



The **HIGHLANDER**

December 2024/January 2025

**The almost monthly newsletter of Highlands
Methodist Church, Leigh on Sea**

These are services at Highlands¹ for December 2024

10:30 am Sun 1 st	Morning Worship 1 st of Advent Café Church	Worship Leaders
10:30 am Sun 8 th	Morning Worship 2 nd of Advent Toy & Gift Service	Rev Heather Simmons
5:00 pm Sun 8 th	Circuit Service At Belfairs Church Modern Christian Songs	Rev Peter Moorhouse
10:30 am Sun 15 th	Morning Worship 3 rd of Advent	Pamela Smith
4:00 pm Sun 15 th	Carol Service	Rev Heather Simmons
10:30 am Sun 22 nd	Morning Worship 3 rd of Advent Communion	Rev Heather Simmons
4:30 pm (for 5:00) Tue 24 th	Christingle Service Christmas Eve	Worship Leaders
11:15 pm Tue 24 th	Midnight Mass Communion at Wesley	Rev Steve Mayo
11:00 am Wed 25 th	Christmas Worship Christmas Day	Rev Heather Simmons
11:00 Sun 29 th	United Service At Wesley Church 1 st of Christmas	Jane Fulford

¹ Unless otherwise stated



 Highlands (Leigh) Methodist Church

www.highlandsmethodist.org.uk

The **Highlander** is published by Highlands Methodist Church, Sutherland Blvd, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 3PT. Highlands Methodist Church is a member church of the *Southend and Leigh Circuit*, 34/10, which is part of the Beds, Essex and Herts District.

These are services at The Fishermen's Chapel for December 2024.

09:30 am Sun 1st	Morning Worship Communion 1 st of Advent	Rev Heather Simmons
7:00 pm* Sun 8 th *for 7:30	Gospel Service 2 nd of Advent	Rev Heather Simmons
11:00 am Sun 15 th	Morning Worship In the Den Toy & Gift Service 3 rd of Advent	Rev Heather Simmons
7:30 pm Sun 15 th	Anchored	Rev Heather Simmons
5:00 pm Sun 22 nd	Midwinter Carols	
7:30 pm Sun 22 nd	Chapel Service Mindfulness 4 th of Advent	Rev Heather Simmons
7:30 pm Sun 24 th	Chapel Service Christmas Eve Candlelit Remembrance	
10:00 am Wed 25 th	Christmas Worship Christmas Day	Rev Heather Simmons
11:00 Sun 29 th	United Service At Wesley Church 1 st of Christmas	Jane Fulford



**These are services at Highlands for January 2025
Please note the new 'normal' starting time of 10:30.**

10:30 am Sun 5 th	Morning Worship Café Church	Jess Dalton
10:30 am Sun 12 th	Morning Worship Communion Covenant Service	Rev Heather Simmons
10:30 am Sun 19 th	Morning Worship	John Annim
10:30 am Sun 26 th	Morning Worship	Rev Heather Simmons

Details may change, so please check in advance if you are in any doubt.

 Highlands (Leigh) Methodist Church
www.highlandsmethodist.org.uk



The **Highlander** is published by Highlands Methodist Church, Sutherland Blvd, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 3PT. Highlands Methodist Church is a member church of the *Southend and Leigh Circuit*, 34/10, which is part of the Beds, Essex and Herts District.

These are services at The Fishermen’s Chapel (TFC) for January 2025.

09:30 am Sun 3 rd	Morning Worship Communion	Rev Heather Simmons
7:00 pm* Sun 10 th *for 7:30	Gospel Service	Rev Heather Simmons
7:30 pm Sun 17 th	Chapel Service Anchored	Rev Heather Simmons
7:30 pm Sun 24 th	Chapel Service Mindfulness	Rev Heather Simmons



Highlands Methodist Church

Hospitality in the Midst of our Community

All telephone numbers are '01702' unless stated

Minister	Rev Heather Simmons heather.simmons@methodist.org.uk	07879 232231
Secretary to Church Council	Patrick Smith (minutes Secretary Vanessa Mayes)	557702 (473787)
Church Stewards	Andrew Hyde Donald Mayes Lesley Hyde Jean Edmonds	473111 473787 473111 525250
Worship Leaders	Jennifer Courtenay Frank Edmonds	556140 525250
Church Treasurer	Steve Watson	07543 905641
Children's Worker	Ros Bryant	478631
Pastoral Co-ordinator	Jean Edmonds	525250
Church Flowers	Jean Edmonds	525250
Lettings/Use of Premises	Sam Watson highlandslettings@gmail.com	07510 808519

Humour Corner

The kids keep laughing about my memory. They won't be laughing at Christmas, when there are no eggs under the tree.

Contributed by Pauline Ryder, who insists it doesn't refer to her

From Your Minister

Dear Church Family,

I have just been reading the Methodist theme for this Advent as we prepare for Christmas. This year's message is "Hush the Noise".

Ahh! I take a lovely breath in just saying the words, don't you? I invite you to try it...



Husssshhhk...

Now, this doesn't mean,

'Keep Quiet!'

it doesn't mean to hush children's squeals of excitement, or hearty singing or laughter between friends. No, it means 'quieten the noise'. Noise is the incessant chatter in our heads, about what presents we need to buy, the concerns over not having enough decorations up. 'Should I be eating that extra mince pie?' Or, 'Who will be at the work Christmas party?' And so on.

'Hush the noise so we can hear the angels sing'

is our gentle aim for this Advent, one that will hopefully bring us joyfully into Christmas and carry us with hope into the New Year. It is where we pause and listen for God's voice. It is where we see the beauty in sharing and giving of our time and love. It is where we notice Jesus in those who are in need, and walk with them, shining His light.

It is where we wrap our presents thoughtfully with recyclable materials and walk gently on the earth.

The hymn from which our theme is taken is of course, *'It Came Upon the Midnight Clear'*. In this hymn, hushing the noise is a prayer to God to stop the wars of the last 2,000 years. Isn't that prayer just as tragically relevant today as it was when Edmund Hamilton Sears wrote the carol in the 19th century? As we pray for the noise to be hushed across our war-torn world this Christmas, I urge us all to play our part. Let us make friendships with people of all different faiths and cultures and embrace each other as God's children as equals. The answer to pray starts with us.



Let us pray for peace this Christmas time, let us pray that everyone, the world over, can hear the angels sing.

As we prepare for Christmas at Highlands Methodist Church, we have so much opportunity for singing with the angels too! We have our Christmas Carol Service, our Christingle Service and of course Christmas Day celebrations. We also invite you all to our yearly Covenant Service in January where Methodists renew their promises to God in their discipleship journey.

Everyone is welcome to worship with us, wherever you are in your spiritual journey. I invite you to come and explore with us and challenge us, tell us how we can serve you as your spiritual home on the Highlands estate. For me that will be angels singing!

My prayer for all the members of Highlands, all who are friends of the church, and our local community is that you have a blessed time of joy, comfort, health and peace and that resonates out into the world as the shining light of our Saviour Jesus Christ, that ALL might receive the same as we “hush the noise”



God bless you all,

Rev'd Heather (RevHev!) x
heather.simmons@methodist.org.uk

Diary Dates

- **Mon 2 Dec 7.30 pm:** House group. Anyone not already taking part who would like join, please call Heather 07879 232231 or Clive on 07956 942980
- **Tue 26 Nov:** 7.30 pm Advent course begins on Zoom² with places still available. After that it will be every Tuesday for three consecutive weeks – that's **3, 10 and 17 December**. You'll need the ID and passcode at the bottom of the page for the first session.
- **Wed 27 Nov:** Advent Course in the Snug. This is the face-to-face alternative of the online course. (please confirm attendance with Rev Heather 07879 232231). This also lasts 4 weeks, but on a Wednesday, so mark in your diaries **4, 14 and 18 December**.

² **Meeting ID:** 952 0646 0195 **Passcode:** 224118

Please note that **with regard to times**, the very first one is/was 10:30 but all subsequent events are at 2:00 pm.

- **Sat 30 Nov:** 10:00 Christmas Market/Coffee Morning.

Christmas Services in December will be 8 (Toy & Gift) 15 (Carols) 24 (Christingle) and 25 (Christmas Day).

The **Toy & Gift Service** will be an all-age event. All Scouts, Cubs, Brownies, Rainbows, Guides and Rangers are on parade and their families are invited to come and take part. All of you who took part in Remembrance Sunday three weeks ago filled the church and made it a very special, respectful event. Thank you.

Toy Sunday is equally special, with a definite purpose, but it's more appropriate this time to put some fun into it. And we will.

Further Ahead Uniformed organisations joint meetings (all at 7:00 pm): 20 Jan, 19 May, 15 Sep



We pray for our friends who are ill, housebound, or bereaved and for those in residential care: particularly Sheena Hunter in *Westerley Methodist Care Home*, *Peggy Gosling* and *Joan Ford*. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and their families.

We **pray especially for** a number of church members afflicted by long-term illnesses and short-term accidents or recovering from surgery; may God grant in each case a speedy recovery.

Huge **congratulations** to Karolina and Tom on the birth of a

daughter Frances on Sunday 24 November. Photo if I possibly can in the next issue.

In this season of celebration, we remember everyone who is lonely, hungry, frightened, inadequately housed, recently bereaved or otherwise parted from loved ones. May God's blessing fall on each and everyone one of them.



From the Editor

New every morning is the Love our wakening and uprising bring.
Hymn of John Keble (1792–1866) based on *Lamentations 3:22-23*



Many of you will recognise the quotation. Some of you like me will remember it as Number 4 in *Hymns Ancient & Modern*³. Tradition attributes The Book of Lamentations to the prophet Jeremiah, but it's not certain. Yes, they sit side-by-side in the Old Testament. Both works are set during a painful time (586 BCE) and Michelangelo portrays a weary looking Jeremiah here in the Sistine Chapel. The temple and city of Jerusalem were destroyed by invaders, who drove the Jews out into exile. Does any of that sound familiar? Yes it does! Something similar has been happening in Gaza...and Ukraine...and Syria, Haiti, Myanmar, Chad...

³ Or you can find it at 137 in *Singing the Faith*

Park that thought for a moment. Forget the 'news', and think about the word 'new'. It's a great feeling to drive a 'new' car home from the showroom. Or to take part in a public ceremony wearing a 'new' suit. Or how about holding a 'new' grandchild? What a Feeling!



The effect of Jesus's death on the cross is that we all have access to a 'new' life. We may have made a few mistakes in our life so far, but the slate can be wiped clean if we repent. We can set aside what has gone wrong and focus on the future

Alongside this, we shortly celebrate a 'New' Year. 2024 has not, it's fair to say, been a year of total worldwide joy and success. There have of course been highlights – the Paris Olympics for example – but overall the headlines have been dominated by conflict, US politics, famine and climate disasters. So should we look forward to 2025 with hope or despair?

Surely the message of John Keble is that each new day brings a new hope and new Love. We might also believe, and rightly, that a New Year brings brings the same. So, we should set aside 2024; it's done and dusted. Instead pray confidently for peace, reconciliation and co-operation throughout the world and its people in 2025.

Amen, a Happy Christmas and a hopeful New Year to all who read this.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

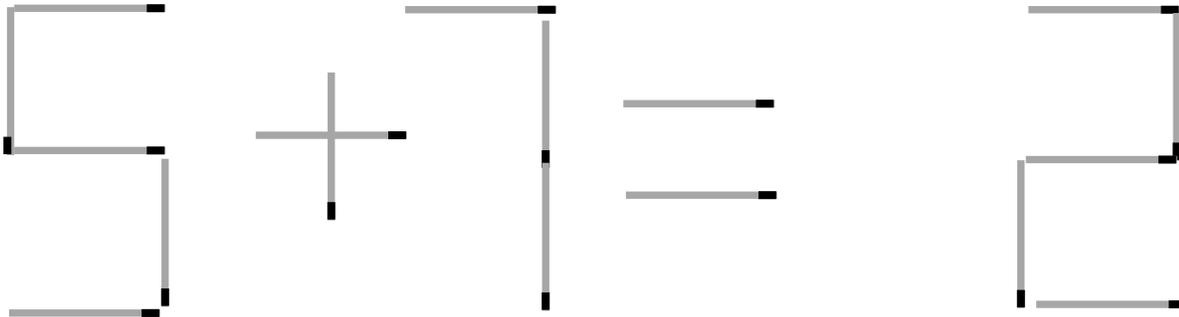
Humour Corner

Last week my wife asked for lipstick, and I accidentally passed her a glue stick. She's still not talking to me...

Puzzle of the Month⁴

This month we have a simple matchstick puzzle.

The equation below is clearly incorrect. You must make one move of a single matchstick to make it correct.



Dining In

Orzo with Baked Feta, Tomatoes and Olives

This is another one of my favourite Rukmini Iyer recipes. I love these all-in-one dishes that you can put in the oven and forget them for 25 minutes. An easy supper when we're all so busy. This serves 2 generously. You can stretch the dish. It's easy to double, or you can serve with it some crusty bread (we had an olive loaf from a supermarket in the middle of Hadleigh 😊) and a green salad). Orzo is a pasta shaped like a rugby ball. (I too had to ask. Ed)

200g orzo
450ml veg stock
300g cherry tomatoes, halved
50g olives, pitted and halved

200g feta cheese
2 tbsp olive oil
Fresh basil

⁴ Solution page 15

- Heat oven to 180° fan or 200° or Gas 6.
- Tip the orzo into a roasting tin, pour the stock over. Give the orzo a good stir and then add tomatoes and olives
- Place the block of feta in the middle of the tin, drizzle over olive oil and scatter with basil leaves. Season
- Place tin in the oven and bake for 25 minutes.
- Once the cooking time is up, remove feta with fish slice and give everything underneath a good stir. Replace feta, scatter over a few more basil leaves, drizzle with a little more olive oil and a scatter of chilli flakes.
- Let stand for a few minutes and then serve.

Humour Corner

Wife: I think perhaps you might be a little immature...

Husband: Excuse me, but you're standing in my fort



WESLEY THEATRE GROUP PRESENTS



Ladies in Lavender

Adapted for the stage by Shaun McKenna;
Based on the film written and directed by Charles Dance
From a short story by William J. Locke

**FRI 29TH &
SAT 30TH NOV
7.45PM**

**WESLEY HALL | ELM ROAD
LEIGH-ON-SEA**

**TICKETS: £7
BOX OFFICE
01702 557764
BUY ONLINE:**

**WWW.TICKETSOURCE.CO.UK
WESLEY-THEATRE-GROUP**

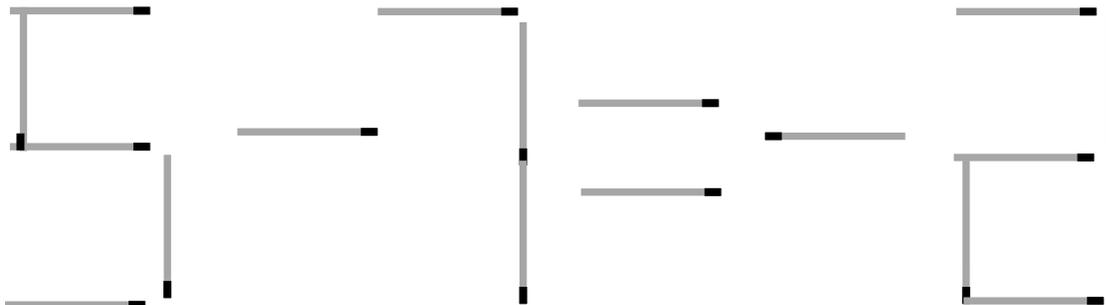
This amateur production of "Ladies in Lavender" is
presented by arrangement with Concord
Theatricals Ltd. on behalf of Samuel French Ltd.
www.concordtheatricals.co.uk





Puzzle of the Month (Solution)

Take away the match forming the upright part of the 'plus' sign and turn it into a 'minus' sign. Now turn the removed match 90° and place it between the 'equals' sign and the figure 2. You have a correct equation thus:





Christmas Services and Events at Highlands



30 November: Our Christmas coffee morning/fair. Come and

enjoy a hot drink, cakes and look round the stalls.

1 December 10:30 am: Come and join us for a café-style service for the First Sunday in Advent. Note the new time.

8 December 10:30 am: This is a parade service with our uniformed organisations during which we will be collecting new gifts and toys to be donated to St Vincent de Paul (Southend), a local charity supporting those in crisis in our city.

15 December: We have morning worship at 10:30 and then our traditional carol service at 4:00 pm. We will be singing popular carols from 3:30 pm so come early.

22 December: Come and share holy communion with our own Rev Heather at 10:30 am

24 December /Christmas Eve: This is our wonderful Christmas Eve service for all the family when we make Christingles and hear the story of the birth of Christ at Christmas. Come at 4:30 to make your Christingle and the service begins at 5:00 pm. This service is suitable for everyone including the youngest members of the family

25 December/Christmas Day 11:00 - 11:30 am: Come and join the celebration. Rev Heather will lead a short and joyful all age service as we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

ALL ARE WELCOME TO ALL OF OUR SERVICES



Snippets

Church flowers for Dec/Jan will be be donated 15/12 by **Frank and Jean** for family and friends, 22/12 by **Jenny Courtenay** for her Parents, 12/01 by **Jill Grove** for her parents, 19/01 by **Jean and Frank** in memory of her mother.

Hobbies Christmas Party with friends from Games 10:00 -12:00 noon 05/12. Hobbies restarts 09/01 (also on 23/01) and Games mornings 16/01 and 30/01. All welcome, all start at 10:00.

Showstoppers have arranged a wonderful Christmas Grotto with a visit from Santa on Thu 19/12 and Highlands folk and children are invited to visit the Grotto. Coffee morning in the church from 10:00 am until 12:00 noon when the Grotto visit takes place. Finally, keep your eye out on Facebook and notice boards for a very special show on Thu 30/01!

Dining with the Homeless: I am asking my Highlands friends for help to provide desserts to be served by St Vincent de Paul (SVP) on Christmas Day. SVP are planning to serve 70 dinners, including puddings. So, they'll need an assortment of pies, puddings, trifles etc as well as cream and custard. For 70 people.



The puds need to be delivered to SVP in Short St on Mon 23 December. I'll be collecting at Highlands on Sun 22.

If you could help by buying an extra dessert or carton of custard between now and Sunday 22 December (and it must have a use

by/BB date after 25 December), please put your name on the list in the Jubilee Room or email me at lesleyakela9@aol.com. Finally, thanks for supporting SVP in the brilliant work that they do. The picture shows a warm summer evening. It's not always like that.

You might like a real story that shows SVP at work and the impact it can make to an individual's life when all seems lost.

'George⁵ recently arrived in the UK, a refugee from a war-torn African country. He approached SVP Southend for support. George was desperate to re-educate himself to pursue a successful career in England and wanted to obtain a master's degree. To achieve this he needed to complete an English proficiency course prior to taking the degree. The cost was nearly £250, which he simply could not afford.

Looking to support George, SVP Southend funded the cost of the English proficiency course, and we were delighted to recently hear that he had successfully passed the initial proficiency exam, and had been accepted into a local university to obtain his Masters. With your kindness and generosity, we were able to help George to attend University, something a few years early he never dreamed would be possible.'



Thank you for your ongoing support.

St. Vincent's Centre, Southend. A Place of Help, Hope and Opportunity. Every act of kindness brings healing closer.
#HopeAndHealing #Generosity #Positivity

Lesley

⁵ Not his real name

Poem of the Month

Christmas Bells–

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882)

Longfellow, an American, wrote these lines in 1865. An underlying bitterness reflects the poet's personal tragedy (the death of his wife Frances) and the much wider disaster of the American Civil War in which his son John was injured. Despite all this, the last verse has a positive tone ('God is not dead') and the poet concludes that 'peace on earth, goodwill to men' will eventually carry the day. 160 years on we still rely especially Christmas on this assurance.



Christmas Bells

I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
 And wild and sweet
 The words repeat
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!

And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
 Had rolled along
 The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!

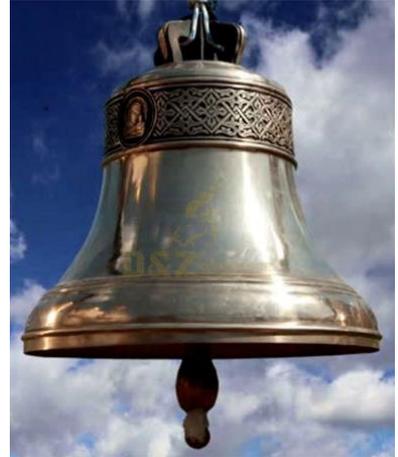
Till ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
 A voice, a chime,
 A chant sublime
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!

Then from each black, accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South,
 And with the sound
 The carols drowned
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!

It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearthstones of a continent,
 And made forlorn
 The households born
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!

And in despair I bowed my head;
"There is no peace on earth," I said;
 "For hate is strong,
 And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!"

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
 The Wrong shall fail,
 The Right prevail,
With peace on earth, goodwill to men."



CIRCUIT SERVICE.
SUNDAY 8th December 2024
Belfairs Methodist Church at 5p.m.

**“Modern Christmas
songs of worship”**



HOBBIES SPECIAL
CHRISTMAS COFFEE MORNING

SATURDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2024

10.00 am to 12.30 pm



Christmas Gifts

Christmas Cards

Candle Arrangements

Children's Activity Table

Christmas Tree Decorations

Appearance by Father Christmas

Delicious Christmas Refreshments

Raffle and Tombola



ALL ARE WELCOME



In Aid of Church Funds

Go On You Know You Want to...

SOUTHEND TOURISM PARTNERSHIP

Visit Santa in Southend

online

With Christmas just around the corner, be sure to make a visit to see Santa at one of the many grottos around Southend

☆ Favorites 📄 Tabs

<p>Santa's Grotto 16 November - 24 December Royals Shopping Centre</p>	<p>Mrs Claus & Santa Paws 7 - 8 December Prittlewell Priory</p>
<p>Santa on the Pier 30 November - 24 December Southend Pier & Railway</p>	<p>Caddies Christmas Experience 7 - 24 December Caddies, High Street</p>
<p>Wonderland 30 November - 24 December Adventure Inside</p>	<p>Father Christmas at Prittlewell Priory 14 - 15 December Prittlewell Priory</p>
<p>Breakfast with Santa 1 8 15 22 December Kingpins</p>	

For information about events in Southend
visitsouthend.co.uk

 **Support Southend's Toy Drive and ensure every local child has a gift to open this year**
www.visitsouthend.co.uk/toy-drive

All event information correct at time of publication.

SERVING the COMMUNITY 7 Days a Week

Children and Young People

Group	Time	Contact
Scouts	Thu 7:30 to 9:00 pm	Jack Reeve 07847 355859
Cubs	Thu 5:45 to 7:15 pm	Jordan Rutherford 07804 065933
Rainbows	Wed 4:00 to 5:00 pm	Julie Griffiths 07834 321724
Brownies	Wed 5:30 to 7:00 pm	Teresa Thompson 07809 219729
Guides	Fri 7:00 to 9:00 pm	Jacqui Hendle 07961 545037
Rangers	Thu ⁶ 7:00 to 9:00 pm	Jacqui Hendle 07961 545037
Toddlers	Mon 9:30 am to 11:30	Ros: 478631 Margaret: 557512

Fellowship Groups

Group	Time	Contact
Prayer	Tue 9:00 to 10:00 am	Andrew Hyde 473111
Chatter	Tue 10:00 am to 12:00 noon	Rosalie 478631

Services to the Community

Group	Time	Contact
Lunch Club	2 nd Tuesday 12:00	07951 963730 Registration essential

Social and Recreational

Group	Time	Contact
Hobbies	1 st /3 rd Thu 10:00 am to noon	Jean 525250

⁶ Every fortnight

For updated news keep following www.highlandsmethodist.org.uk or  Highlands (Leigh) Methodist Church. Also www.methodist.org.uk is an excellent source of information and inspiration.

Items for the February 2025 issue should be emailed to me andrewghyde@aol.com before the **deadline of Sunday 26 January**. No email? Don't despair; just telephone 473111 to arrange an alternative.

A Final Image

Notice in a pedestrian underpass, Chelmsford City centre

