



**General Assembly of Unitarian
and Free Christian Churches**

Annual Reports

2017

The Eighty-Ninth

2017 Annual Reports



General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches
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the **unitarian** and free
christian churches

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Photographers:

We would like to thank all those who provided photographs for this Annual Report.

Cover Image:

By John Hewerdine

Centre Spread Image:

By Ed Fordham



General Assembly President's Report

General Assembly President 2017-18 Rev Charles VanDenBroeder

I have had a very busy year travelling around the UK taking services, leading workshops, and attending funerals, and writing reports and giving greetings from the General Assembly of Unitarians and Free Christians. It has been exhausting but well worth the effort.

One of the highlights of the year was the trip to South Africa where, along with other faith leaders, I helped the Cape Town Unitarian Church celebrate its 150th Anniversary. Another highlight was my visit to the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland (NSPCI). I was the first General Assembly President in eight years to attend their Synod in Belfast. In both places I received a warm welcome and experienced a different way of doing things regarding church life than we do here.



It was a privilege to be at The Cenotaph representing the General Assembly alongside other faith leaders, politicians, foreign dignitaries, members of the armed and civilian forces and some of the Royals. It was a moving experience as the wreaths were laid at the Cenotaph. I was excited to see myself on the television wearing my white Peace Poppy.

I learned of our diversity in the way we worship, the way we spend time together, the way we become involved in our local communities beyond our own church or chapel. There is a sense of pride in being different than the rest of the Unitarian and Free Christian Churches and other denominations as well.

I am sensing an acceptance of the need to celebrate who we are and let go of those things in the past which no longer serve us and to look to what is needed in the future. Congregants are interested in the changes being made in the areas of education and training, different models of ministry and leadership. There has been a sea change in the mood of our congregations regarding the future of the denomination. No longer is it doom and gloom but a rolling up of shirt sleeves and getting to work on making our denomination fit for the 21st century and beyond.

Charles VanDenBroeder



Chief Officer's Report

General Assembly Chief Officer, Derek McAuley



The year described in this Annual Report was one where the focus has been on the “Next Steps” priorities presented at the Annual Meetings in 2016. As Chief Officer I have worked with the Executive Committee on the strategic development of the Unitarian Movement. The programme of work initiated last year has been taken

forward and there has been a need to co-ordinate the various activities around the identified priorities. The positive response to these initiatives has been encouraging.

I have devoted considerable time and energy to the Training and Education (TED) Development project and it has been a joy to work with Rachel Skelton and Simon Bland from the staff team and with many volunteers on taking this vital piece of work forward. Opening up opportunities to pursue professional ministry to more people, who may feel excluded by the current training model, will go a long way to ensuring that congregations have the skilled leadership they require to serve them in a time of great change. Our ultimate goal is to enable a more co-ordinated approach to lay leadership and lifelong learning for all.

Essex Hall remains the final point of contact when congregations want advice or assistance and this often involves working with the British and Foreign Unitarian Association Incorporated, of which I am the Honorary Secretary. The congregational support aspect of Simon Bland's role is new and has enabled “on the ground” visits to be made in various parts of the country. Several congregations have pursued Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) status following reviews of their governance and we have been in discussions with the Charity Commission on charitable objectives.

Legal advice has been obtained on CIO status for the General Assembly but preparatory work during the year has involved governance changes affecting the British and Foreign Unitarian Association Incorporated, The Sustentation Fund and the Stipend Augmentation Fund all of which will have implications for new arrangements for the future.

All the usual work of the General Assembly has continued. The contribution of staff was again shown by their commitment and hard work in arranging another successful Annual Meetings at the Birmingham Hilton Metropole. This absorbs a huge amount of staff resource over many months and requires planning, attention to detail and a customer focus. I would thank all the staff and also Rosemary Ruston, who volunteers one day a week at Essex Hall.

David Joseph as Finance Manager and Simon Bland as Ministry and Congregational Support Officer have settled in over the year and are valued members of the team. Just after the year end we lost Aniuska Dominquez, IT/Communications Officer, and Rev John Harley, Youth Co-ordinator, although John has stayed on as Safeguarding Lead. Rachel Skelton was seconded to the General Assembly to work on the Training and Education Project. Inducting and supporting new members of staff is rewarding yet time-consuming.



*Visiting with the Brighton Congregation to celebrate their Heritage Lottery Fund bid
L-R: Stephen Crowther, Rev Martin Whitell, Derek McAuley*



Communications internally across the Unitarian and Free Christian Movement and externally is a key part of the role of Essex Hall. Uni-news, the email newsletter, was issued at least monthly. Staff issued the regular GA Mailings, including the huge Annual Meetings distribution in December. The GA Directory and the Annual Report were published and circulated. Staff work with volunteers in various ways, often behind the scenes, to support and deliver the programme activities that are reported elsewhere in this report.

External relations remains a key area of responsibility. I meet regularly with Paul Parker, Recording Clerk of The Quaker Yearly Meeting, and representatives of other churches. Amongst external events I have attended were Liberty's AGM in Leeds, the Annual Parliamentary Reception for the Bahai Community, a 24 hour strategy event for the sponsoring bodies of Christian Aid and the launch of the NPC report on faith-based charities. I represented the Denomination at meetings of the Faith Communities Forum of the Inter Faith Network of the UK and, with Alan Ruston, the Churches Legislative Advisory Service (CLAS).

I worked with the General Assembly President to prepare Public Statements on the Manchester, London Bridge and Finsbury Park terrorist attacks which were placed on the GA website and that of the Inter Faith Network of the UK. I participated in several efforts by Accord to highlight inclusive education, particular on admissions. Cumberland Lodge invited me to be a speaker at an Emerging International Leaders on "Freedom of Religion and Belief in Action".



With key IARF Activists at our Kensington Church

I am now Chair of the British Chapter of the International Association of Religious Freedom (IARF) as well as of the Europe and Middle East Region. I contributed the Keynote article on "Values of Inclusion" in the Autumn/Winter edition of Faith Initiatives.

I also continued to develop relationships across the wider Unitarian and Free Christian Movement and I spoke at the 25th Anniversary celebration of the Unitarian Christian Association held at Essex Hall.



I was a panel member on a "Sunday Night Live" at Golders Green Unitarians on LGBT issues for UKUnitarianTV. It was a real pleasure to be at the 5th Anniversary of Simple Gifts in Bethnal Green.

I regularly contribute a column "A View from Essex Hall" to The Unitarian and articles to The Inquirer. The Chief Officer's blog on the GA website continues to have a worldwide reach and I now have nearly



1,800 followers on Twitter, up from 1600 last year (@Derekunit). I attended the first 'Assembly of Unitarians in Europe' conference in June 2017.

The past year has been orientated towards turning Vision into Action in implementing "Next Steps". It has been a challenging year as we are dealing with longstanding and complex issues of change that are deeply embedded in our culture; in the "way we do things around here". I do remain encouraged by our ability to focus on a positive future.

Derek McAuley



Our Trustees



Marion Baker (Convenor)

Marion is a retired career civil servant and past President of the Unitarian denomination. She is Treasurer of the Trustees of Upper Chapel, Sheffield, Treasurer of the Sheffield District Association and Chairperson of the Nightingale Centre Management Committee. Wife of Rev Ernest Baker and mother of Tim.

Peter Hanley (Honorary Treasurer)

Peter is an independent researcher and specialist safety consultant. He spent nearly 25 years in the British Royal Navy submarine service, operating nuclear power plants and managing people. Peter's specialist ability was in deriving solutions to whole submarine problems based on the minimum amount of data and small amount of time available for successful completion. Building an intimate relationship and knowledge of acoustic and vibration energy patterns first hand provided a foundation for this high speed problem solving skill.



Sheena McKinnon

Sheena is an active member of Bradford Unitarians, including leading worship. Since 2014 she has been secretary of the Unitarian Association for Lay Ministry, since 2015 administrator of the Yorkshire Lay Preachers' Association and since 2016 on the executive committee of the Yorkshire Unitarian Union. Before retiring she was a practice manager for a busy urological surgeon and his team at St James Hospital.



Rev Matthew Smith

Matthew has been a Unitarian for over thirty years, having joined Cambridge Unitarian Church while at University. He was a member of the President's Commission on Unitarian Education and Training in the late 1980s and served on the Council of the London and South East District and Provincial Assembly from 2010-2012. He was employed by the General Assembly as Information Officer from 1990-2004. Following Ministry training at Harris Manchester College Oxford, he has been Minister at Framlingham and Bury St Edmunds since 2014. He holds a Postgraduate Certificate in Charity Management from South Bank University.



Our Trustees

Sir Philip Colfox

Currently running Symondsburry Estate, a family property and leisure business near Bridport, Sir Philip has worked in the Financial Sector, construction and lobbying and has a successful track record at starting and growing community organisations. Sir Philip led the resurgence of the Chapel in the Garden, Bridport.



Rev Lynne Readett

Lynne is a third generation Chowbent Unitarian Chapel member and still lives in Atherton with husband John and son Michael. Early working life was within the textile industry as a manufacturer's agent. She decided to train for ministry later in life and until her recent retirement was District Minister serving the Merseyside District Ministry Association.



Christina Smith

Christina has been active in Unitarian communities in the UK and in the United States for 18 years. Since 2012 she has been a lay worship leader with Belper Chapel and has served on the committee of various Unitarian bodies including the Unitarian Peace Fellowship, Unitarian Association for Lay Ministry, Youth Panel and Unitarian Renewal Group. She is now working as Chief Community Cultivator for Derby Unity and Worship Leader for Derby Unitarians as part of the 2020 Congregational Development Programme, supported by the General Assembly and the East Midlands District.



Rev Dr Rob Whiteman

Rob is Minister with Dundee Unitarians, having previously served with the Cotswold Group. He came to ministry following careers in Church Administration and Teaching, as well as a brief period in Development at the University of St Andrews where he had previously read theology. He discovered Unitarianism at St Mark's, Edinburgh.



Trustees' Report

Executive Committee

Members during the year:

Marion Baker (Convenor), Sir Philip Colfox, Joan Cook (to Apr 2017), Peter Hanley (Hon Treasurer), Robert Ince (to Apr 2017), Sheena McKinnon (from Jul 2017), Gwynn Pritchard (to May 2017), Rev Lynne Readett, Christina Smith (from Jul 2017), Rev Matthew Smith (from Apr 2017), Rev Dr Rob Whiteman (from Jul 2017), Jacqueline Woodman (to Apr 2017)

Staff Support:

Derek McAuley (Chief Officer),
Mary-Jean Hennis (Minutes)

The Executive Committee (EC) acts as the trustee body of the General Assembly and is responsible for determining the overall direction and development of the Assembly in line with the decisions and policies agreed at the Annual Meetings and the requirements of charity and other legal requirements. The Executive Committee provides strategic leadership and is responsible for ensuring the effective use of the assets of the General Assembly. Executive Committee members are not representatives of individual districts or areas of the country but must act in the best interests of the General Assembly as a charity.

Our Vision

In our vision we seek a personal faith through rational thought, respecting individual conscience. We are inspired to serve humanity, working with others for social justice. We want to encourage spiritual inspiration and engage with all people seeking answers to life's questions; welcoming new forms of religious expression and collaborating and sharing in a spirit of mutual support. Our organisation and membership will need to be supported by our volunteers and a willingness to give ("Next Steps").

Our Challenge

Our challenge is to energise and inspire those who are prepared to give of themselves in the service of humanity.

Progress on "Next Step" Priorities

The focus for the Executive Committee during the year has remained the priorities identified in, "From Vision to Action: Next Steps" which were presented to the 2016 Annual Meetings. Much of this work has been taken forward in partnerships with others within the wider Unitarian Movement. The Executive Committee has had to prioritise where effort and energy is placed and therefore progress has been variable across different priorities.

- Find more flexible ways of training for Ministry and Develop and integrate different forms of ministerial training (including recognised lay ministry training) – The first stage of the Training and Education Development (TED) project was completed in September 2017 and stage two is underway. This involves the development of a Ministerial training pilot to commence in September 2018, a framework for lifelong learning and establishment of a Learning and Development Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).
- Develop a comprehensive response to explain our identity – an external Consultant, following consultation with interested Unitarians, has produced Unitarian Identity guidelines and a proposal for implementation. Work on a Communications Strategy has been taken forward.
- Support a web-based spiritual learning resource with Unitarian College Manchester (UCM) – the website "TheSpaceToSearch" has been developed with the assistance of external web designers funded by the Anniversary Service Appeal in 2016.
- Engage with the wider community on today's issues – discussions have been held on how engagement group processes can assist local congregations in their work in their community.



Trustees' Report

- Increase collaboration with other like minded organisations – The British Red Cross Clara Barton Fund has now raised nearly £100,000 and a certificate of recognition was presented at the Annual Meetings. Financial support for Dr Hadwen's Trust, now Animal Free Research UK, was also recognised at the Meetings. Financial support for bursaries was given to the Findhorn Unitarian

Experience Week. A mapping exercise has been undertaken of key partners.

" Our challenge is to energise and inspire those who are prepared to give of themselves in the service of humanity. "

- Promote more Unitarian thought and writing – a guide to publishing work was produced by the Lindsey Press Panel and launched at the Annual Meetings. It is available on the GA website to download free of charge. Funding has been allocated to "Faith and Freedom" to publish the papers of the 2017 Unitarian Theology Conference.
- Formulate a plan to undertake Campus Ministry – support was given to an initiative by Cambridge Unitarian Church, however, the learning from the pilot is that a traditional model of engagement focused on a church is unlikely to work with students and young adults.
- Support a new congregational development – financial support for the Derby Unity 2020 project has continued enabling encouraging progress. Discussions have been initiated with the 2020 Leadership Team on how growth can be supported.
- Grow our volunteer pool – the new post of Ministry and Congregational Support Officer (MCSO) has support for volunteers as a priority.
- Work with the Districts to create a new forum for national involvement – some early thinking took place but there is no clarity about what might work in practice.
- Understand and reduce threats to building and financial sustainability – an assessment of the overall financial health of the Unitarian and Free

Christian Movement has been undertaken. The MCSO is working to support congregations with issues relating to finances and buildings.

- Review the effectiveness of our organisation – the role of staff and volunteers in contributing to the success of the "Next Steps" priorities has been considered in the context of our current structures.
- Update "Help is at Hand" as an on-line resource – the Local Leadership Strategy Group has been leading in updating "Help is at Hand" with the aim of having it online in April 2018.
- Reduce our carbon footprint – The Buildings Advisory Group held a workshop at the Annual Meetings and has promoted congregational assessments of energy consumption as well as providing practical advice.

Our Activities

The highlights for the year include:

- An excellent 2017 Annual Meetings at the Birmingham Hilton Metropole which again achieved very positive feedback from attendees with a memorable Opening Ceremony by Welsh Unitarians.



- Recognition of three new Ministers at the Anniversary Service.
- Increasing use of social and other media to raise the profile of the Unitarian Movement, particularly at the Annual Meetings.
- Building stronger relationships with like-minded liberal religious communities and other progressive organisations.



- Receipt of a donation of £648,580.79 to establish the Gábor Kereki Trust to support ministers and students of the Hungarian Unitarian Church to study in Britain.

Finances

The Accounts of the General Assembly are set out later in this report in summary form along with those of the Nightingale Centre and Sustentation Fund, the two “linked” bodies. A full copy of the Annual Accounts is available on the Charity Commission website and from Essex Hall. A Finance Committee has been established. Trustees completed an investment questionnaire.



Spending has been controlled and income maintained, although it is of continuing concern that quota payments are reducing. Grants from the British and Foreign Unitarian Association Incorporated and the Essex Hall Trust have increased to make up some of the shortfall and we give special thanks to their Trustees for this support.

The General Assembly’s reserves policy is to hold sufficient free reserves, not restricted by their purpose or by virtue of endowment, to ensure that it is able to service its annual budgeted expenditure and to ensure that its risks in relation to its pension fund obligations are mitigated.

Receipt of a substantial donation from the Bowland Trust in 2015-16 brought to a close the “matching of live giving” initiative that has been in place for ten years and this prompted a review of the General Assembly’s arrangements for investment management with the support of external legal and investment advisors. The management of this donation to ensure ongoing support for the activities of the General Assembly will present new challenges.

At the Annual Meetings, Peter Hanley, Honorary Treasurer, reinforced the message that resources were merely a tool to be used and should not limit our vision for the future. Developing innovative projects would surely produce the required funding. The EC would like to thank Peter Hanley for his particular contribution as Honorary Treasurer in addition to his role as a Trustee.

Communication

Executive Committee members have continued to undertake “link” roles to District Associations. The GA President has attended the Executive Committee meetings as an observer, bringing grassroots views to discussions as well as improving their awareness of the work of the EC. An Executive Committee Question and Answer session was again held at the Annual Meetings.

At the February 2017 EC meeting a presentation was received on the work of the Women’s League and we explored how we could work more closely together to support our shared objectives.

Nightingale Centre

The Executive Committee members are also trustees of the Nightingale Centre, which is a separately registered charity. A report from the Management Committee, who act under delegation arrangements, is included later in the Report. The Executive Committee met with members of the Management Committee when they were at the Centre in September 2017 and visited the newly refurbished Barleycrofts Cottage. The Management Committee members and the Centre Manager and staff are to be thanked for their hard work and commitment in developing a successful resource for Unitarians and others.

Risk Management and Public Benefit

The risk register was reviewed in September 2017 resulting in a number of changes reflecting an assessment of the current risks facing the General Assembly. Most significantly the risk arising from the TED pilot programme for ministry training was added. The importance of effective local arrangements for Safeguarding remains the highest risk area.

The Executive Committee referred to the guidance given by the Charity Commission in relation to public benefit when reviewing their aims and objectives and in planning future activities. In particular the Executive Committee members, in their role as charity trustees, have a responsibility to consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives they have set.



Annual Meetings 2017

The Annual Meetings took place at the Hilton Metropole, Birmingham from 10-13 April 2017. This was the third year running at the Hotel so many attendees knew it well and whilst the feedback has been positive, clearly expectations have risen. We would thank everyone who contributed to the success of the event, in particular, the Welsh Unitarians who conducted the Opening Ceremony, and our keynote speaker Rev Dr Ralph Waller, Principal Harris Manchester College and Pro Vice Chancellor of the University of Oxford. The Annual Meetings Panel has taken forward a review of the arrangements for future meetings in response to the Resolution approved at the Meetings in 2017.



*Keynote Speaker, Rev Dr Ralph Waller,
Principal of Harris Manchester College*

International

Support has continued to be offered to the International Council of Unitarians and Universalist (ICUU) and to the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) with the Chief Officer chairing the Europe and Middle East (EME) Regional Committee. He also attended the first 'Assembly of Unitarians in Europe'.

Staffing, Accommodation and Volunteers

All we have achieved this year would not be possible without the dedication of our staff, volunteers and supporters. The Executive Committee would like to thank the Chief Officer and staff at Essex Hall for their work and commitment and also Rosemary Ruston, who continued to provide weekly support in a volunteer capacity at Essex Hall for the Associate Member scheme.

In November 2016 Simon Bland was welcomed as Ministry and Congregational Support Officer. Rachel Skelton was seconded from 1 October 2016 to work on the TED project.

The Essex Hall building is owned by an independent body, the Essex Hall Trust, and the Trustees generously provide the General Assembly with free office space, including business rates, utility bills and service charges. The General Assembly also receives a contribution towards staffing costs reflecting the management and financial services provided to the Trust and a substantial grant. The Executive Committee would like to thank the Essex Hall Trustees for their continuing support.

We would like to thank everyone who serves on the various bodies within the General Assembly or takes part in the various activities for their commitment in a voluntary capacity. We know that without their efforts much of our work to support congregations would not be possible. This report bears witness to what has been achieved.

Membership

It is with regret that we report the closure of one of our member bodies during the year; Mossley Christian Unitarian Church, and we place on record our recognition of the commitment of members and Ministers over the years. Their Trustees are thanked for a substantial donation to the Unitarian Ministerial Students Fund.

Governance and Organisation

An election process was initiated for six positions on the Executive Committee; four for positions whose term of office was coming to an end and two for those who had been co-opted in 2015. Valid nominations were received from three candidates who were declared elected unopposed. Three members were co-opted in July 2017 following public advertisement. Gwynn Pritchard resigned due to ill-health leaving a vacancy at the year end. All those who have served on the Executive Committee during the year are to be thanked for their contribution.

A trustee skills audit has been undertaken reflecting best governance practice.

Marion Baker

Marion Baker
EC Convenor



Electoral Panel

Members during the year:

Jill Hudson, Gavin Mason,
Howard Wilkins

The Electoral Panel (Jill Hudson, Gavin Mason and Howard Wilkins) is established under the General Assembly Constitution (Paragraph 7) to be responsible for conducting the election of the Executive Committee. It is accountable to the Annual Meetings.

The Panel was able to conduct its business by email and confirmed it would run a similar process to that in 2015.

Anne Hock, of Popularis was again appointed as Independent Election Supervisor. A Call for Nominations was issued on 25 November 2016 with nominations to be received by 23 January 2017. Congregational secretaries were also informed of their responsibilities in the event of an election being called.

On 26 January 2017 Anne Hock of Popularis confirmed that she had received nominations for the following candidates: Sir Philip Colfox, Rev Lynne Readett and Rev Matthew Smith.

GA Constitution paragraph 7.e. states:
“If the number of candidates remaining validly nominated for an election is less than the number of members to be elected to the Executive Committee, then -

- i. the candidates validly nominated shall be declared elected unopposed, and
- ii. the Executive Committee shall fill any vacancy by appointment within six months from the date the declaration of valid nominations were received. Any such appointed person shall serve until the next Executive Committee election.”

All nominations were accepted. In accordance with the Constitution, as the number of candidates (3) did not exceed the number of vacancies (6) an election was therefore not required. All candidates were declared elected unopposed.

We would like to thank Anne Hock of Popularis and Derek McAuley, Chief Officer and staff at Essex Hall for their assistance.

The Electoral Panel will be reconstituted to conduct the next EC election in 2019 and would welcome views on the election process from congregations, Unitarian bodies and Associate Members of the General Assembly. These should be sent to Derek McAuley (DMcAuley@unitarian.org.uk).

The next EC election will take place in 2019

- be sure to have joined as a congregational member or GA Associate Member by the end of the preceding financial year to be able to vote!



Investment Panel

Members during the year:

Ministers' Pension Fund, Unitarian College Manchester, Manchester District, Ministers' Stipend Augmentation Fund, Upper Chapel Sheffield, Sustentation Fund, various Unitarian Churches, GA Funds

The panel met three times during the year to review the results of the various investments managed by Newton Investment Management ('Newton'), to receive reports of their thinking on the general economy and comments on some of the stocks held by the various funds run by Newton.

We have been pleased to find that Newton have performed well again this year so that by the end of the year the value of the funds held by all the GA and other Unitarian funds amounted to £18.538m. We have been fortunate in that Newton have been represented by the same manager - Alan Goodwin - for at least 17 years, giving us continuity.

The review of whether the GA should recommend that all funds be obtaining outside advice following the withdrawal by Newton as discretionary managers was made following advice from Counsel. He has stated that in his view the way that our holdings in Newton funds cover the Charity Commission's guidance in their document 'CC14 – Charities and Investment Matters: A Guide For Trustees'. Further guidance is to be issued by the Chief Officer in the near future.

Mike Tomlin

£18.53m

- The amount invested by Unitarian groups with Newtons through the Investment Panel as at 31/10/17.

Sustentation Fund

Members during the year:

Dorothy Hewerdine, GA President (until Apr 2017), Rev Charles VanDenBroeder, GA President (from Apr 2017), Derek McAuley (GA Chief Officer), Peter Hanley (GA Treasurer), Mike Tomlin (Chair), Jeffrey Teagle (Secretary), Alan Eastwood (Treasurer), Joan Cook, Robert Ince, Rev Eric Jones

The Sustentation Fund met once in October to receive the Annual Accounts (produced in double quick time as usual by our Treasurer, Alan Eastwood), make grants, vote to wind up the Sustentation Fund and transfer the Fund to the care of the General Assembly as was mentioned in the last report.

The Accounts and Treasurer's Report are to be found later in the Annual Report.

The income this year was slightly down on the previous year but the capital value of the Fund rose slightly.

Grants

We had planned to make grants equivalent to those paid in 2016 but due to the movement of Ministers during the year, fewer were actually made. Since this is the last year of the Sustentation Fund in its present form, we provided for grants of £17,400 to be paid during 2017 so that the Treasurer can clear the outstanding matters as quickly as possible.

Finally I would like to thank all those over the years who have given their time and efforts to enable the Fund to work efficiently and smoothly - in particular to the Secretaries who have had to chase up church accounts and then summarise them for the benefit of the committee when it has met. We hope that the General Assembly will be able to run the Fund as easily as it has been run in the past.

Mike Tomlin



2020 Group

Members during the year:

Jane Couper (until Jun 2017), Winnie Gordon, Angela Maher, Andy Pakula, Martin Whitell, Aleks Zglinska

2020 has continued to support the development of the Derby Unity project. The community has become established at The Multi-Faith Centre every Sunday, welcoming participants of all ages into friendship and fellowship. A specific Sunday every month is devoted particularly to celebrating life in a multigenerational setting. A meditation session has also been added some Sunday afternoons.

With release of some funds held by the East Midlands Unitarians district, the Friargate Chapel has been refurbished to provide a modern multifunctional meeting and worship space in the city centre able to be used by the Derby Unity community and other local groups. Providing a welcoming and adaptable space, the hall has already hosted support groups, meditation classes, workshops and music rehearsals. Plans to upgrade the kitchen and office facilities as well as provide ramps for permanent universal access are in progress and at least one wedding booking has already been arranged for 2018.

Derby Unity has faced challenges in recruiting staff to support roles for the day to day work of the community, however there is now an additional staff member with a focus on engaging families in the community and other positions should be filled as soon as possible early 2018.

As well as the Derby Unity project, 2020 has been asked to contribute to the discussions around strategic planning for support, development and growth of our congregations into the future. This sits alongside the other projects and programmes (TED, Local Leadership etc). Challenges faced by the Derby Unity project have informed these discussions and future plans include development of tools to help congregations identify ways to improve their own growth practice.

The 2020 leadership team is Aleks Zglinska, Andy Pakula, Angela Maher, Martin Whitell and Winnie Gordon. Our thanks go to Jane Couper who finished her time in the team in June 2017.

Aleks Zglinska



Images from Derby Unity



Local Leadership - Supporting Congregations

Local Leadership

Members during the year:

Louise Rogers (Chair), Margaret Robinson (Secretary), Winnie Gordon, Howard Wilkins

2016/17

The role of the LLSG is to ensure that every congregation is served by trained leaders, by providing training, advice and information, to encourage and support congregations through:

- Developing and implementing a modular training strategy for local leadership and governance;
- Providing advice and support to congregations and districts; and
- Providing facilitation services to congregations and districts.

The LLSG has a co-ordination as well as a strategic role. It works to a plan, reviewed every year. The year started with the LLSG reviewing its plan in the light of the newly created Vision document, identifying where the Group's work could help to meet the Vision's aims. In August the LLSG renewed its action plan.

All the work developing and implementing activities is carried out by the working groups, which report to the LLSG. These are:

- Building Advisory Group (BAG)
- Worship Studies Committee (WSC)
- Hucklow Summer School
- LEAP

The LLSG meets virtually every two or three months via telephone conference and the purpose of these meetings is to:

- Hear how the working groups are getting on, whether they want to try something new or need some additional support;

- Discuss whether we have the resource or a new volunteer to develop projects in the areas which are thought to be important but we do not have the time, the resource or the expertise to progress;
- Discuss the annual budget; the annual meetings; and the annual report; and
- Linking with the EC via Marion Baker, the EC's LLSG link

2016/17 started with a refreshed action plan for all the groups and individuals involved. Most of the work is carried out by working groups. The main work which sits with the LLSG is the updating of Help is at Hand, as an on-line resource. This started well, but stuttered to a stop. It is now hoped to complete this by the 2018 annual meetings at the latest.

Unitarian



Chalice

Award

Leaders'

Pack



September 16

The Unitarian Chalice Award Scheme (UCAS) also sits with the LLSG. The Chalice pack information was updated during the year and is available to download on the www.unitarian.org.uk website. A survey was sent out to all congregations to ascertain which congregations were using the Chalice Award Scheme, 31 congregations responded. Five congregations are currently using the Scheme with their young people: York, Sevenoaks, Norwich, Ullet Road Liverpool and Knutsford. We would like to hear from other congregations.



The LLSG has supported the development of LEAP (Leading, Enabling, Affirming People), a programme to prepare people to develop and deepen their leadership skills in facilitating groups and creating worship for all ages in the Unitarian community. Those involved are Rev John Harley, Liz Hills and Margaret Robinson and they have spent 2015/17 planning the LEAP programme.

We had a half-day session which included Simon Bland, Ministry and Congregational Support Officer, in August where group members identified developments for their areas, which are reported separately. We also thought that there should be additional resources produced about dementia, with perhaps service material produced.

The LLSG has worked with the TED project around the development of more accessible training for ministry and, following that, congregational leaders.

LLSG members also provide governance support to congregations should they request it – this is done in collaboration with Derek McAuley and Simon Bland.

Plans for 2017/18

Completing the Help is at Hand webpages, and developing a more strategic approach to governance training. To assist this, LLSG is discussing with UKunitarianTV how video may be used to support the Help is at Hand webpages.

It is hoped that new modules for the Chalice Award will be developed over the next 12 months. There is a template for the Chalice Award modules available from unitarianllsg@gmail.com and we are hoping that others may get involved in developing a module. Also there are plans to update the Chalice Award leaflet.

The LEAP Course will consist of two residential weekends, which will be held at The Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow in Derbyshire, from 1st to 3rd September 2017 and 1st to 3rd June 2018. With four assignments and reflections to be done in-between the weekends, with tutor support and feedback. There are nine people enrolled to take the course.

It is expected that there will be more focus on the TED project and how LLSG activities may need to change and develop.

Louise Rogers

Hucklow Summer School

Members during the year:

Jane Blackall (Convenor), Janet Costley, Katie McKenna, Ned Prideaux

Staff Support:

Audrey Longhurst



Summer School Participants

Hucklow Summer School 2017 welcomed 61 participants: 54 adults and 7 children aged between 3 and 13. The panel aims to accommodate around 60 people, and this target was therefore achieved. The target of one third of participants being newcomers this year was not met, however, as the proportion of first-timers was down to a quarter for the second year running. We are conscious that new attendees are essential to the life-blood and energy of Summer School and our movement as a whole and we are looking at ways in which the message about Summer School can be broadcast further. One such way was a letter being sent to all the congregations in Spring 2017. This did result in several new participants coming to Summer School, and donations being given to the Bursary Fund by at least four congregations and individual members.

The theme of Summer School was 'Walk your Path with Joy: Finding Hope and Resisting Despair in Troubled Times' and was explored firstly by the daily theme speakers: Margaret Kirk, Catherine Coyne, Claire MacDonald, Nancy Crumbine and Katie McKenna. The theme talks were well-received and set the tone for each day. They were followed by the respective engagement groups: 'Now is the Time to Open your Heart' with Lindy Latham and Janet Costley; 'With Great Good Care' with Sarah Tinker and Michael Allured; 'Forget your Perfect Offering'



with Liz Birtles and Stephen Crowther; ‘God in Daily Life – Theological Reflections’ with Jane Blackall and Daniel Costley; and ‘A Home from Home’ with Claire Maddocks and Jim Blair, who deftly led the Children and Youth Programmes. The engagement groups allowed participants to explore the theme in more depth and enabled more personal involvement.

The theme was sensitively held. A lot of thoughts, reflections and experiences were shared, principally in the engagement groups, and it was paramount and evident from the written feedback that a sacred space was established in each one. The need to care for each other was also echoed in the written feedback from the children, and demonstrated by the young people looking out for the younger children, engaging them both in play and the thoughtful activities promoted by the children’s leaders.

This year, as well as meditation, we were able to offer yoga as an optional activity at the start of each morning. The attendance in both was very high, and offered a spiritual clarity to the day. New optional activities included ‘Lamentation as a Spiritual Practice’, ‘Making Personal Sacred Objects, and ‘Craftivism: How Pom Poms can Change the World’. The latter resulted in a fabulous transformation of a tree by the centre (see photos below). Watch this space – for the Norwich, Lewisham and Bessels Green congregations were in attendance!



The theme for the 2018 Summer School is ‘How, Then, Shall We Live? : Living, Dying, and Considering Our Legacy’ and, at the time of writing, we have lined up a full complement of engagement group facilitators and theme speakers. As was the case last year, a facilitation day ‘summit’ will be held for our group leaders in February 2018, to help broaden and deepen the competence of new facilitators and to help share good practice.

Janet Costley



Buildings Advisory Group

Members during the year:

Mike Barber (Convenor), Viv Aylmer (from Oct 2017), Zoe Bremer, Adrian Isaac, Geoff Levermore, Howard Wilkins

Staff Support:

Simon Bland (from Apr 2017), Derek McAuley

Historic Consultants:

John Goodchild, Graham Hague, Judy Hague

During the year the Building Advisory Group (BAG) continued to be active, conducting most of its business by email. It met twice, at Monton and Kidderminster. We welcomed two new members, Simon Bland (April 17) and Viv Aylmer (Oct 17).

Our mission is to informally offer practical guidance and suggestions on developing, financing, and maintaining our building stock. The main focus of the Group this year, as previous ones, has been responding to requests for advice from various Unitarian places of worship and other denominational buildings. These requests are usually submitted via Essex Hall.

The main enquiries/contacts handled during the year are listed here:

Birmingham New Meeting: Advice sought on possible solutions to the problem of worship space underheating.

Bristol (Surrey Lodge): Advice sought on a replacement heating system.

Essex Hall, London: the Group continues to be represented with two members on both the Board of Trustees and Management Committee. Advice continues to be sought on various matters.

Meadrow, (Godalming): Advice sought on the provision of a safety rail.

Mansfield: Progress report on work undertaken to cure corrosion in the heating system.

Southend: (1) Advice and comments on their Quinquennial Survey {QS} report. (2) Advice on the use of data loggers (iButtons) to monitor the chapel's heating. Suitable data loggers have been demonstrated at the Annual Meetings by the BAG.

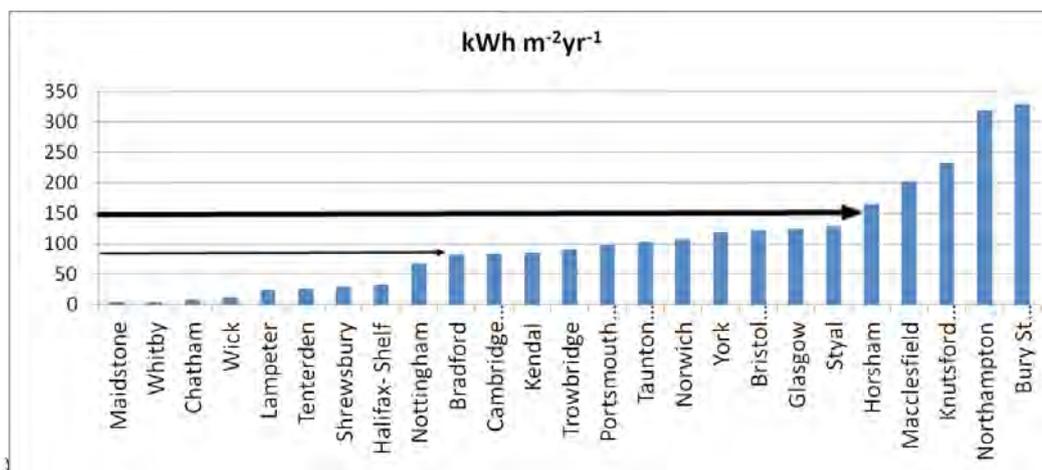
Shrewsbury: Advice concerning an application for a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant.

Whitby: Advice on work called for in their QS. Also questions about obtaining HLF grants.

Presence at 2017 Annual Meetings: The Group had its usual stall. In addition we held a workshop where we discussed progress on our energy monitoring/ carbon footprint project (see below) as well as discussing other BAG related topics.

BAG Energy Consumption Project: At the 2016 Annual Meetings we launched a project to look at the energy performance of the denomination's building stock. All the GA member places of worship were requested to submit details of their annual energy consumption. A year later this resulted in 25 useable returns which, on analysis, enabled a bar chart/graph to be plotted (below), showing the typical annual consumption of a Unitarian place of worship. This annual consumption appears to be 145kWhr/msq floor area (below 80 being 'good'). All congregations in the GA have been circulated with a brief report. Those congregations which have not submitted figures are still welcome to do so, and so enlarge the data base for further analysis to be done. iButtons are devices which measure and store air temperature data, and we are advocating their use by chapels to monitor their heating provision.

Mike Barber



Worship Studies Course (WSC)

39

Members during the year:

Rev Winnie Gordon (Chair & Mentor), Rev Sue Woolley (Course Administrator & Tutor), Rev Ernest Baker (Tutor), Rev Alex Bradley (Tutor), Rev Celia Cartwright (Tutor), Rev Sheena Gabriel (Tutor), Rev John Harley (Tutor), Rev Ant Howe (Tutor), Rev Dr Ann Peart (Tutor)

- number of people enrolled on the WSC and USC courses

This is a summary of the Worship Studies Course (WSC) and the Unitarian Studies Course (USC), and our plans for 2018:

We are most grateful for the contributions of Mr. Alan Ruston, who retired from the position of the second Unitarian History tutor during the year.

Foundation Step:

This report does not cover the costs of the WSC Foundation Step (WSCFS) courses. These are run in and by Districts, and each course is expected to be self-funding. Students are required to complete all elements of the training, and have two services assessed to receive their Foundation Step certificates.

Since our last report, the WSCFS has been run in the Yorkshire Unitarian Union (which started in 2016), in the London & South East District Provincial Assembly, and in Kendal. The total number of participants was nearly forty, demonstrating the ever-increasing need for well-trained worship leaders in our congregations. All three courses have gone well.

Intermediate and Advanced Steps:

Registration on the WSC presently stands at 26 students on the WSC Intermediate Step, and eight on the Advanced Step, with five students enrolled on the USC.

The new structure for the Intermediate and Advanced Steps is now in place, and students are starting to do the new modules at Advanced Step.

The modules consist of:

1. Unitarian theology/thought. (Compulsory) [tutors: Revs Alex Bradley & Sue Woolley]
2. Unitarian history-local/broader. (Compulsory) [tutor: Rev Ernest Baker]
3. Biblical studies. [tutor: Rev Ant Howe]
4. Earth Centred Spirituality. [tutor: Rev Celia Cartwright]
5. Intergenerational Worship [tutor: Rev John Harley]
6. Meditation & Contemplative Practices [tutor: Rev Sheena Gabriel]
7. Women and Religion in a Unitarian Context [tutor: Rev Dr Ann Peart]
8. World Religion within a Unitarian Context [tutor: Rev Ernest Baker]

The Worship Studies Course Team met twice this year, with most in attendance and all the tutors sending in their reports prior to the meeting. Much was discussed about the contribution the WSC makes to the movement and the importance for congregations to have a good support of lay worship leaders. In addition, the team reviewed the course, making suggestions for future improvements.

The success of the WSC would not be possible without the work of the Intermediate and Advanced Tutors, and the Tutors and Facilitators on the Foundation Step that lay the ground work so well. Our denomination is very blessed to have such volunteers and the Chair expresses gratitude and thanks for all their time and efforts in training lay worship leaders.

The North West Provincial Assembly will be running the WSC Foundation Step starting June 2018. Please contact Rev Lynne Readett if you are interested in participating in the course.

If you would like more information about the WSC or the USC please do come and see us on the display stall at the Annual Meetings.

Rev Sue Woolley



Ministry

Ministry Strategy Group

Members during the year:

Rev Sarah Tinker (Interim Chair),
Rev Daniel Costley (until Feb 2017),
Jane Couper Rev Ant Howe, Kay
Millard, Rev Lynne Readett (EC Link)

Staff Support:

Derek McAuley (Chief Officer),
Simon Bland (Ministry &
Congregational Support Officer),
Mary-Jean Hennis

Mission Statement: To provide the General Assembly with excellent spiritual leadership with the skills and ability to develop and lead thriving religious communities.

The Ministry Strategy Group (MSG) met four times during the year covered by this report. The Rev Daniel Costley stepped down as MSG Chair and member due to demands of other work, and our lack of volunteers to take on the Chair's role is perhaps an indication of the challenging phase the Strategy Group finds itself in. The MSG's primary tasks are the organisation and funding of training for Unitarian ministry and the on-going responsibility for the GA Roll of Ministers.

Ministry Training

The lead responsibility for exploring new ways of training our Ministers moved to the TED Project (Training & Education Development), jointly funded by the Executive Committee and by Unitarian College Manchester (UCM). A denomination-wide ethos and framework for training has been created and much work continues on the practicalities of creating ways of training Ministers to work with congregations in the 21st century. Work is needed on a modular system that allows for a variety of training pathways, accrediting prior learning and ensuring that students are confident in all the competencies previously agreed as necessary for professional

ministry. Embedding assessment methods within the curriculum from the start and encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning are key aspects being explored and continuing to encourage student placements with congregations. We are grateful to all the congregations and supervisors who make such placements effective and worthwhile.

A potential new area for exploration is the national apprenticeship scheme for ministry, proposed by the Church of England, which may hold possibilities for some of our future students. Much is changing in the world of further and higher education and we are keen to stay abreast of such developments.

Whilst the MSG's prime responsibility remains as ministerial training, we support the concept of lifelong learning and can see benefits in a more coherent, joined-up approach to all the training opportunities offered by our Movement. We recognise that students embarking on ministerial training in the near future may well face a training that is in transition, as changes occur at both our current colleges. Our commitment is to ensure that students feel both supported and inspired as they embark on their journey towards ministry. Effective leadership is clearly essential for the health and well-being of our congregations and our wider movement.

The Roll of Ministers

The Strategy Group is responsible for overseeing the Rolls of Ministers and Lay Pastors and ensuring that high professional standards are maintained. Through Simon Bland, the Ministry & Congregational Support Officer, we ensure that DBS safeguarding checks are updated every five years. We were delighted that Simon Bland's post was created as a full-time position to replace the part-time post of Director of Ministry. Simon has quickly shown himself to be a valuable member of Essex Hall's staff, with much to offer. We must ensure that his time is not so taken up with dealing with complex individual situations that we do not make much needed progress on some longstanding projects.

In the year ahead progress must be made on the much delayed review of the Guidelines document, which deals with the relationship between Ministers and congregations. We are also keen to liaise with the Ministerial Fellowship on a new Code of



Conduct for Ministers. Training should be offered for new mentors and attention should be given to the probationary status for new Ministers. We are concerned that congregational expectations of newly trained Ministers can be unrealistic and that a 'duty of care' for a Minister needs to be understood.

The MSG continues its commitment to ongoing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Ministers, as is now the norm in most other professions.

Other Work

The Strategy Group appreciates greatly the time and financial commitment made by the Hibbert Trust in running the Ministry in the Making (MiM) retreat for a sixth year, bringing together students and newly qualified ministers from our colleges in Oxford and Manchester. MiM has been credited with helping to create a far deeper sense of collegiality amongst new ministers and is much appreciated by all those who have attended the retreats. The Strategy Group also recognises the value of the lay leaders' consultation, again organised by the Hibbert Trust. The experiences and aspirations of this important yet oft unacknowledged group of congregational leaders need to be heard. Clearly there is much work to be done in the year ahead. The direction of travel may not always seem certain. But the Strategy Group remains committed to its mission: helping to provide excellent spiritual leadership with the skills and abilities to grow and develop thriving religious communities. Let us do all we can to encourage the changes needed, both in our training structures and in our ways of working, to ensure the highest possible standards in professional ministry.

Sarah Tinker

3

- The number of Ministers admitted to the roll with probationary status

Interview Panel

Members during the year:

Rev Alex Bradley, Rev Maria Curtis (from May 2017), David Dawson, Rev Ant Howe (from Sep 2017), Rev Margaret Kirk, Rev David Shaw (until Jan 2017), Rev Dr Arthur Stewart, Rev Sarah Tinker (Chair),

Staff Support:

Simon Bland (Ministry & Congregational Support Officer), Mary-Jean Hennis

The current structure for the Interview Panel's work has continued during the past year, with applications from potential candidates for ministerial training being received by October 1st. Those selected for interview are invited to Oxford in early January for an overnight stay, with conversations and interviews, worship and group exercises. The Panel meets in London in May to approve training proposals for those starting academic studies in the autumn and for final interviews with students about to complete their training. The Panel reports to the Ministry Strategy Group (MSG) and looks to the Strategy Group and the Executive Committee for guidance on its current and future ways of working.



New and Retiring Ministers with GA Officers at the Anniversary Service

L-R (Near): Rev Don Phillips, Rev Linda Phillips, Rev Kate McKenna, Rev Dr Ralph Catts



6

- The number of Ministers admitted to the roll with full status

The arrival of Simon Bland as Ministry & Congregational Support Officer in November 2016 was a great relief as the administration of ministry training cannot be managed by volunteers.

Although much of the Interview Panel's work has to remain confidential in order to respect individuals' privacy, we do make every effort to review our activities on a regular basis and to ensure best practice in all our endeavours. We aim to give helpful and clear feedback to candidates if requested and to ensure appropriate levels of transparency in our decision-making. We encourage all those who sense a call to ministry to engage in a process of discernment, often over a number of years. Those interested in ministry can learn much by observing and consulting with Ministers at work in our movement, by engaging with the life of their congregation and district association, ideally becoming more involved with our national Movement perhaps through Worship Studies and Unitarian Studies courses, through the Hucklow Summer School, through attendance at Annual Meetings and visiting other congregations around the country. Candidates must demonstrate their understanding of our Movement's work and governance structures and the great variety of our congregations.

2

- The number of new ministerial students offered training for the next year

A Ministry Inquiry Day is held in early summer, offering an opportunity for people at all stages of their journey towards ministry to ask questions and consider possibilities. There are many different forms of leadership needed in congregations today and professional ministry is not a path for everyone.

In January 2017 the Interview Panel recommended that training places to commence in autumn 2017 be offered to Michael Allured and Melda Grantham at Harris Manchester College, Oxford.

6

- The number of ministerial students in training in the academic year to Summer 2017

During the academic year to the Summer of 2017, six students were in training:

Harris Manchester College, Oxford:
Lewis Connolly, Claire MacDonald, Andy Phillips and Duncan Voice

Unitarian College Manchester:
Mark Hutchinson and Rev Bob Janis-Dillon

Panel members were pleased to recommend that Bob Janis-Dillon, Claire MacDonald and Andy Phillips be admitted to the Roll with probationary status on completion of agreed academic studies.

Recommendations for full status on the Roll were made for Rev John Carter, Rev Maria Curtis, Rev Jo James, Rev Anna Jarvis, Rev Matthew Smith and Rev Kate Whyman.

It is a privilege to take part in the selection and training of candidates for congregational ministry. Panel members express their gratitude to everyone in our Movement who assists in the training of our future leaders.

Sarah Tinker



Visibility

Lindsey Press

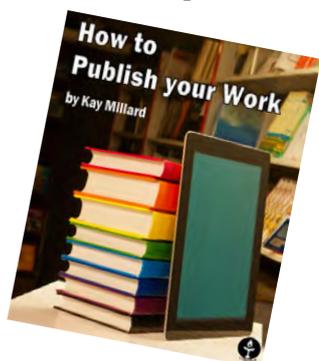
Members during the year:

David Dawson (Convenor),
 Claire MacDonald (from Jan 2017),
 Kay Millard, Catherine Robinson,
 Rev Kate Whyman

Staff Support:

Audrey Longhurst,
 Derek McAuley (Chief Officer)

The panel met three times during the year to facilitate progress on texts and book proposals that we have accepted as having the potential to meet our stated aims – in brief, ‘to publish in book form material that communicates contemporary Unitarian values, ideas and practice to the external world and to the denomination.’ In our last report (2015/16) we were able to record two new books and total sales rising above the one thousand mark. Alas, this year has been disappointing in terms of new publications and sales. We were only able to offer *How to Publish your Work* – not as a book, but as an on-line sixteen page pamphlet available on the GA web site. This was launched at the GA Annual Meetings by its author Kay Millard. We hope that this will be helpful for those wishing to publish something of local interest: chapel/congregation histories, biography of a notable local person – and so forth.



Our disappointment with this year is largely due to the nature of publishing – occasionally full and acceptable texts arrive virtually ready for editing and design; more normal are proposals with only a limited amount of writing completed and therefore needing much more time to develop. We have also had to contend with delaying issues over which we have no control.

At the time of compiling this report, work is ongoing on a new book entitled *Unitarians: Together In Diversity*. It is hoped to launch this book at the 2018 GA Annual Meetings. This is the only occasion in the Unitarian calendar when a large number of Unitarians are gathered together; when they can see, browse and buy Lindsey Press books easily. There is an online facility and you can buy with a debit/credit card by telephoning Essex Hall, but this does not seem to be a substitute for direct sales. We recognise that we have a marketing problem and would welcome help from anyone with skills, energy and enterprise in this field.

Without a new book to sell at the 2017 GA Annual Meetings our overall annual sales inevitably fell – compounded by a tailing-off in some of the more established titles. There were some positive signs: *Living with Integrity* maintained some momentum (54 copies sold) after a very good first year (197) and *The Unitarian Life* from 2008 still has steady annual sales. Cliff Reed’s *Unitarian? What’s That?* is still selling well and a new edition, reflecting current legislation on same sex marriage, will be available shortly. Some congregations use this book as an inexpensive and helpful gift to people exploring Unitarianism. If this is not part of your ‘Welcome Pack’ or a follow up to that, perhaps you might consider this – and boost your care for new members.

The overall sales figures for the past four years tell the story vividly:

	Essex Hall / Annual Mtgs	Online	Total Sales	Books launched
2013/14	434	157	591	<i>Creationism</i>
2014/15	679	185	864	<i>Carnival of Lamps, Life Spirit</i>
2015/16	903	196	1099	<i>Living with Integrity, On the Side of Liberty</i>
2016/17	532	148	680	<i>How to publish your work (pamphlet)</i>

Our thanks to Audrey Longhurst at Unitarian Headquarters for handling sales and providing the Panel with sales figures throughout the year; to these figures are added the online sales.

David Dawson



Penal Affairs

Members during the year:

Bruce Chilton (Chair / Secretary), Tony Cann, Bernard Omar, Jo O'Sullivan, Tony Rees, Tony Ward, David Warhurst, Paul Wheeler (from May 2017), Jane Williams (from May 2017)

The Penal Affairs Panel is a social responsibility activity of the Unitarians. It was created in 1992 following the General Assembly's "great concern at the poor conditions and regime at many local prisons." The Panel was given the task "to investigate the current situation on... penal policy, to keep the denomination informed..., and to provide a liberal religious voice in response... to current legislation."

The Penal Affairs Panel (PAP) has continued to "investigate", "inform" and "respond" with three meetings in London during the year and has recruited two new members to help with the work. During 2016-17 it has continued to submit several articles to *The Inquirer*, publish through the PAP Network three issues of PAP News and publish two PAP Issues Papers, "Rehabilitation" and "Inequality". Again the PAP was represented by members at the AGM of Liberty and has again responded to the interest in penal and social affairs by FOY, Unitarian chapels and churches and individual Unitarians.

The General Assembly Meetings give the PAP an opportunity each year to bring penal and social issues directly to the attention of many Unitarians through discussion and distribution of PAP documents. At the 2017 Annual Meetings in Birmingham, Professor Kate Pickett gave an excellent address in the PAP Presentation on the problems of social inequality. Professor Pickett is the co-author of the influential book "The Spirit Level – Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better". For penal reform in the UK, equality of UK penal policy and conditions with much of Western Europe would clearly be major, valuable reform.

The outstanding change during the life of the Penal Affairs Panel has been the doubling of the prison population. Since 1991 all Governments have engaged in populist penal politics. The number of criminal offences in statutes has doubled and the length of prison sentences and the use in sentencing of community sentences grown inexorably. The protests of prison and probation inspectors and senior judges appear to be ignored by Government. Unitarians have even greater cause for concern about prisons than in 1991.

The more the PAP members look at these modern penal problems, the more social issues emerge. More than 60% of UK prisoners have drug misuse problems yet the present Government persists in the "war on drugs" and refuses to reform. Since 1991, and with the start of "care in the community", UK prisons have filled with people with treatable mental illnesses. The UK persists in the criminalisation of children at the earliest possible age. Homelessness and poverty are at the heart of causes of crime.

To be clear, the Penal Affairs Panel does not wish to give up the work and objectives given to it by the General Assembly in 1991. It wishes to expand them. The situation in 2017 in UK prisons is arguably much worse. The PAP wishes to give Unitarians a focus for collecting and sharing information about social problems as well as penal affairs and give a voice to express reasoned concerns. The PAP has consulted the Executive Committee and with its approval, the name of the PAP will become the "Penal and Social Affairs Panel" (PSAP).

In 2017-18 the renamed PSAP plan to:

1. Carry out a "Social Responsibility Survey" of Unitarian communities and individual Unitarians. We are concerned to find out their concerns, their social actions, to inform and share this information and to promote and support the best social causes reflecting Unitarian interests.
2. Continue and expand its publications to include social issues. PSAP Issues Papers will continue. Similarly, our successful PAP News in its 26th issue will now, as "PSAP News", continue to expand its social issues subject matters. We are developing a programme of PSAP articles for more frequent submissions to *The Inquirer* and start submissions to *The Unitarian*.
3. Move the annual PSAP Presentation to the GA Meetings in 2018 to the clearly social issue of "Fake News". As with "Inequality" and "Immigration" we hope to have the support again of UKUnitarianTV.

The Unitarians have a strong history of social action for reform both as communities and as individuals. The PSAP hope its wider remit will encourage modern Unitarians in greater numbers to take interest and take action in penal and social reform. Do you or your Unitarian communities have particular concerns? Why not write about them for other Unitarians through publication in PSAP News and PSAP Issues Papers and for the PSAP webpage on the Unitarians website? Do remember that social responsibility is religion in action!

Bruce Chilton
**Annual
Report 2017**



Wales

Welsh Department

Members during the year:

Diana Bianchi, Elaine Davies, Nans Davies, Hilda Dumpleton, Tony Foster, Rev Eric Jones, Megan Jones, Rev Cen Llwyd, Manon Richards, Rev Wyn Thomas (Chair)

Staff Support:

Melda Grantham (Secretary)

As always, there have been plenty of opportunities during the last year for Unitarians in Wales to get together – both for worship and social events.

One of the highlights of the year was when a coach and several full cars made their way up to Birmingham to the Annual Meetings to present the



The Annual Meetings Opening Ceremony

Opening Ceremony. This was a first for us and proved to be a very worthwhile and enjoyable experience. It had been agreed that

we would present the story of Unitarianism in Wales, drawing on the historical figures and stories of the past to illustrate how they influence and inspire us today. There was an acknowledgment that many Unitarians outside of Wales were unaware of our rich heritage and did not understand the way that this had shaped our present. We were extremely fortunate that Dylan Iorwerth who is an eminent broadcaster, journalist, poet and Unitarian agreed to prepare a script that condensed 300 years of history in to just over an hour's presentation. Thus we were able to share the stories of Iolo Morgannwg, Tomos Glyn Cothi, Richard Price, Gwilym Marles, Jacob Davies, Jenkin Lloyd Jones, Arthur Powell Davies and many other influential Welsh Unitarians. We shared the stories of those who had stood firmly against the very worst oppression and those who had carried the message and values to far-flung corners of the world. We were also able to show how these people have influenced us to deal with the problems

of our modern day world such as homelessness, the refugee crisis, human slavery, LGBT issues and the constant attacks on our language and culture. Through music and song, comedy and sincerity, some powerful imagery, as well as some great singing from the audience, we hope that everyone present not only enjoyed it, but were also inspired by our message.

Another highlight of the year was the fact that Yr Hen Gapel Llwynrhydowen, (and if you were at the Opening Ceremony, that's the one where Gwilym Marles and his congregation were evicted from) was shortlisted in a competition to discover Wales' Favourite Place of Worship. This was a competition run by Sacred Wales and launched by the broadcaster Huw Edwards in the autumn. It was the only Unitarian chapel to feature in the short list of 50 and I'm delighted to report that Yr Hen Gapel finished in fourth place, so a massive "thank you" to everybody who voted for us.

Some important visitors have been welcomed to our chapels this year, from the GA President to MPs. The First Minister, Carwyn Jones, paid a visit to Highland Place, Aberdare recently to talk about how his non-conformist upbringing had influenced his political views.

We look forward to welcoming Stephen Lingwood to the Cardiff Congregation in the New Year and wish him and the congregation every success.

The Welsh Department have agreed to focus on reviewing the opportunities offered to young people within the Movement this year, with a view of improving the resources on offer, as well as creating a more varied and inspiring programme of activities. It promises to be a very exciting and challenging year again.

Some great inspiring work goes on throughout the year at local level, with each congregation remaining busy and purposeful. Without the constant efforts of the Welsh Department committee, both District Associations, the Ministers and every individual in every congregation, this level of activity would not be possible, and we are truly grateful for this commitment.

The two District Associations work tirelessly to support the Movement and it is only through their efforts and dedication that the committee of the Welsh Department are able to focus on the bigger picture. Between us – we are keeping the flame burning brightly in Wales.

Melda Grantham





The 2017 Annual Meetings



free christian churches

Welcome to the

Unitarian

ANNUAL MEETINGS

Youth - Our Future

Youth Panel

Members during the year:

Lorna Barry (Chair), Jim Blair, Jen Hazel, Claire Maddocks, Sara Robertson, Christina Smith (to May 2017)

Staff Support:

Rev John Harley (Youth Coordinator), Andrew Mason (Minutes)

It has been quite a year for the Youth Department. As previous years we have continued to hold Junior (33 attendees), Inter (13 attendees) and Senior (24 attendees) weekends as well as FDA (15 attendees) at the Nightingale Centre at Great Hucklow. Numbers have varied from event to event but regardless of this we have managed to continue to run these events.

Sadly, Unikids held in July was not so fortunate. Low numbers of bookings meant that it was unfeasible to run this event, however we took the opportunity to lead some training with potential new leaders. John and I took the opportunity to strip a weekend back to its bare bones with those attending and went through every element of a youth weekend discussing its purpose, how we would plan for it, the importance of risk assessments, grouping of participants and much more.

Youth Panel have this year taken the opportunity to look at our work, how we work and whether or not what we are doing is fit for purpose. Into the three meetings that we hold each year we have added a 'blue sky thinking' session once a year. In this session we took the opportunity to look at the strengths, weaknesses and any gaps in our programming or skill sets. This was a most beneficial session. We looked at our thematic plan for events where we have managed to plan for connecting themes between Junior weekends and Inters and Seniors. Inter and Senior weekends now will have the same theme but with largely independent planning.



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- attendance at our main Youth events this year (excludes new UniFEST event)

The booking system, the needs of its users and the needs of Essex Hall have also come under major scrutiny. We are actively looking into improving the Youth booking system to make it far easier for participants and their parents. This is an ongoing project but one we are determined to rectify.

In July we received the sad news that John Harley had decided to resign from the post of Youth Coordinator at the end of October. John has held the post for the past 12 years but has been involved in Unitarian youth work for longer than this. We cannot thank him enough for the work that he does. He has touched and inspired so many young people with his own sense of magic. His nature has been very much vital in creating the "bubble of trust" that our young people talk about, desire, enjoy and thrive in.

Prior to John resigning the panel had discussed holding a stakeholders day to gain the opinions of those with an interest in the programme to discuss whether what we offer is fit for purpose for the 21st century. John's resignation made this a greater priority and in early October we held a session for stakeholders at the Unitarian Chapel in York. The session gave much food for thought but in particular questioning the impact of changes in Education policy, locality, and duration of events. This is not the end of the process, as we have also circulated a questionnaire to those who did not attend the session to continue our exploration further to ensure that what we offer fits and meets the needs of our young people now and in the future.



New to the calendar this year was Uni-FEST, which was held at the end of October at the Nightingale Centre with numbers of 32 adults and 28 children. It was a truly intergenerational event with all ages between three months up to mid-seventies with family groups, several with three generations, individuals and couples. Interestingly the one age bracket we really missed was our twenty-somethings but they were meeting at Flagg the same weekend.



During the long weekend we enjoyed epilogues, games, art, dance, singing, walking, a trip to the Chestnut Centre, visit from the History Van, personal discussions on how Unitarianism impacted on family life and enjoying being with other Unitarian families in a supportive community.

It has been a busy year but one that would not have been possible without our team of loyal youth leaders. If it was not for their time then we would not be able to run the programme that we do. Thank you to: Claire Maddox, Isabelle Rosenberg, Jen Hazel, Rob Gretton, Jim Blair, Kathy Elcox, Rachel Thorpe, Louise Shatliff, Lizzie Harley, Emma Lowe and of course John Harley.

Lorna Barry

Uni-FEST 2017



Nightingale Centre - Great Hucklow



Nightingale Centre Management Cttee

Members during the year:

Marion Baker (Chair), Sue Catts, David Copley, Dot Hewerdine, Richard Merritt, Colin Partington (Financial Secretary), Gwyneth Roper, John Rowland (from Dec 2016), Michael Tracey (Secretary)

What a year this has been, yet another year of major improvements entailing much additional work for the Centre's manager, Stella Burney, and her dedicated staff.

The Annual report for last year mentioned the planned improvements to Barleycrofts House. Transformation might be a more accurate description of what has taken place. Without knocking down any external walls or building any extensions, the house now has an extra bedroom (four in all), an en suite shower room, a family bathroom and an additional downstairs shower room and utility room. Imaginative changes in layout have transformed the house inside, improved the garden and provided several parking spaces. This work has greatly increased its value and made it a very attractive rental property.

Overseeing this has added hugely to (doubled) the workload of the Centre's Manager which, in turn has put extra work onto other members of Staff. Stella and her staff are to be congratulated for keeping the Centre open, once again with minimum disruption to the comfort of guests.



Barleycrofts - exterior

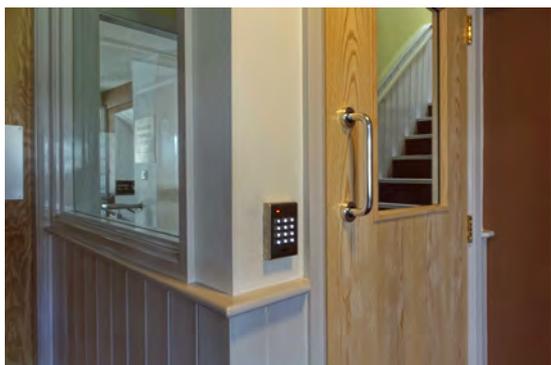


Barleycrofts - new kitchen



This year has seen a continuation of improvements to The Nightingale Centre main house with upgrades to bedrooms and shower facilities, new boilers and carpets and much, much more. Often the improvements are with small things suggested by our guests and go unnoticed by many but it is this attention to the smaller details that gives guests that sense of comfort that is so important to feeling welcome.

A major change this year has been an improvement to the security of the building. The back door now has a keypad entry for which the code is changed for each group. The layout of the back entrance has



changed too to offer more space for guests to change from outdoor to indoor footwear. These changes include a new entrance to the bedrooms on the first floor at the back of the house with a keypad entrance security system at the bottom of the back stairs and another partway along the top corridor ensuring that, when school and SACH groups are in residence, all children and staff can be accommodated within this secure area.

This marks a major improvement in the Safeguarding facilities which will be valued by leaders, including our own youth leaders, and parents alike.

The Staff team has once again worked well through the changes ensuring that guests' individual needs are met. The gardens continue to supply the kitchen with an increasing range of home-grown vegetables, fruit and herbs which add considerably to the quality of guest meals.



New seating areas have been created offering peaceful, quiet and often fragrant places for guests to relax.

Over the summer, there have been changes to the kitchen and house staff but the high standard expected by our regular guests is maintained through the commitment and hard work of those remaining and those joining the team.

And so what next?

Well, there is always room for improvements both small and large. Plans currently being considered include additional space around The Peach Hall to offer a further small meeting area with potential for some additional group accommodation. Watch this space!

The additional improvements to the Centre have borne fruit in terms of increased occupancy and resultant income. Organisations have used the Centre for the first time, tempted by the quality of accommodation on offer. Maintenance of our four star hostel rating is an important selling tool and the logos are used prominently in our advertising and on our website.



Existing users have been encouraged to revisit although there have always been organisations who can be seen as "one-offs". Many organisations choose to move from place to place each year for their events, so the chance for repeat business is not always present. Others will repeat but only for a year or so before they look for a change, even where the offer is good and they are totally satisfied. This places constant pressure on the Centre to find new customers alongside retention of valued regular users. Some new customers come by word of mouth, others through a variety of methods. The Retreats Association website continues to be a good source and this is reflected in the nature of many of the organisations attracted to use the Centre. Groupaccommodation.com has also been a useful source.



We produce an annual Brochure. As well as attracting take up for the various events already arranged, the brochure is intended to act as a stimulus to new users. The brochure gives an idea of what kind of events can be put on and the range of organisations so far which are finding the Centre meets their needs. The 2017 brochure was distributed to all churches, to attendees at the GA and is made available at the Centre. It was also available on-line through the Centre website.

Our own website has a list of all events taking place at the Centre as well as comprehensive information about what the Centre has to offer. In its latest format it is tablet and smartphone friendly, an increasingly important consideration.

The Centre has continued to be a focus for national Unitarian meetings. As in the previous year there were last year some thirty Unitarian-related events. As well as the other promotional vehicles previously mentioned these events have been made known through Uni-News and from time to time in the Unitarian and/or The Inquirer. Additionally the General Assembly Meetings were a focus for the promotion of Unitarian events at the Centre. The Centre Manager attended and the Centre's stall with its auctions, Unitarian jewellery and promotional material was a prominent, much-visited part of the 2017 event.

A problem for the Centre is a failure of some groups to reach their forecast numbers. Sometimes the result is a loss of potential occupancy by another group. The challenge is to help support the promotion of such events and here it is important that those planning the events liaise effectively with the Centre, providing comprehensive information so the Centre can include this on its website and, if provided in time, within the Centre's annual Brochure (see earlier).

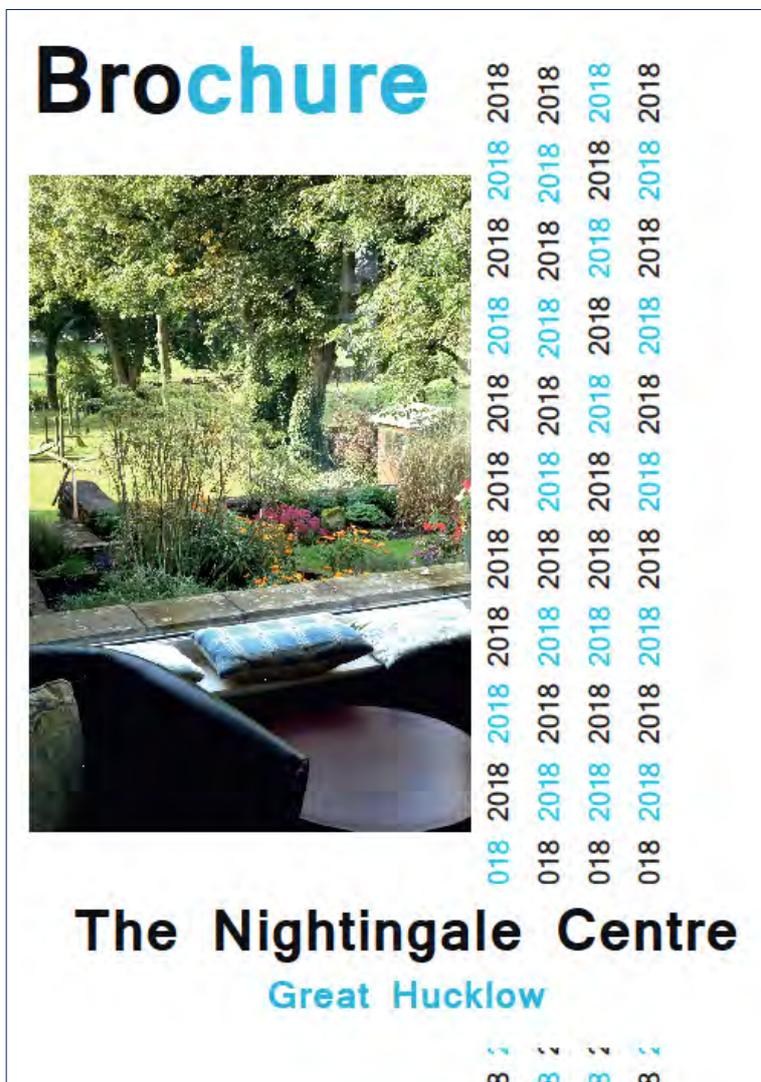
The Centre strives continually to improve the match between what it offers and what is needed by both our Unitarian and non-Unitarian users. Feedback, by word of mouth and by evaluation sheets available to all guests, has been used by the Centre to make changes where appropriate and to take account of the wide range of guest needs. The most visible

example of this has been the increase in the number of en-suite rooms over recent years but other examples include the flexibility of configuration within rooms and the many less obvious small changes to accommodation and/or catering which have been made to improve the guest offer.

Always a key consideration in attracting guests has been an appropriate pricing structure. Care has been taken to stay competitive within the market while securing sufficient income to ensure the Centre is viable over the short-medium and long terms.

Apart from the Manager, Staff and Management Committee, we are grateful to all those who from time to time have provided photographs or helped in other ways with promotion of the Centre. Our thanks go to all those who continue to spread the word about the Centre: churches, organisations and individuals. Importantly the "Friends of the Nightingale Centre" have assisted the Centre, not only by making regular financial contributions, but in many cases in other ways too, including promoting what we offer.

Richard Merritt & Dot Hewerdine



2017 Annual Meetings



The 2017 Annual Meetings took place at the Birmingham Hilton Metropole hotel from Monday 10 April to Thursday 13 April. Over 350 Unitarians met to decide on the business of the Assembly, learn, worship and socialise together.

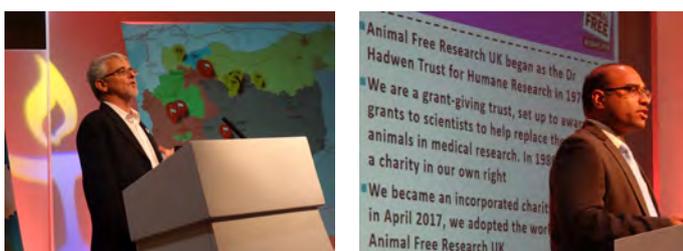
Some of the highlights:

- The Opening Celebrations with the theme “Cerdded Ymlaen/Walking On” and presented by the Welsh Unitarians, were certainly amongst the most memorable ever at an Annual Meeting. Written by Dylon Iorwerth, with both the Welsh and English language contributions in both prose and song, we were taken through the history of the Welsh Unitarian Movement to their present day commitment to social change.
- The Keynote Speech, with a short question and answer session, by Rev Dr Ralph Waller, Principal of Harris Manchester College, Oxford was a reflection on his many years in ministry and academic life as he approaches his retirement.
- The Anniversary Service was led by Rev Daniel Costley with the Preacher Rev Sarah Tinker on the theme “In Our Hands”.
- The financial support from Unitarian and Free Christians across Britain to The British Red Cross Clara Barton Fund and Dr Hadwen’s Trust, now Animal Free Research UK, was publicly recognised.



Top Left: The Opening Celebrations
 Top Right: The Banner Parade
 Bottom Left: The GA Zette magazine
 Bottom Right: Handover over the Women's League President's Medallion

- The Social Evening, featuring “The Simon Faulkner Band” with Soul and Motown Music.
- The Nightingale Centre reported another very successful year with the largest income ever and much investment in repairs, maintenance and improvements.
- The John Rely Beard lecture on “Fifty Shades of Grace: Sex and Progressive Christianity” was delivered by Rev Dr Carla A Grosch-Miller.



Speakers from the Red Cross (L) and DR Hadwen Trust (R) gave presentations as part of a progress report on last year's Annual Meetings Resolutions



Business

- The Annual Report and Annual Accounts were adopted.
- Rev Cliff Reed's contribution to the Unitarian Movement was recognised by him named as an Honorary Member of the General Assembly.
- Progress on several priorities under "Vision into Action: Next Steps" was explored in both the plenary and workshop sessions.
- Retiring members of the Executive Committee were thanked for their service and a new Executive Committee took up office at a handover Ceremony.
- An Emergency Resolution was passed on the plight of Coptic Christians in Egypt. following the bombing of two churches on 9 April 2017
- The Stipend Review Committee report was adopted.
- Support was given for changes to the length and format of the Annual Meetings with a report requested in 2018.



RESOLUTIONS

The following Resolutions were agreed by the Assembly:

1. FROM TWELVE FULL MEMBERS

In view of the tragic news of the bombing of two Coptic Churches in Egypt on Palm Sunday, 9th April 2017, this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, meeting now in Birmingham, extends its deepest sympathy to the families and friends of the over 41 Coptic Christians who died, and to the Coptic Pope and churches of Egypt, the United Kingdom and around the world.

In the words of Hans Küng, to the International Association for Religious Freedom:
"There will be no peace in the world, until there is peace among religions. There will be no peace among religions until there is dialogue among religions."

2. FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches supports changes to the length and format of the Annual Meetings [as set out in report AGM13/17];

and therefore, requests the Executive Committee and Annual Meetings Panel to bring forward proposals to the next Annual Meetings, including any amendments to the Constitution and By-laws, to enable such changes to take place for future Annual Meetings.

3. FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches recognises the considerable contribution of Rev Cliff Reed to the Unitarian cause worldwide by naming him as an Honorary Member.

4. FROM STOCKTON UNITARIAN CHURCH

This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches deplores the harsh and degrading treatment of County Durham resident Irene Clennell on 26th February 2017 when she was taken away from her husband and family by the UK Border Agency, held in Dungavel immigration removal centre and then deported to Singapore in the most humiliating manner.

This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches calls upon the Government of the United Kingdom to:

1. Immediately reinstate Irene Clennell's indefinite leave to remain in the UK, permitting her to return to her husband and family in County Durham.
2. Cease the practice of using obscure technical issues to deport people who have long been fully integrated into British families, thereby subjecting them and their family members to extreme anguish and distress.
3. Instruct the UK Border Agency to treat persons subjected to deportation with the utmost care, dignity and respect.



FURTHER RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report of the General Assembly Executive Committee and the Accounts of the General Assembly be received and adopted.
2. That Shaw Gibbs Ltd be reappointed as Auditors.
3. That Peter Hanley be appointed Honorary Treasurer for the year 2017-2018.
4. That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Peter Hanley for his service as Treasurer during the year 2016-2017, and to district association and local officers for their invaluable services.
5. That greetings be sent to kindred churches and societies abroad.
6. That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Rev Sarah Tinker for preaching the Assembly Sermon.
7. That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Rev Daniel Costley, worship leader for the Anniversary Service, and to all those who provided music and other content for the Anniversary Service and on other worship occasions during these Meetings.
8. That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the members of the General Assembly staff and to all volunteers for their inestimable help in organising the Meetings.



Rev Sarah Tinker preached an Anniversary Service Sermon THIS big..

9. That Rev Charles VanDenBroeder be appointed President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for the year 2017-2018.
10. That this eighty-ninth General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its gratitude for the services provided by Dorothy Hewerdine as President during the year 2016-2017.



Passing the Chain - Dorothy Hewerdine's final act as GA President for 2016/17 was to pass on the Presidential Chain to the 2017/18 GA President, Rev Charles VanDenBroeder





Annual Meetings Birmingham 2017 Accounts

Summary of Financial Results	2017 Income	2017 Expenditure	2017 Balance	2016 Balance
Accommodation & Conference Fees	88,273	83,652	4,621	8,888
Group Registration	5,072		5,072	4,142
Wood Green Trust	6,000		6,000	5,000
Other Donations to Meetings	7,900		7,900	10,308
Printing and Postage		2,337	-2,337	-2,642
Pre-AGM Expenses		1,009	-1,009	-244
Room Hire and Audio Visual		7,469	-7,469	-7,331
Speakers, Fees and Social event		4,556	-4,556	-3,395
Sundries		1,583	-1,583	-6,893
Travel		2,059	-2,059	-1,805
Youth Honoraria & Expenses		1,143	-1,143	-651
Transfer for future Meetings			0	0
Previous Year's transfer			0	0
	107,245	103,808	3,437	5,377



Independent Auditor's Statement

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S STATEMENT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF UNITARIAN & FREE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

We have examined the summarised financial statements for the year ended 30 September 2017 set out on pages 42 and 43.

Respective responsibilities of the trustees and the auditor

The trustees are responsible for preparing the summarised financial statements in accordance with applicable United Kingdom law and the recommendations of the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP).

Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summarised financial statements with the full annual financial statements and the Trustees' Annual Report.

We also read other information contained in the summarised annual report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the summarised financial statements.

Opinion

In our opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements and the Trustees' Annual Report of The General Assembly of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches for the year ended 30 September 2017.

Shaw Gibbs Limited

SHAW GIBBS LIMITED
Chartered Certified Accountants &
Statutory Auditor
264 Banbury Road
Oxford
OX2 7DY

TRUSTEES' STATEMENT

The auditor has issued an unqualified report on the full annual financial statements of the General Assembly of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches for the year ended 30 September 2017 and on the consistency of the Trustees' Report with those financial statements.



General Assembly Financial Summary - Income

By David Joseph,
Finance Manager



Grants from Essex Hall Trust and management fees charged to the Trust amounted to £115,000 along with a gift-in-kind of free office space valued at £64,000. The B&FUA grant was £34,163 (2015/16: £32,630) an increase of £1,533 (4%).

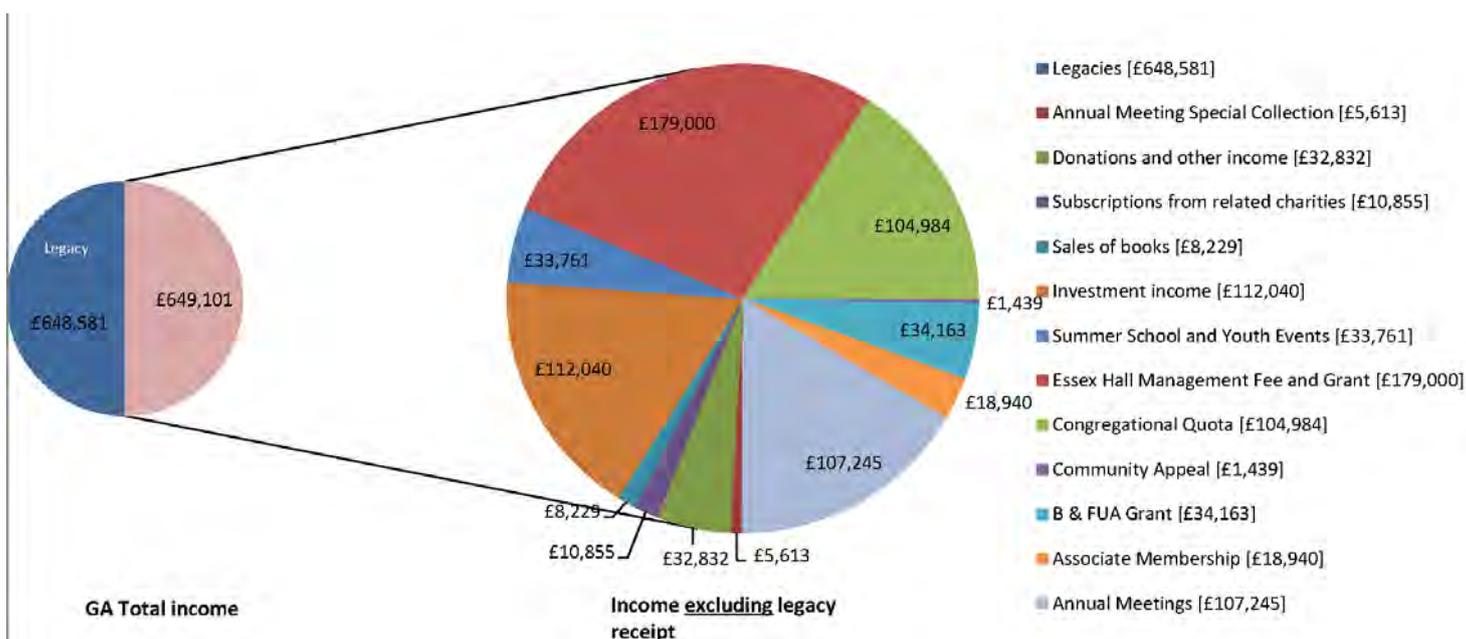
Book Sales generated £8,229 against £10,350 in 2015/16. Cost of book sales is £3,783 (2015/16: £5,989).

Investment Income was £112,041 (2015/16: £82,045). New investments in the year generated increased returns of £27,800. Investment income includes bank interest and rental income from the freehold property.

Unrealised gains The GA's investments appreciated significantly in value resulting in unrealised net gains of £116,029 since the beginning of the year. This includes net gains on new investments made in the year. The investment property (freehold land) was revalued on an open market basis in 2016. It is not considered that the value of this land has changed materially and will be revalued at three yearly intervals.

Total income for the year was £1,297,682 (2015/16: £1,071,735) and included a legacy of £648,581 plus usual operating income of £649,101 (2015/16: £571,734). Usual operating income includes income from Live Giving, grants from Essex Hall Trust and the B&FUA, book sales and investment income as well as receipts from the Annual Meeting and courses that we run such as the Summer School. The usual operating income for 2016/17 was up on 2015/16 by £77,367 due mainly to increases in investment income, additional support from the Essex Hall Trust and higher levels of voluntary income.

Live Giving was £174,663 (including Gift Aid), an increase of £26,631 on 2015/16.



General Assembly Financial Summary - Expenditure

The General Assembly expended **£707,667** (2016: **£704,282**) in the year to 30th September 2017.

This includes expenditure from the Annual Meetings and courses such as Summer School where there is an equivalent amount of income.

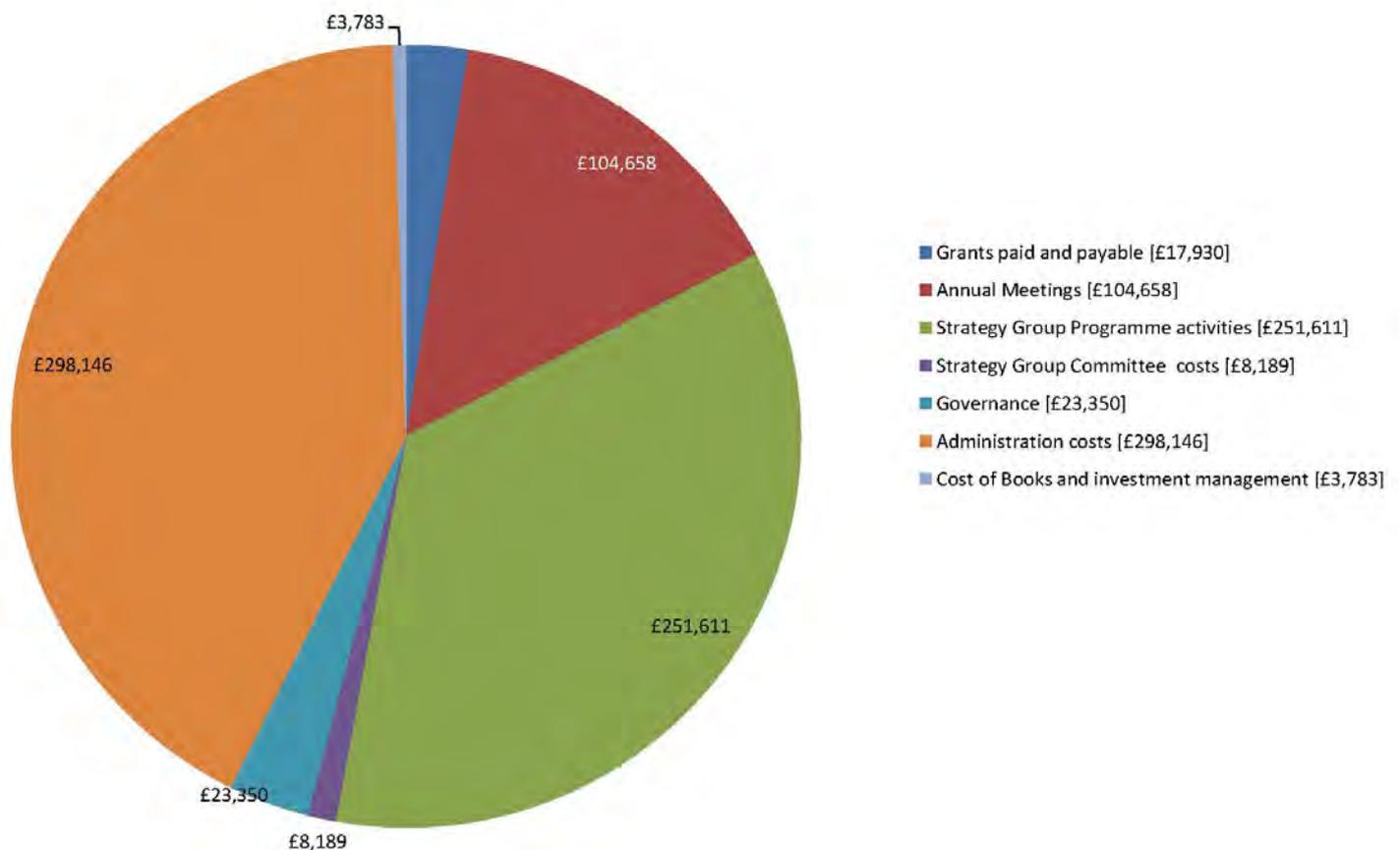
Strategy Group Programme includes the Local Leadership, Visibility and Ministry strategy groups as well as the Welsh and Youth Programmes and cost £251,611. GA staff time charged to the programmes is 62% of programme costs. Strategy Group Committee costs were £8,189, up on 2015/16 (£5,190).

Grants paid were £17,930 (2015/16: £47,912); however, there was an increase in expenditure on programme activity by £36,661, an increase of 17%.

Administration costs were £298,147 (2015/16: £297,278).

Governance and EC activities amounted to £23,350 (2016: £28,543). In addition, the audit charge for the year was £9,450.

The withdrawal penalty payable to the Pensions Trust in the event of there being no contributing members in the staff pension plan is accounted for as a liability in the balance sheet. The change in the liability for 2016/17 is an increase of £44,733 and is shown in the Income and Expenditure report; the liability is £283,843.



Balance Sheet

	2017	2017	2016	2016
	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets				
Tangible Assets	222,347		234,505	
Investments	4,837,611		2,873,000	
		5,059,958		3,107,505
Current Assets				
Stocks	4,999		4,630	
Loans	260		260	
Debtors	110,541		101,141	
Short term deposits	25,694		1,525,511	
Cash at Bank and in hand	223,214		45,450	
	364,707		1,676,992	
Current Liabilities				
Creditors falling due within one year	(27,374)		(93,250)	
Net Current Assets		337,334		1,583,742
Long term Liabilities		(283,843)		(239,110)
Total Assets less Liabilities		5,113,449		4,452,137
General Funds		1,847,219		1,836,513
Designated Funds		152,757		152,102
Restricted Funds		2,354,269		1,724,130
Endowment Funds		759,204		739,391
Total Funds		5,113,449		4,452,137



Income and Expenditure Report

Where the money came from	2016-17	2015-16
Voluntary Income		
Legacies	648,581	-
Associate Membership fees received	18,940	19,522
Subscriptions from Related Charities	10,855	5,355
Congregational Quota	104,984	98,536
Community Appeal	1,439	2,309
Annual Meeting Special Collection	5,613	5,956
Bowland Trust	-	1,500,000
Sundry Donations and other Income	32,832	16,355
Essex Hall Management Fee and Grant	179,000	154,000
B&FUA Grant	34,163	32,630
	1,036,407	1,834,663
Sales of Books		
	8,229	10,350
Furtherance of GA Objects		
	33,761	35,080
Investment Income		
	112,040	82,045
Annual Meetings Income		
	107,245	109,597
	1,297,682	2,071,735
Where we spent our money		
Cost of Books		
	3,783	5,989
Grants Paid and Payable		
	17,930	47,912
Annual Meetings		
	104,658	104,420
Strategy Group Programme activities		
	251,611	214,950
Strategy Group Committee costs		
	8,189	5,190
Governance		
	23,350	28,543
Administration costs		
	298,146	297,278
	707,667	704,282
Net Incoming Resources		
	590,015	1,367,453
Transfers		
	-	(38,125)
Gains/ (losses) on investments		
	116,029	478,478
Gains on revaluations of fixed assets		
	-	130,400
Recognition of "withdrawal penalty" on staff pension fund		
	(44,733)	17,088
Net Movement in Funds	661,311	1,955,293



The Nightingale Centre Financial Summary

The Nightingale Centre has had another good year with yet another record breaking income. Overall there has been a small deficit due primarily to the extensive improvements carried out to make the Centre even better – responding to our customers’ wishes.

There has also been a significant increase in depreciation charges as we continue to invest capital in more major improvements – primarily to Barleycrofts House.

Donations continue to be an important part of our income and go towards improving the centre.



Colin Partington MBE

Income and Expenditure Report

Where the money comes from	2016-2017 £	2015-2016 £
Donations	13,529	11,629
Charitable Activities	268,557	243,694
Non-Charitable Activities	67,139	60,924
Investment and Rental Income	15,687	22,862
Total incoming Resources	364,912	339,109
Where we spent the money		
Providing the Services - Charitable	300,458	275,876
Providing the services - non-charitable	75,340	68,969
Governance Costs	900	680
Total Outgoing Resources	376,698	345,525
Net Incoming resources	(11,786)	(6,416)
Gains/losses on investment assets	3,932	8,511
<u>Net Movement of Funds</u>	<u>(7,854)</u>	<u>2,095</u>



Balance Sheet

Total Assets of The Nightingale Centre as at 30 September 2017

	2017 £	2017 £	2016 £	2016 £
Fixed Assets				
Tangible Assets	2,251,184		2,171,887	
Investments	65,589		61,658	
		2,316,773		2,233,545
Current Assets				
Stocks	1,200		1,227	
Debtors	1,120		-	
Cash at Bank and in hand	215,777		317,207	
		218,097		318,434
Current Liabilities				
Creditors falling due within one year	(69,191)		(78,446)	
Net Current Assets		148,906		239,988
<u>Total Assets</u>		2,465,679		2,473,533

Income



Expenditure



The Sustentation Fund - Financial Summary

Sustentation Fund

The accounts for the year ended 30th September 2017 showed an operating surplus of £3,406 (2016: £1,184). After gains on disposals of investments during the year and year-end market revaluations totalling £4,634 (2016: £78,871) there was an overall gain of £8,040 (2016: £80,055).

Lay Pastors' Fund

The accounts for the year ended 30th September 2017 showed an operating surplus of £520 (2016: £529). After a year-end market revaluation gain of £1,456 (2016: £2,986) there was an overall gain of £1,976 (2016: £3,515).

Investments

Newton Investment Management Ltd continued as Investment Manager, but no longer on a discretionary basis, and participated with the Trustees in the Unitarian Investment Panel.

The Trustees pursue an investment policy that provides revenue for their current purposes and enhances income and capital growth over the longer term, thereby enabling them to meet their current and future objectives in accordance with the purpose of the fund.

Michael Tomlin

Balance Sheet

Total Balance Sheet of the Assets managed by the Sustentation Fund at 30 September 2017

	2017	2017	2016	2016
Fixed Assets				
Investments		532,470		526,380
Current Assets				
Cash at Bank and in hand	33,186		29,186	
Income Tax recoverable	0		74	
	<u>33,186</u>		<u>29,260</u>	
Current liabilities				
	<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>	
Net Current assets		33,186		29,260
Total assets less liabilities		565,656		555,640
The Sustentation Fund		540,580		532,540
The Lay Pastors fund		25,076		23,100
Total Funds		565,656		555,640



Income and Expenditure Report

	2016-17 £ Sustentation	2016-17 £ Lay Pastors	2015-16 £ Sustentation	2015-16 £ Lay Pastors
Where the money came from				
Bank Interest and Income from Investments	16,850	520	18,480	529
Donations	508		641	
Total Incoming Resources	17,358	520	19,121	529
Where we spent our money				
Grants	(13,525)	0	(17,475)	0
Administration Expenses	(427)		(482)	
Operating Surplus / (Deficit)	3,406	520	1,184	529
Gains/(Losses) on Investments	4,634	1,456	78,871	2,986
Total Increase/(Reduction) in Funds Value	8,040	1,976	80,055	3,515

The Congregations to whom we gave money

(Combined Sustentation Fund and Lay Pastors' Fund)

	2017	2016
Bolton Bank Street	1,500	1,500
Bolton Egerton	1,100	1,100
Bristol	750	0
Cardiff	2,000	0
Chorlton	0	625
Chowbent	1,500	1,500
Edinburgh	0	750
Knutsford	0	750
Lewisham	0	750
Macclesfield	1,200	1,500
Monton	1,500	1,500
Oldham	300	0
Padiham	0	1,500
Rochdale	375	1,500
Southampton	0	750
South Wales Group	3,000	3,000
Urmston	300	750
	13,525	17,475



Governance

General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches

Registered Charity No 250788

The Nightingale Centre

Registered Charity No 242256

The Sustentation Fund

Registered Charity No 235449

The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches

The General Assembly :

- Is a charity in its own right
- acts as a 'supervisory charity' to many congregations with 'excepted' status
- Is considered a parent charity under law to the Nightingale Centre and the Sustentation Fund

The objects of the General Assembly:

Preamble

We, the constituent congregations, affiliated societies and individual members, uniting in a spirit of mutual sympathy, co-operation, tolerance and respect; and recognising the worth and dignity of all people and their freedom to believe as their consciences dictate; and believing that truth is best served where the mind and conscience are free, acknowledge that the Object of the Assembly is:

Object

To promote a free and inquiring religion through the worship of God and the celebration of life; the service of humanity and respect for all creation; and the upholding of the liberal Christian tradition.

To this end, the Assembly may:

Encourage and unite in fellowship bodies which uphold the religious liberty of their members, unconstrained by the imposition of creeds; Affirm the liberal religious heritage and learn from the spiritual, cultural and intellectual insights of all humanity;

Act where necessary as the successor to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association and National Conference of Unitarian, Liberal Christian, Free Christian, Presbyterian and other Non-Subscribing or Kindred Congregations, being faithful to the spirit of their work and principles (see appendix to the constitution), providing always that this shall in no way limit the complete doctrinal freedom of the constituent churches and members of the Assembly; Do all other such lawful things as are incidental to the attainment of the above Object.

In reference to the penultimate clause of Object, the following is a statement of the Objects of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, as set forth in Rule 2 of its Constitution:

The diffusion and support of the principles of Unitarian Christianity, including the formation and assistance of Congregations which do not require for themselves or their Ministers subscription to any doctrinal articles of belief; the publication and circulation of biblical, theological, scientific and literary knowledge related to Unitarian Christianity; the doing of all such other lawful things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objects or any of them.

The following is a statement of the Objects of the National Conference of Unitarian, Liberal Christian, Free Christian, Presbyterian and other Non-Subscribing or Kindred Congregations, as set forth in Rule 1 of its Constitution:

To consult, and when considered advisable to take action, on matters affecting the well-being and interests of the Congregations and Societies on the Roll of the Conference, as by directing attention, suggesting plans, organising expressions of opinion, raising funds to carry out the foregoing objects.



The Nightingale Centre

The Trustees of The Nightingale Centre are the Members of the GA Executive Committee.

Day to day Management of the Centre is delegated to a Management Committee:

The objects of the Nightingale Centre:

(1) The object of the charity is, for the benefit of the public, to further the religious and other charitable work of the Unitarian and Free Christian Churches including:

- (a) the relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health, financial hardship or other disadvantage; and
- (b) the provision of facilities for the education of students of educational establishments.

Subject to the provisions of clauses 5 (Power to dispose of purpose property) and 10 (Disposal of land), the land identified in the schedule to this scheme must be retained by the trustees for use for the object of the charity.

The Sustentation Fund

The objects of the Sustentation Fund:

To aid the maintenance of faithful and efficient Ministers and Lay Pastors serving congregations affiliated to the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches.

Being a Charity

Advantages

As a charity the General Assembly is exempt from income tax and corporation tax on its charitable earnings, and there are advantages involving VAT and rates.

Particular decisions on tax decisions are complex and need to be taken with professional advice.

Responsibilities

As a charity the General Assembly is subject to charity law which insists we behave in a prudent and reasonable manner and fulfil the obligations of the Charities Act and other legislation.

The General Assembly is subject to supervision by the Charity Commission, to whom an Annual Return, which includes our annual report and financial accounts, must be submitted.

The General Assembly has taken great care and professional advice in relation to its position as a parent charity to the Nightingale Centre and the Sustentation Fund and has concluded that at the moment the objects of all three charities are sufficiently similar and the degree of control exerted by the Trustees of sufficient magnitude that the General Assembly should be considered as a parent charity.

In accordance with this, the GA has fulfilled the requirement to publish consolidated accounts for all three charities.



Our Members

Honorary Members

Rev Dr Peter Godfrey

Mr Michael Tomlin

Rev J Eric Jones

Rev Cliff Reed

Rev James McClelland

Mr David Dawson

Mrs Dawn Buckle

In accordance with rule 4 of the Constitution of the General Assembly the following persons, having contributed not less than £30 each to the funds of the Assembly in the financial year 2016-17, are Associate Members of the General Assembly. Names of Honorary Members and Full Members who have subscribed not less than £30 each during the financial year are also mentioned.

Abram S Mr	Calderara B Mrs	Doel DC Rev Dr	Harrison M Mrs
Adkinson EB Miss	Camper A Rev	Dolso C	Hartley LJ Mrs
Allen M Mr	Cann HA Mr	Dyson-Jones E Ms	Hartley R Mr
Allured M Mr	Carter J Rev	Edwards J Ms	Hastie WJ Mr
Anderson EC Mrs	Cartwright CM Rev	Egloff U Dr	Haughton DP Ms
Arthur D Mr	Catts LS Mrs	Elder RC Mr	Hewardine C Ms
Ashworth J Mrs	Chilton GEB Mr	Evans D	Hewardine DC Mrs
Askerod Andersen T Mr	Chilton CD Mrs	Evans S Mrs	Hewardine AJ Mr
Atkinson JM Mrs	Clifford B Mrs	Faiers ME Mrs	Hewis H Mrs
Attfield R Prof	Clifford JC Rev	Fieldhouse AM Miss	Hewis P Rev
Aylmer V Mrs	Cockroft BS Rev	Fieldhouse S Miss	Heyse R Mr
Baker M Mrs	Cockroft L Rev	Foggo K Ms	Higgins M Mr
Barber JM Mr	Coldwell AH Mr	Ford JM Ms	Hill AM Rev
Barry J Mr	Colfox P Sir	Fordham E Mr	Hill JM Mrs
Barwick S Mrs	Cook JMM Mrs	Foulkes RO Mr (Dec'd)	Hill M Mrs
Beck R Mr	Copley DW Mr	Fowler AM Miss	Hills A Rev
Bennett DE Miss	Copley H Mrs	Gabriel S Rev	Hills E Mrs
Birtles E Rev	Corrigall J Rev	Gaines REF Mr	Hird JL Dr
Blair J Mr	Costley D Rev	Gienke M Mr	Hooper J Mr
Boeke J Rev	Costley J Mrs	Gillman DE Mr	Hoskins DG Mr
Boeke R Rev	Cotterill K Mr	Godfrey PB Rev	Howarth J Mrs
Boyce S Mrs	Cotterill S Mrs	Godfrey S Mrs	Howarth M Mr
Boyle B Dr	Crompton DF Mr	Hague G Mrs	Howell GJ Mr
Bradley A Rev	Crompton J Mrs	Hague HR Mr	Hughes M
Bradley J Rev	Crosskey JM Mr	Hague J Mrs	Hugill M Ms
Brooks B Mrs	Crosskey KSM Dr	Hanley KG Mrs	Ince R Mr
Brown AHO Mr	Cupper AM Mr	Hanley P Mr	Ingold J Dr
Brown I Mr	Darlison JW Rev	Hardy SJ Dr	Inkson J Mrs
Buckle D Mrs	Dawson C Mrs	Harris LA Ms	Inkson RHE Mr
Buckle R Mr	Dawson D Mr	Harrison A Mrs	Isaac A Mr
Buckley D Mr	Day JM Mr		Isaac RB Mr
Burbage M Miss	De Silva M Mr		
Burns C Ms	Deas E Mrs		



Janes JA Mrs	Oates ADG Mr	Sampson PW Mr	Wightman R Rev
Janis-Dillon B Rev	O'Connor F Rev	Sanders N Dr	Wilcox A Mrs
Johnson KJ Mr	Ogilvie S Mrs	Scott G Mrs	Wilcox G Mr
Johnson PF Rev	Omar B Mr	Scott JA Mr	Wilkie C Mrs
Jones A Dr	O'Neil SE Mrs	Seal S Mrs	Wilkins H Mr
Jones A Ms	Oulton R Dr	Seccombe JA Mrs	Wilkinson JS Rev
Jones A Mrs		Sellman J Ms	Williams DA Prof
Jones B Mrs	Parsons H Mrs	Shaw T Mr	Williams J Dr
Jones JE Rev	Partington C Mr	Short A Mrs	Williams SR Dr
	Partington J Mrs	Silk JF Mrs	Williams WM Mrs
Kay H Mrs	Paxton MRH Mrs	Silk PA Rev	Wilson AM Mrs
Kenyon B Mrs	Payne B Mrs	Simmons J Mrs	Winder JR Mrs
Kenyon NA Mr	Peace DI Mr	Sinclair A Mrs	Woolley S Rev
Kerr DG Dr	Peart A Rev Dr	Slaven S Ms	Wybrew M Mr
King L Ms	Pebody I Dr	Smith C Mrs	Wykes DL Dr
Kirk M Rev	Pennington AC Mr	Smith CF Mrs	Wykes E Dr
Knopf B Mrs	Percy A Mrs	Smith J Mr	
	Perry MP Miss	Smith KJ Mr	Zucker D Mr
Lake M Mrs	Pilkington C Mr	Smith MF Rev	
Laycock BA Mrs	Price DD Mr	Soulsby P Sir	
Lingwood S Mr	Prior C	Storey D Mr	
Lloyd GD Mr		Sykes J Ms	
Lloyd-Lawrence K Ms	Quest P Ms		
Louw B Mr		Teagle JJ Mr	
	Ratcliffe M Mrs	Teagle SM Mrs	
Magee P Mr	Rathbone B Mrs	Thompson C Ms	
Maguire M Mrs	Raymond G Mrs	Thompson J Miss	
Martin C Ms	Raymond S Dr	Thursfield A Mrs	
Mason CB Mr	Reed CM Rev	Tinker SM Rev	
Mason GH Mr	Reed P Mrs	Tombs S Miss	
Mason JI Mr	Rees C Mrs	Tomlin JR Mrs	
Maud G Mr	Rees AM Mr	Tomlin MJ Mr	
McAuley D Mr	Reynolds HM	Tucker A Mr	
McClelland A Rev	Richards J Mrs		
McClelland J Rev	Richards JCT Mr	Usher A Mrs	
McKinnon S Ms	Richards W Mr	Usher GR Rev	
McLeod J Mr	Roberts DM Rev		
Merrick TJ Mr	Roberts WM Mrs	Van-Manen E Rev	
Merritt H Mrs	Robertson I Mr	Varley RJ Mr	
Merritt R Mr	Robinson J Rev	Voegeli I Mrs	
Midgley C Rev	Robinson M Ms	Voegeli R Mr	
Midgley J Rev	Rogers J Mrs		
Mills C Mr	Rogers L Ms	Wagner E Mr	
Mitchell SCF Ms	Rowland J Ms	Walker F Rev	
Moore C Col	Rowson J Mrs	Warhurst DE Mr	
Moore TJ Mr	Rowson P Mr	Warhurst H Mrs	
Newton J Mr	Ruston AR Mr	West J Mrs	
Nuttall M Mrs	Ruston J Ms	West MG Mr	
	Ruston M Mr	Whitell M Rev	
	Ruston R Mrs	Whitham P Mr	



Congregational Contributions

1 October 2016 to 30 September 2017.

England (and Isle of Man)	Quota Members	£			
Ainsworth	5	175	Derby	3	105
Altrincham	42	1470	Ditchling	20	700
Ansdell (Lytham St Annes)	0	0	Doncaster	23	805
Ashton in Makerfield	41	1435	Douglas (Isle of Man)	3	105
Atherton	41	1435	Dover	4	140
Banbury	13	455	Dudley	0	0
Bath	7	245	Dukinfield	35	1225
Belper	14	490	Eccles	46	1610
Billingshurst	9	315	Evesham	23	805
Birmingham New Meeting	20	700	Framlingham	5	175
Birmingham Hollywood	63	2205	Godalming	37	1295
Blackpool	12	420	Great Hucklow	6	210
Bolton Bank Street	54	1890	Great Yarmouth	9	315
Bolton Chorley New Road	9	315	Hale Barns	18	637
Bolton Egerton	30	1050	Hastings	10	350
Boston	5	175	Hinckley	37	1295
Bradford	15	525	Hindley	9	315
Bridgwater	7	245	Horsham	30	1050
Bridport	10	350	Hull	18	630
Brighton	48	1680	Hyde Fellowship	0	0
Bristol Brunswick	12	420	Hyde Flowery Field	0	0
Bristol Frenchay	16	560	Hyde Gee Cross	7	245
Bury	48	1680	Ipswich	36	1260
Bury St Edmunds	8	280	Kendal	46	1610
Cambridge	32	1119	Kidderminster	27	945
Chatham	8	280	Knutsford	47	1645
Cheltenham and Gloucester	18	630	Leeds	27	945
Chester	5	175	Leicester	33	1155
Chesterfield	10	350	Lewes	1	35
Chorley	16	560	Lincoln	14	490
Cirencester	10	350	Liverpool Gateacre	20	700
Coventry	4	140	Liverpool Sefton Park	24	840
Cradley	10	350	Liverpool Toxteth	5	175
Crewkerne	13	455	London Brixton	16	560
Croydon	39	1365	London Golders Green	47	1645
Cullompton	4	140	London Hampstead *	79	2765
Dean Row	60	2100	London Kensington	57	2000
Denton	10	350	London Lewisham	6	210



London New Unity *	96	3360
London Stratford	5	175
Macclesfield	16	560
Maidstone	6	210
Manchester Chorlton	19	665
Manchester Cross Street	32	1120
Manchester Dob Lane	12	420
Manchester Gorton	3	105
Mansfield	53	1855
New Mill	4	0
Newcastle under Lyme	20	700
Newcastle upon Tyne	16	560
Newport (Isle of Wight)	10	0
Northampton	9	315
Norwich	59	2065
Nottingham	12	420
Oldbury	3	105
Oldham	12	420
Oxford	42	1470
Padiham	41	1435
Plymouth	23	803
Portsmouth	53	1855
Rawtenstall	0	0
Richmond	25	875
Rivington	20	700
Rochdale	24	840
Scarborough	7	245
Sevenoaks	27	945
Sheffield Fulwood	34	1184
Sheffield Norfolk St	52	1820
Sheffield Stannington	25	875
Shelf	10	350
Shrewsbury	23	805
Sidmouth	4	140
Southampton	11	385
Southend	5	175
Southport	5	175
St Albans	5	175
Stalybridge	10	350
Stockton	18	630
Stourbridge	6	210
Styal	25	0
Taunton	11	385
Tenterden	10	350
Torquay	6	210
Trowbridge	8	280

Urmston	20	700
Wakefield	21	735
Warrington	15	525
Warwick	15	525
Watford	8	280
Whitby	7	245
Whitefield (Stand)	32	1120
Wirral	22	770
Wolverhampton	1	35
Woodhall Spa	1	35
York	40	1400
Wales		
Aberdare	25	875
Alltyblaca **	2	0
Bangor	7	245
Cardiff	14	490
Cefn y Coed	18	630
Cellan **	1	0
Ciliau Aeron **	0	0
Cribyn **	3	0
Cwmsychbant **	3	0
Cwrtnewwydd **	4	0
Felinfach **	1	0
Lampeter **	9	0
Llandysul **	3	0
Llanwnnen **	5	0
Nottage	4	140
Pontsian **	3	0
Prengwyn **	4	0
Swansea	8	280
Talgarreg **	6	0
Trebanos	15	525
Wick	4	140
South Wales **	-	1176
Scotland		
Aberdeen	15	525
Dundee	11	385
Edinburgh	65	2,275
Glasgow	38	1,330
Total:		£101,979
Previous year's net quota income received after September 2016		£3,004
Total:	2,963	£104,983



Notes on congregational contributions:

* Includes adjustments for previous years.

** £1,176 was received from churches in South Wales for the 2015/16 return. £1,176 for the 2016/17 year was in process of payment at the year end and has therefore been recorded. The churches in South Wales pay collectively via the District Treasurer. The numbers for each congregation have not been provided this year and we have therefore used last year's figures as an estimate.





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