops, and talks.

Local Involvement: Around 250 local volunteers, including groups like ECHO and Leominster in Bloom, contributed to the success of the celebration.

School Participation: 1,425 children from 11 local schools engaged in themed activities, with an additional 680 under 18s involved in craft and music workshops.

Visitor Impact: The automatic door counter recorded 15,798 visitors to the exhibition between June 10th and July 14th.

Community and Cultural Contributions: Over 100 local artists contributed to the exhibition, with additional collaborations from organisations like the Hereford College of Arts, Leominster in Bloom and the Leominster History Society. (Over 50 local organisations were involved in the celebration.)

Highlights of the Celebration:

Exhibitions: Displays such as the Bayeux Tapestry replicas, the Stitched Atlas Folk Aedgiva display, and works inspired by the Priory's Norman architecture and history attracted significant interest. The Priory Time Travel Film and the 'Relics and Reflections' display, which involved a collaboration between local nursing home residents and the Guides, were particularly well-received. Liz Jones' stunning quilts in the Norman Nave, Bob Brown's painting and the Timeline were so popular that they have been on display ever since.

Events:

Key events included musical performances, including a music and dance performance by schools and a unique collaboration between Leominster Morris, Passamezzo Dance, Leominster Priory Choir and the History Society. Hidden Histories was a thought-provoking exploration of issues concerning local women through history, and talks on our the Priory's history, and interactive workshops including 'The Great Norman Stitch Up', a Norman Churches Tour and illuminated art by ECHO were enjoyed by many.

Multicultural and Community Engagement:

The festival featured a multi-faith 'Spiritual Spaces' event and a twinning visit from France, enriching the community experience. In addition people from nursing homes, ECHO and Leominster Meeting Centre were invited for tea and special events.

Economic and Cultural Impact:

The Priory 900 festival increased visitor interest in the town, contributing to local tourism and economic growth. Press coverage in national publications helped raise awareness of Leominster Priory's national significance. Post-event visits from international groups, including those from France and Germany, continued to highlight the Priory's historical importance.

Acknowledgments:

The event was made possible by community collaboration, including local schools, churches, cultural organisations, stewards and volunteers, in particular the work of the Priory Arts Team who worked for many months on the project. The project was part of 'The Futures Project' largely funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. We are also grateful for funding from Leominster Town Council, the Elmley Foundation, Rowlands and W. Cadbury's Trust and the Harley Charity and some generous individuals provided essential funding.

In conclusion, Priory 900 not only celebrated Leominster Priory's rich history but also fostered community engagement, education, and cultural pride, making the Priory and the town accessible and attractive to a wider audience and bringing lasting benefits to the Priory, town and region.

Shoebox report – Anna Quelch

The annual shoebox appeal in November enabled us to fill 120 boxes with stationery, hygiene items, hats, gloves and scarves as well as toys and sweets which were handed over to the Teams4U charity to start their journey to vulnerable children in Ukraine.

During the year empty shoeboxes are collected and lovingly covered in colourful wrapping paper by a team of volunteers, and in the autumn donations of items and money are received to allow me to go on a shopping spree and buy all that is needed. For 3 months my house is overrun with empty shoeboxes, wrapping paper and sellotape, and bags and bags of shopping, sorted into categories - enough to fill 14 trestle tables!

Each box that leaves the Priory has a photograph in it of the group of volunteers who packed it with the words "Sent with our love and prayers from the Priory Church, Leominster". They are then taken to a warehouse where they are checked (for no unsuitable items i.e. war related toys, liquids), packed into cardboard crates, and loaded onto articulated vehicles ready for their overland journey to Eastern Europe.

These shoeboxes bring such joy to families who live in poverty, and have an ability to let a child know that someone, somewhere, cares for them enough to send them this precious gift.

I am indebted to the Priory family who support this charity so generously, to the Knit & Natter group, whose nimble fingers produce mountains of hand knitted hats, scarves and teddies. Also my thanks to those who lovingly cover copious numbers of boxes so beautifully, to Rachel Ayling for allowing me to store items at her house, and not forgetting Val Gates who helps with the endless sorting and counting of items.