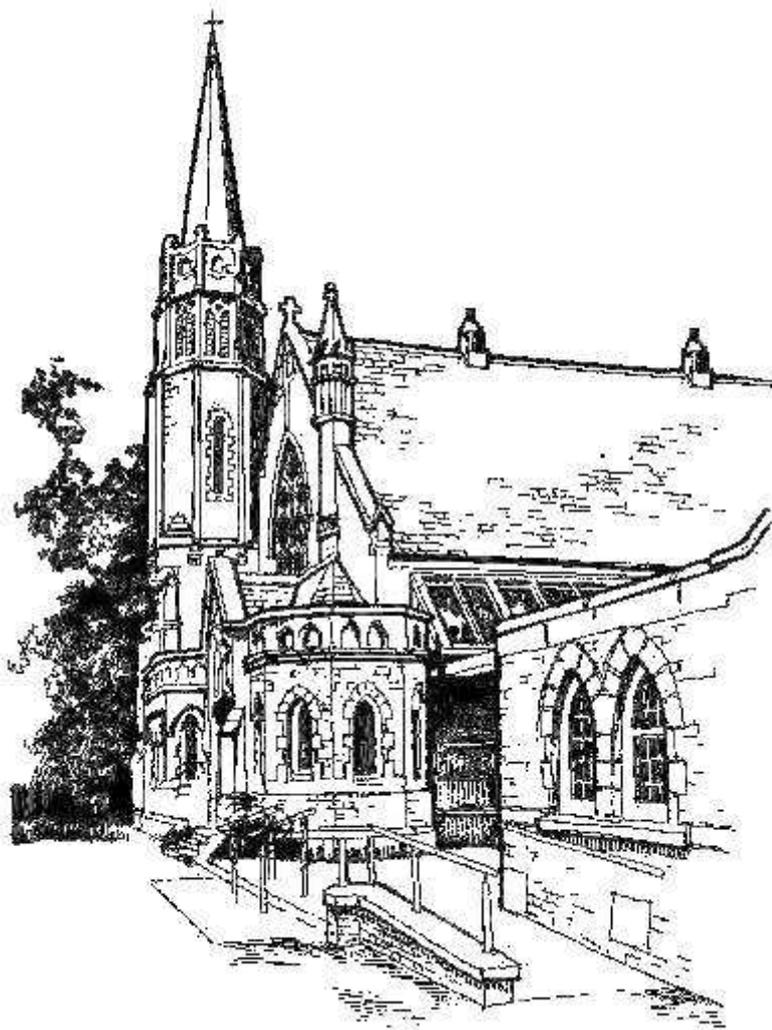


Fulwood Methodist Church

Registered Charity No. 1133929

Watling Street Road, Fulwood, Preston, PR2 8EA

www.fulwoodmethodist.org.uk



Annual Report 2017 – 2018
for the General Church Meeting - 29th April 2018

GENERAL CHURCH MEETING 2018

Group Reports

MINISTERS' ANNUAL REPORT

July 2017 saw the retirement of Malcolm Hickox and he and Christine left the area. We mark the commitment and dedication they showed in their time at Fulwood and the way in which Malcolm led the Church in its mission and discipleship.

We have continued to offer a wide range of worship styles from informal café church to formal communions, Taize, services based on films and our remembrance service. We have celebrated the Christian festivals. In our preparations for Christmas and Easter we have had prayer opportunities available through social media and in more traditional forms.

We are indebted to all those who continue to make our worship services happen not least faithful stewards and musicians.

In June groups were challenged to look at the letter of James in line with the Methodist initiative June with James.

In addition messy church has continued and we have hosted the circuit initiative 'Space'. This is an opportunity to take time or space to engage with soothing different have some time to learn and think or even play. It is a Multiplex Worship & Discipleship-in which one chooses one of four activities:

- New Ways Worship offering contemporary approaches and styles for communal worship.
- Play & Pray creative spirituality for all - in the same vein as Messy Church and Godly Play.
- School of Prayer experiential learning to deepen understanding and practice in prayer.
- Youth space for young people to interact, explore and grow in their faith together.

In addition we have begun to take worship out. On the back of the Church Carol singing in Sherwood Lodge, we were invited in to conversations which have resulted in monthly services at both Sherwood Lodge and Sherwood court.

Welcome Wednesday continues with new people attending and finding friendship and food. The team have branched out into occasional Welcome Saturdays. Christian Aid, Fairtrade and Farmers' Markets have also continued successfully.

Our work with young people has been enhanced by Darren Arnold as our new worker alongside all those who do a huge amount in the service of young peoples and families.

Very many of our groups meet for fellowship and support, you will read about them in other places in this document. The 'Alphabites' bible study continues to reflect on scripture and there are new groups forming to study the bible and look at what we believe as Christians.

Witness of Fulwood Methodist Church that of a church which is caring fellowship with individuals willing to go the extra mile. May I take this opportunity to thank those whose hard work and commitment make all that we do possible.

At the circuit meeting in June the circuit adopted the 'Following Jesus, Loving Communities' report which you will have read about in the Fulwood Methodist. This sets as the background of circuit life some principles or golden threads.

The first is that the churches in this Circuit need to work much more closely together as neighbours and partners across the whole Circuit.

The second is that we believe that in order to see the "new thing" that God wants to do among us, it will be necessary to identify some areas of work to lay down. The recommendation are that there should be a new 'Plan for Worship' and 'Discipleship' which renews our commitment

to relevant, high quality worship and responds to the opportunities for mission in our churches. The Circuit meeting further determined that:

The Circuit should offer further opportunities for individuals and groups to explore their spirituality and discipleship should be developed.

The Circuit should restate its commitment to pastoral ministry in relation to both faithful members and those in need of hospitality, care and prayer in our wider community.

The Circuit should act as an effective 'steward' of God's resources (people, money, skills, buildings) in a small number of bold mission opportunities for a 3-5 year period.

Each church should articulate a Plan for Mission including the vision and resources required as a response to this.

The Circuit should redesign the Circuit Ministry team with a blend of 5 full time ordained and 6 fulltime lay roles to be in place from September 2018. This will mean recruiting 4 additional lay employees.

The Circuit should also strengthen lay leadership within the Circuit Leadership Team to respond to the challenges the church is facing.

These recommendation in connexion with the work we already do offer us great challenges and opportunities of the future.

Membership Statistics

These membership statistics that were returned in November 2017.

Note that in 2016 there were 286 members and in 2017, 286 members.

There were 7 transfers in,

5 deaths

2 transfers out

15 people received into membership

15 other losses which include those ceasing to attend and moving away.

The church continues to see a huge number of people pass through it premises each week and work hard at the calling to serve them.

Jane

YOUTH, CHILDREN'S & FAMILY WORKER

OMG/TGWNN – Started meeting back at church on the 4th Sunday of the month, has SPACE now takes 2nd Sunday – group joins to make food together first then game/challenge followed by eating together, then we split into appropriate age groups to reflect on our subject. Subjects covered so far have included looking deeper into the 3generate manifesto, mental health and being giants! We took 7 youngsters along to the '3generate' event in Southport back in November. From this event we are trying to encourage our youngsters to take leading roles within the church and tell them that they are part of the church now and the future not just in the future! So please encourage them to be a big part here now!

SPACE – circuit event, the Youth section is led by myself – numbers are very small, and I have changed the way of approach to try and meet the needs of the youngsters.

'Who Let The Dads Out' – have had 3 meetings now, group is steadily growing with a total of 4 dads, one of the dads who came last time, runs the Lancashire Dads Network, has gave us a great review and will encourage the groups members to attend future dates. I am now the

Fylde coast representative for the national 'WLTD0', this will involve me meeting with various churches who are looking at running a group, currently talking with Fulwood Free.

Escape & Youth Club – both groups are very strong number, we have a good range of equipment and are looking to add to this, we are very fortunate to have a great voluntary team helping, and 5 young leaders, 4 of whom are doing their Duke of Edinburgh. A typical night for Escape has games playing in the hall, table tennis, pool and board games in the Willow Grove along with a craft table and then dodge ball in the Cedar Room, the Youth Group have the same things out, but are probably not used as much as they generally like to just chill out! We have had sessions which have included mainly food, like making shortbread, mocktails and waffles. We did try karaoke and have also made slime with them.

Other –

Helped with activities etc. in worship. Also, part of the Sunday Club and Toddler Club team.

Helping when required and visiting uniformed organisations.

'3generate' follow up meet up at Bamber Bridge with 5 of our youngsters, meeting with other youngsters and leaders from around the district.

Youth leader's meetings have taken place in November & February, have changed format now so we can concentrate more on issues etc. like safeguarding.

Teddy Bears Picnic happened at the beginning of January which was very well attended, plenty of food, games, there was a parade of the various teddies and a visit from a 100-year-old bear.

Pancake Party took place and was well attended by families and members of the church, a fun night with lots of pancakes, a quiz, games, art and crafts.

Puppet ministry is going well under the supervision and organisation of Jane, we used the puppets in the Palm Sunday service and from what we've heard all are enjoying them.

Holiday Club took place at the end of March for two days, not well attended but those who came got to do a lot of crafts, here the story of Easter through acting, puppets, DVD and book.

Future ideas –

Looking at organising events for the World Cup which will include developing ideas with uniformed organisations, idea of having match played with activities and food themed around countries England play – Tunisia, Panama & Belgium.

Launching new family fun and learning club based on the disciples and biscuits!

Programme sorted for Summer, using the premises when others meet and when empty – i.e. welcome Wednesday for kids and film sessions.

Attending a Scripture Union event in Blackburn at the beginning of May.

Meeting up with Melody Cross – SPLAT to talk about school's work, I have made contact with Kennington School and hopeful of doing some work with them.

Starting the Worship Leaders Course.

Starting group for 4-7-year olds, this has been identified from talking mainly with Toddler Club parents as a need.

I would just like to finish the report by thanking everyone for making me and my family part of this church family and for all the volunteers who help in the various groups with out you all this wouldn't happen and for jane who is very supportive in all I do.

Darren Arnold

CHURCH STEWARDS' REPORT

The Church stewards continue to work hard to maintain the life of the church and support our ministers in the ministry and mission within our community.

Since the Annual Meeting last year Libby Stone has stepped down from her steward duties. We thank for her quiet but faithful support in all our work and responsibilities. Sadly this summer we will also say thank you to Anne Garsed and Liz Ellison who feel it is time for them to sit down from the work of the Stewards. Anne and Liz have been valuable members of the team and we will miss their experience and support. However, this will leave us very short of stewards so if you feel the call to join us do speak to Jane or one of the team for further information. We are fortunate to have a good team of Worship Stewards who help us each Sunday morning to set up for worship.

In July of last year we said goodbye to Malcolm and Christine Hickox and I am pleased to tell you that following their "Seaside Farewell Party" they have settled well into their new home in Northumbria and are thoroughly enjoying the freedom that retirement brings them. They even spent Easter in Rome just a stone's throw to the Vatican!

In August we welcomed Darren, Cheryl, Josh and Jack Arnold to our church family. Darren spent his first few months familiarising himself with the activities of our young people and families. He has now completed his probationary period and is a permanent member of the circuit staff team. Please support him with this valuable work with our children and young people.

September saw the arrival of Jane, Stuart, Grace, Hope and Verity Wild into our midst. Jane has had a very busy first year and the first few months seemed to be beset with funerals, although there were happily a couple of weddings too! We are enjoying the different ideas and creativity which she has used within worship and around the church. Not least the spectacular tomb, created from milk cartons, and transformed into a beautiful garden on Easter morning.

Following the Circuit Strategy and Resources Review several things have already been implemented. Not least of these is the new Circuit event each month called SPACE. If you have wondered what this is please come along and try it. There is something there for everyone to choose from one of four activities: New Ways Worship; Play and Pray; School of Prayer; Youth. They are held at Fulwood as it is felt we have the best premises to facilitate all these activities at the same time.

As we look forward to another year of worship and community activity I want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support of the stewards in our work and encouraging us to carry on!!

Margaret Squire
Senior Church Steward

CHURCH LIFE GROUP

The current focus of the Church Life group is to review its own role and to receive reports from parts of the church related to Church Life which are not supported by other committees. Participants felt that the meeting provides an extra opportunity for information to be exchanged and issues discussed; in addition it celebrates and supports the work of 'smaller' groups. Different views are able to be voiced from people who may not attend the more formal meetings of the church. Some concern was expressed however that without a clear focus the meetings could be repetitions of other meetings and lack challenge. We have therefore been using the different aspects of *Our Calling* – worship, learning and caring, service and evangelism to review the breadth and quality of church activities and to identify areas which need to be developed if our work is to reflect our commitment to this 'calling'. A clear strength of the church is its commitment to serving the community, with a wide range of needs being met in activities

as diverse as *Welcome Wednesday* and the *Theatre Group*. However it was felt that there some aspects eg adult learning which need to developed further. The workshop organised by the Church Life group and led by Rev David Wood in November 2017, exploring the Old Testament was both informative and challenging; it was much valued by the people who attended. This type of session may offer one way forward as we develop this aspect of our life. The group hopes that its thoughts about the life of our church will be reviewed by other groups so that further progress can be made by the whole church.

Approximately ten groups send reports to the Church Life Group and their presence and contributions can offer a different perspective on the life and activities of the church. There have been discussions about the links between groups which use the church building and the rest of the work.

Some time has also been spent reviewing the way we welcome new people into our fellowship. This can include families at baptismal services and those who come to find out more about the church. Toy bags have been 'renovated' and are now more prominently placed and church families are encouraged to look out for newcomers. Preparations are in hand to produce welcome packs and draft copies have been shared for consideration.

The role of the Church Life group is clearly linked to other groups eg Outreach and pastoral response and it is hoped to explore these links and communication strategies during the next year.

Our reflections continue.

Janet Wales

Chair - Church Life Group

OUTREACH REPORT

The Outreach Group continues to work hard to make connections with our local community and work to support Christian outreach nationally and across the globe. Here is a short resume of our activities throughout the past year.

World Church.

We still need to find a volunteer to be our World Church co-ordinator. The main thrust of the work is to encourage and enable our congregation to be aware of the wider church across the world – to be an ambassador for the work of the Methodist Church throughout the world, and identifying places where we can learn more about our brothers and sisters in Christ. If you feel able to take on this important role in the church please speak to Jane or myself for further details.

JMA

The JMA certificates were presented earlier this year but sadly there are fewer youngsters collecting. We hope to discuss some alternative options for raising awareness with the young people whilst raising money for the World Church.

Church Project

For many years the church has supported fundraising for charities locally, nationally and internationally. As well as raising money we have always tried to provide information about each charity.

Our current policy is to donate 10% of the money raised through the Church's 'outreach events', namely: Welcome Wednesdays, Farmers Markets, Table Top & Plant Sales, Craft Fair and Craft & Book Stalls, and the catering associated with these events. The aim is to raise £1000 for a specific project, with additional funding raising events being organised, should the target not be reached from the 10% levy within a year."

We recently completed donations to the 'Erayim Charity Aid Trust' (Kyrgyzstan) and the 'British Kidney Support Group'. Our current project is 'Galloways', the local charity working with blind and partially sighted people.

Eco Church

It was agreed that further efforts to become an 'Eco Church' should be put on hold until our bid to become a 'Child Friendly Church' has been achieved. This does not stop individuals or groups looking at ways in which we can improve our Eco Friendly activities but we will not be actively pursuing the award at present.

Methodist Communications

Lesley Birkett continues to send out all the information on events which take place, locally, within the Lancashire District and further afield. She does this by email so if you do not receive her regular notes then please contact her to be added to her address list, lesley.birkett@yahoo.co.uk.

Local Community

Libby Stone co-ordinates our local community events.

Week day coffee and 'Welcome Wednesday' are both key to our local outreach. Each day fills a different need with Tuesday being a quieter day it suits some of our more vulnerable adults who find the busyness of Wednesday too much. 'Welcome Wednesday' embraces a wide range of needs including the communion service, the friendship over coffee and food which are all greatly appreciated. Numbers staying for lunch have grown and we now regularly provide over 50 lunches. This is not done without a lot of effort and dedication from a small group of people, particularly the kitchen staff. If you know of anyone who would be willing to join the team on a rota basis please ask them to contact me for further info. All offers gratefully received!

We try to provide these facilities throughout the holiday periods and also offer coffee on Friday mornings during the school holidays to support those parents who would normally attend the Toddler Club in school time.

A new venture, 'Welcome Saturday' took place in the New Year and another is coming up soon. Join us with our community friends for a Saturday evening of fun, food and laughter.

Christian Aid

The small group who took part in 'Live Below the Line' campaign during Christian Aid week last year raised £1200. They also raised a lot of awareness, particularly amongst the young people.

The Harvest Concert raised £484.50.

'The Big Shift Campaign' urged people to lobby their banks to "clean up their cash". Some of our church family signed a petition which was delivered to the manager of the local branch of the Royal Bank of Scotland which is our service provider.

Fairtrade

The Fairtrade stall continues to be well supported on the second Sunday morning of each month. The Fairtrade Farmers' Markets take place on the 4th Saturday of every second month from 9.30am till 1pm.

Do remember to support these events as we continue to encourage everyone to think of where our produce and foodstuffs are sourced.

We thank Anne Garsed, for all her hard work promoting the work of both Christian Aid and Fairtrade throughout our church and community.

Theatre Group

The Theatre group continues to thrive. Visits have been made to many exciting productions across the north of England as well as an overnight stay in Stratford on Avon and a holiday in

North Wales taking in a theatre production. The Church Council see this group as an important part of our outreach.

Who Let the Dads Out

This is a new initiative which is being spearheaded by Darren Arnold our Youth, Children and Family Worker. It had a rather slow start for their first gathering in January but is gradually finding new members. Please help Darren by spreading the word to all young dads with small children who will find a welcome space on the third Saturday morning of every month.

Christmas and other Activities

Thanks must go to Libby Stone for co-ordinating the successful Christmas Fair. However, we would like to see a small group willing to organise and co-ordinate the event this year. The Carol Singing around the homes was well received as always and we are grateful to Alan Smith who has agreed to contact the residential homes and co-ordinate this year. John Ferris has agreed to rally the singers. As always the Christingle Service was a full house and the making of the Christingles was enjoyed by the group who helped. Abundant bacon butties helped the morning along! The Christmas card sent through Amnesty International to prisoners abroad was well supported and will be repeated this year. The Festive Lunch was again a great success. We provided a hot lunch with all the trimmings for over 80 people from our Church and community. This is an opportunity for anyone who finds themselves alone over the Christmas period to share a meal and entertainment with others from both inside and outside the church. Thank you to all the helpers who gave up their time during the Christmas holiday.

Recklinghausen

A group from our church will again visit our twinned church in Recklinghausen from the 26th-30th May. It is hoped we can arrange a Skype link with the two churches again on the Sunday morning of their visit.

We are a very active church at Fulwood, trying to connect particularly with our local community. Thank you to all our committed volunteers for all our outreach events. However, none of the events above would happen without a lot of dedication from a small number of people. If you think you could offer to help out serving coffee or chatting with people even once in a while please speak to Libby or myself and we will make sure you are added to the rotas. Likewise if you have any new ideas of ways we can reach out to our local community please let us know.

Margaret Squire

PASTORAL

During the last few months Rev Jane, Darren, Pastoral visitors and many members of the church family have supported the members of this church family and others in different ways to help those in need both in hospital, nursing homes and in their own home, through visits, phone calls, texts, emails, flowers, cards, church magazines prayers, all have been appreciated by the receivers.

We have celebrated joys in the church family through the birth of several babies and sorrows as we keep the families of Audrey Curtis, Harry Duckworth and Roseanna Daley in our thoughts and prayers.

Thank you to all who support the pastoral work of this church. As a Church family we try remember those in need both in this Church community and in the community in which we serve. Please help by keeping us up to date and giving ideas how we can improve and continue our pastoral work.

Sue Penrith

(Pastoral Secretary)

SUNDAY CLUB

The number of children attending Sunday Club continues to be stable with 45 names on the database. As in previous years a large number of children visit the provision either as visitors or as members of baptismal parties. We have therefore worked hard to ensure that these children / young people are welcomed and take away some information about Sunday Club (see action against goal 1 below). Average attendance is considerably less than 45 with numbers varying from 22 to 8. As reported in previous years this puts considerable pressure on leaders to be prepared for every possible eventuality! Seven leaders work with the children on a rota basis when possible and this year we are delighted to welcome 3 young leaders to the team. Their contributions are much valued and they bring a new perspective to the sessions as well as extra energy. Darren Arnold is now also a regular member of the team and he is able to build relationships across the different youth sectors within the church. All adult leaders have updated their safeguarding training and we work hard to ensure good practice in our provision. We have also included 'fire evacuation' drills in some of our sessions.

This 'academic /church' year we have followed 6 themes. We began in September with one of our most popular themes, 'This is me' based on Psalm 139. Some members of the congregation may have noticed Fred the skeleton hanging on the noticeboard which was made as part of the 'I am alive' session. After the Advent / Christmas topic we began to explore the theme of Prayer, particularly focussing on the Lord's Prayer. This enabled the work of Sunday Club to run in parallel to the Lenten theme for the whole church. Our final session of the theme was a Lord's Prayer safari and children /young people brought an adult with them to share the kind of experiences we use for teaching within Sunday Club. This was highly successful with a great atmosphere. Some work was also completed about the Church Year and the season of Lent. After the teaching about Easter, we shall be moving on to looking at the parables that Jesus used to teach and challenge people about the nature of God and His kingdom. Although we plan our work in themes in reality, we deliver a series of 'one offs' as it is unusual to have the same children there for two consecutive Sundays. (See below goal 2) All the themes link to our underpinning values and aims. Effective links have also been made with Messy Church especially the Messy Nativity session.

Progress against 2017 goals and future action

Goal 1. *Prepare information about Sunday Club for the Church website.*

Basic information is on the church website and available on a card for visitors. For children / young people a 'chatterbox' leaflet has been made and has been given out to baptismal families.

Action: create leaflet to complement current publicity material.

Goal 2: *Continue to develop range of activities to meet needs of young people at different ages and stages of development.*

Themes are now planned to allow for repetition of key learning so that most children should cover some of the basic learning. All sessions are prepared on a range of levels to meet the learning and social needs of the children and young people. This is working particularly well with KS1 and KS2

Action: review work with young people (KS3)

Goal 3 *Contribute to the church application for the Child Friendly Church award.*

Application ready for submission.

Goal 4 *Work with parents to maximise learning and experiences.*

Facebook continues to be a highly effective way of communicating with parents weekly and ensures that they are aware of the curriculum we are exploring. A protocol for membership of this secret group has been devised to ensure that we meet safeguarding standards.

'Bring an Adult to Sunday Club' was a successful way of involving parents and family friends in the church.

Action – explore ways of using the Church Facebook site to allow members to know the topics we are covering. (NB No photographs of children at Sunday Club will be posted on this site because of safeguarding constraints.)

Ensure major events are also covered by email

Action: Build on 'Bring an adult' to Sunday Club' and devise ways of involving adults more in the work eg inviting people to visit before the beginning of the service so that they are able to see the range of activities planned.

New Goal: Teaching Curriculum

Although we have made many alterations as we have progressed, our 3 year curriculum has served us for 9 years and we need to evaluate its effectiveness and look at the impact of new developments within the church on our work

Action: Review curriculum with leaders, minister, family worker, stewards and young people.

Sunday Club is a vital part of our **present** church - not the church of tomorrow - and we are privileged to be able to develop relationships with so many children and young people and to share our faith and heritage. Every week the leaders offer a considerable amount of their time planning and delivering session and also supporting young families, ensuring that the baptismal promises of the congregation are fulfilled. Your support, prayers and care are vital for the work.

Janet Wales

Sunday Club Co-ordinator

CHURCH MUSIC

We are fortunate in having a good number of people who are on the rota for providing music on Sundays - Ian Williams, Tony Whitman, Mavis Fletcher, Margery Pitcher, Stephen Anyon, Stephen Grice, John Alcock and all the members of the Band ('316'). Each has their own particular style and contribution to our worship. We must acknowledge that some of our sister churches in the Circuit have greater difficulty in finding suitable musicians for their services, and so several of us also regularly 'play away'. This, combined with the inevitable holidays and other commitments, can occasionally cause me real difficulty in filling our own music rota.

We shall be sad to lose the services of Ian Williams – his last scheduled appearance is 6th May. Ian has decided to concentrate on supporting the church at Midge Hall, and we wish him well. He is also involved with the Circuit Choir, and no doubt he will be 'popping up' with them sometimes. Thank you, Ian, for your contribution to our worship.

A small but loyal group of singers comes early every Sunday to practice the hymns, and worked hard for the Christmas Carol service. We would welcome anybody who wishes to join us. And if there is anybody who would like to use their musical talent to play an instrument during a service, either separately or with the Band, do please have a word with me.

Finally, a big thank you to those who play music at times other than Sundays – Wednesday Communion, funerals and weddings, midweek meetings, Holy Week services. And, of course, the Community Choir, who enjoy their singing and gave their all at Welcome Saturday in January.

Stephen Grice

Music Co-ordinator

PROPERTY GROUP

Richard McClay resigned as our Cleaner/Caretaker in August 2017. Derek Walmsley replaced him and he has completed his probation period to our great satisfaction.

The Property Group has met three times during the past year. Recent work by the Group and its members include:

Building

- **Electrical System Quinquennial inspection** – we are still awaiting the final report.
- **Lightning protection:** The third earth mat which was installed in April 2017 tested satisfactorily.
- **Boundary wall at front:** The top 2 layers of bricks and a coping stone have been re-cemented following vehicle damage.
- **Carpet to Cedar Room:** New floor covering has been fitted.
- **Singing the Faith:** A book trolley has been purchased to 'house' the hymn books.
- **Vacuum cleaner:** A replacement cleaner has been purchased
- **Boards:** Pin boards have been erected in church.
- **Sycamore Room:** A video screen has been erected in the Sycamore room.
- **Church PA system:** Audio Works have made a number of improvements to the system including the replacement of a failed amplifier and the 2 small speakers in the pulpit area.
- **Contract:** The Electricity contract has been fixed for 2 years at a price considerably lower than the old contract.
- **Floors:** The Oak Hall and Willow Grove floors have been given their annual re-sealing.
- **West Chancel Window wall:** The wall has been redecorated.
- **Oak Hall window:** The wall (around the door to the Copper Beech room) has been redecorated
- **Car Parks:** The front and rear car parks have been resurfaced and parking lines painted on the rear car park. Some minor remedial work is planned for late spring.
- **Boilers:** All 4 boilers have been serviced. The one feeding the Sycamore Room needed a replacement pressure regulator.
- **Cedar & Copper Beach:** Extra Dado rails have been fitted in both rooms.

Health, Safety and Security

- **Portable (Electrical) Appliance Testing (PAT):** Testing is due in October 2018.
- **The Fire Alarm and Emergency Lighting systems have been tested.**
- **Kitchen:** All seven window sills have now had plastic coverings fitted.

Ongoing and near-future work

- **Cedar Room Projector:** A computer projector will be purchased and mounted to the ceiling of the Cedar Room projecting onto the screen in front of the cupboards. Controls will be wired back to the electronics in the left hand cupboard. Contract let in April.

The Property Group wish to again put on record our grateful thanks to all volunteers for their splendid work during the year in maintaining and cleaning our premises and looking after our garden.

Mike Ellis

MESSY CHURCH

This year it has been great to welcome Jane, Darren and Verity to our band of planners and a few new faces to our gatherings. In July last year it was sad to say farewell to Malcolm, Christine, the Farrell family and the Tayburns. The two families have located overseas and left quite a hole in our numbers as they came in force, often with reinforcements! Thus our numbers have been down on average with around fifty sitting down to eat each session. There has, however, remained a good atmosphere and sense of belonging, working together and sharing our talents with some new families joining us.

Our overall theme this year has been Let's Love God's World and there has been a great variety of things to do, including making volcanoes, bird feeders and bug hotels, recycling milk containers to make our Easter tomb, making new friends and learning new songs, stories and graces!

Again we had a Messy Nativity on the Sunday before Christmas and the diversity of approaches went down well. Our Good Friday session was very well attended with some of our Toddler Group families coming along.

We realise that Tuesday evening is not ideal for everyone but finding another time to fit in with other Church activities is difficult and we do appreciate the way that the Scouts work with us to make Tuesdays happen. Please encourage families to come along and join us whenever they can. We do value your prayerful support in this venture.

Delma Whitman

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Our average weekly attendance is 20 - 25 .and we have had several new members during the past year. From September 2017 to April ,2018 our programme has included subjects from various speakers covering British Wild Life, R.N.L.I, Musical afternoons, Devotional, Mercy Ship, B.B.C Radio Lancashire, Puppy Walking for Guide Dogs, and many more.

The Summer outings planned for this year are as follows -

May Rufford Old Hall,

June 12th Details to follow

July 10th Women's Fellowship social ,Willow Grove,

August Lunch at The Cottage.

The opening date of the Women's Fellowship weekly Tuesday meetings is September 11th 2018. There is always a warm welcome to any ladies who would like to join us.

Muriel Crossley and Mary Fox

LADIES AFTER 8

This group continues to flourish, with meetings alternate Thursday Evenings at 8.01pm. Our numbers average 18 – 20 and the speakers this year so far have included our own Madelaine Bennett who gave a superb insight into her 'Time in Cambodia' and Dave Topping who entertained us greatly with his talk 'An Interesting Life'. We have listened to Pat Ascroft from MENCAP, Sue Griffiths, North West Blood Bikes, Rev Ken Walton and Sue Hogarth's talk 'From Vancouver to the Rockies' – and more is to come!

As always, we would welcome any newcomers

Sue Whiteford

WOW (Women on Wednesdays)

WOW continue to meet on a monthly basis to share a variety of activities. Our What's App group continues to work well for the busy group of Mum's who are active in WOW. However our activities are also emailed to an extended list and we use the Church notices to publicise events in the hope of attracting new members. The core group is about 12 strong having grown since last year.

This year's programme has included a trip to Longridge Cinema, learning how to sew bunting (which was donated to church), making decoupage Christmas table centrepieces, and learning about Madeline's experiences in Cambodia.

We held our "Christmas meal" in January again which was a very successful Indian meal at *The Running Pump* in Catforth.

Our plans for the rest of this year include a meeting led by Rev Jane Wild who we hope will give us some ideas to develop a more thought provoking content to some of our meetings. The programme also includes a theatre visit, a walk, a gardening themed evening among other things.

The focus of the group continues to be fellowship and it has enabled us to support a number of members through some challenging times recently.

We collect a small donation for subs which is used to thank visiting speakers, pay for resources and purchase cards, flowers etc. for members "big" birthdays etc.

If you know of anyone who would like to join WOW please pass on their details to Wendy Gaskell tel. 07719 843543, wendy.gaskell@gconnect.com and they can be added to our What's App group to keep them informed as to what we are up to!

Wendy Gaskell

AM CLUB

The AM club has successfully finished another season of talks ranging from 'Football Scouting' to 'Tea Bags' and 'Methodist Action' to 'Trains, Boats and Planes' .

Speakers come from various backgrounds and professions and give their time voluntarily.

Number of attendees continues to rise with an average group of 14. Some members are new to the group from outside the church family. The age range of attendees is from 66 to 97 years .

The new season of talks begin in September with the programme being currently compiled .

Graham Johnson

(Secretary)

ALPHABITES

Alphabites continues to meet once a month on a Tuesday evening at 7pm. We always start with a meal, followed by a time of worship and Bible Study. Since September we have looked at some people in the Bible, eg Esther, Elizabeth and Mary, and John the Baptist. At present we are following a series entitled Holy Habits. We have looked at 'service' and 'possessions' each linked to a New Testament passage. These sessions are informal and helpful.

We thank Jane, our minister, for the time spent in preparation and the encouragement she gives.

Dates of future meetings:

May 8th, June 12th, September 4th, October 2nd, November 6th, December 4th

Margaret Holmes

BOOK CLUB

The Book Club has continued to meet regularly, every six weeks or so, and has grown in numbers over the winter. The average attendance is around 11. Our meetings are held in an evening at Church and we try to create a relaxed atmosphere where we can be in the company of each other, of books and the printed word and, of course, of tea, coffee and biscuits.

The aim is to read and discuss a book which we have chosen in advance and sometimes one or more of us brings along other material which we feel will be helpful to our discussion. Not everyone has read the chosen book in its entirety (especially if it is 'Middlemarch') or even at all - but that doesn't always mean those people have nothing to say. Some people prefer also to come along say nothing but follow the discussion and think about it - and then they usually tell us over coffee one Sunday morning what conclusions they have reached.

So what are we trying to do? First and foremost to get to know each other better for then we can better worship, work and play together. Although most of our books are not religious, we usually find some spiritual aspect to enrich our discussion. For the authors who interest us are mainly those who write about the world and life in a multi-layered way. There is usually something more in the book than the story itself and so often this has a spiritual aspect.

Two or three times a year we choose a book which is more overtly religious. Not all will see 'A Christmas Carol' in that way, but it helped us to take many themes associated with the celebration of the Incarnation. And towards Easter we discussed a book by the modern theologian Paula Gooder entitled 'Heaven'. Later in the summer we will read the 'Book of Jonah' from the Old Testament, as other churches are also doing.

There is room for more to join us. We would love to see you there.

Ken Wales

THEATRE VISIT GROUP

The Theatre Visit Group continues to prosper and provides opportunities for those in the church and the community to spend time together on visits to theatres in the region. We currently organise about ten visits each year and these are now including days out to places of interest other than theatres. For example, nearly 90 people visited Liverpool to see 'The Terracotta Army' exhibition earlier this year.

Reports have been provided to the Church Council to ensure that the Church is happy to see this activity as part of the Church's service to the wider community. Of course, theatre going is, for some, expensive and we have no wish as a Church to be divisive. But many older people tell us they have lost the confidence to go to regional theatres under their own steam and that our visits are an effective antidote to loneliness. Once again this year we were able to use our resources to pay for 20 or so pupils from Ribbleton Avenue Methodist Junior School to come with us to Bolton to see 'A Christmas Carol'. See the current magazine for their letter of thanks.

We try to provide a variety of theatre experiences, at a range of costs. Usually Cosgroves provide the transport and we have excellent relationships with them. On some occasions, when we don't need a large coach, we work with Miller's Taxis and sometimes use our own cars.

We are currently planning two residential visits. The first is our regular trip to Stratford but this time we are combining it with a visit to the 'National Arboretum' at Stoke-on-Trent on the return leg. Then in October we are working on a five day, four night visit to Buxton, where we will enjoy time together in visits, shopping, sight-seeing and possibly an optional theatre visit.

None of this could happen without the help of Sharon Beck who is our administrator and much more, a very real help to many of our contacts. Currently we have about 350 people who are connected with the group, many from other churches. but for some this is outreach work for

people who are not as confident as they once were. Thank you, Sharon, for keeping us on our toes.

Ken Wales

KNITTING GROUP

The knitting group continues to thrive with very regular attendance. It is a supportive as well as a teaching time, but there are always plenty of laughs.

The group helped towards the knitted poppies, the little punk men for Easter and watch the notices for what we are planning for Christmas!

We have donated £250 to the Galloway Foundation, who are looking to buy a new mini bus, and also £500 to general church funds.

This group started as a 6 week fundraising project and we have outgrown one room and had to move into Copper Beech which can sometimes be a squash, it is a good outreach project.

We also try to knit for any expectant mums, if you know of any that we might miss, please let Jan Astley, Veronica Frost, Barbara Hothersall or Jude Gallagher know.

Happy knitting, please feel free to join us even if it is just for one project!

Jan Astley

COMMUNITY CHOIR

It is 2½ years since our formation and we currently have a regular attendance of between 15 and 20 participants. On the plus side nearly half of these are people who are not members at Fulwood but are happy to come into Church premises. The down side is that we have not got as many of our congregation as we had hoped and only 3 men in our ranks.

In all we have covered over 60 songs from all genres ranging from Popular to Traditional to Musicals, Abba to Carpenters to Michael Ball and beyond

The main aim of our choir is to enjoy singing and have fun, with ability secondary. We have this year been involved in 2 social evenings as well as the Christmas Fair, the Carol Service and Palm Sunday Worship. We have also contributed about £200 to church with a £1/week subscription.

Finally a massive thanks are due to Teresa, our resident pianist, without whose guidance and encouragement we would not have been able to continue.

We welcome any interest from potential new members to our regular Wednesday evening get together at 7pm.

David Topping

OMG - OUR METHODIST GROUP

We have had another good year with a great group of youngsters aged 10-14. We are pleased to have been joined by Darren as our Children, Youth and Family leader, who has freshened up our programme of activities. We are also grateful to Jane for her support to the leadership of the group.

Whilst OMG still enjoy activities which include arts and crafts, cooking and hide and seek in church, Darren has ensured that we offer a clearer Christian theme to each session. We have established a link to the youth group at Bamber Bridge Methodist Church during the last year which has been encouraging.

One of our highlights for most of the group was to join over 1000 young people at the '3Generate' event at Pontins in Southport for a great weekend of music, discussions, crafts, swimming and time together. It was cold in those chalets though!

We are concerned that numbers in the group are small and finding ways to increase the size of the group remain. Please remember this challenge in your prayers for OMG.

Our thanks for the continued commitment of our long term leaders John and Gillian Ferris, Jez Harrison and Andrew and Wendy Bennett.

Wendy Bennett

TODDLERS' CLUB

We currently have 118 children on the register with an average of 45 attending each week. Lots of new babies have recently swollen the number of our Friday morning family. Through Toddlers' Club. 86 families have some contact with the Church.

Financially we are comfortably off and are able to buy and replace new toys as and when we need them. Most weeks the children also have supervised play in which they use playdough or do some other craft. Each of our sessions ends with a sing-a-long which is usually lead by our newest helper, Lisa.

Toast and teacakes are still an important feature of Toddlers' Club.

We currently have eight regular helpers and a few we can call on when we are short handed, but we are always grateful for more help.

Last year we missed a very important anniversary – we forgot that Toddlers' was 50 years old! We plan to finish for the summer with a celebration 51st Birthday Cake.

Janet Porter

BEAVERS

At Beaver Scouts we like to give our boys and girls the opportunity to have lots of fun through a variety of activities and challenges. We are an active Colony and our programme over the last twelve months has seen us learning about keeping healthy, cycling, swimming, having local adventures - climbing, den building, hikes – visiting local places of interest such as other places of worship, the museum at Fulwood Barracks. Our Monday evening activities are also complemented by our weekend activities – taking part in District and County activities – fun days, bake-off competitions, quizzes and camps. The Beaver Scouts do enjoy their nights away and we have taken part in the Group family camp at Great Tower in the Lake District and more recently we visited Jodrell Bank as part of our space themed sleepover.

Everything we do counts towards activity badges or challenge awards which in turn contribute to the Chief Scout Bronze Award, the prestigious top award within the Beaver Scout section. Not all Beaver Scouts achieve the award, it must be worked for and earned through personal achievement, so I am really pleased that the majority of our Beaver Scouts do achieve it, even those who are not with us for the full two years and put additional effort in during their own time. Very well done to them all, it's very well deserved for all the effort they put in.

A number of our activities just would not happen without the fabulous support the parents of our young people also give us. So, I'd like to thank all of the parents for their contribution, large or small, from simply bringing Beaver Scout to activities, sharing their own interests, skills and hobbies, to sparing time to accompany us on our various adventures; it is sincerely appreciated.

I cannot take the credit for all that we do. I am extremely fortunate in that I have a fantastic team working with me to provide the best possible initial Scouting experience to the youngest members of our movement. Each of us takes great pleasure in seeing our Beaver Scouts

develop and progress whilst they are with us, watching them discover things about themselves, about others and the world around them.

We are a flexible team and the combination of our various skills, interests and experience are the key to being able to provide such a wide ranging programme for our members to enjoy. If anyone else is interested in helping out, (be it once in a while, once a month or every week) with our fabulous young people, please do just let me know, any offer of help is always welcome!

This is but a brief insight into our Colony antics – feel free to get in touch if you would like to know more!

Fiona Jackson

Beaver Scout Leader

CUBS

Cubs have had a fantastic last 12mths, with 18 cubs achieving their Chief Scout Silver Awards. Not only have the cubs be recognised for their hard work, but also our leaders; Janet Thorpe received her 20yr long service award and Lee Girvan received his 5 yrs. service award also. A huge thank you to all of our leaders who give up their time and weekends to help provide a fun packed programme.

The Pack currently has 24 children and is running at full capacity, which shows what a great team 4th Fulwood Scout Group have as, all sections are full.

Last July saw our family camp which as usual is ever-growing and popular with all, Great Tower at Windermere allowed us to run sailing and other water sports as part of our water themed camp.

As always, we try to go to new places and try different activities, Clip n climb, Alston Hall observatory, Energi trampolining park are always popular, but anything that involves fun and mud are always popular.

Looking forward to the rest of the year...

Camps, Group Nights, Fulwood Barracks, Den Building and more

Karen Smalley

Cub scout leader (Akela)

SCOUTS

Weekly, we have had a busy programme getting out as much as possible. These evenings have included; night hikes, wide games, fire lighting and laser tag. Also, during evenings at the church, we have had many evening of fun including, ready steady cook, team building nights, talks from guest speakers and much more

We have also had many camps, including our yearly indoor camp to Yealand Conyers and winter camp at Great Tower. We also have many camps coming up as the weather get better, including a team of Scouts taking part in the Bowlander hiking competition in April. Country rally is after that in May, and we also have 13 Scouts off to Red Rose, an international camp in the summer.

This year we have had many great achievements of 7 Scouts gaining their Chief Scout Gold award, which is the highest award that can be obtained in Scouts. So, congratulations to all of them, and we hope to see some more Scouts achieving this in the future.

Christopher Thomas

Scout Leader

RAINBOWS

I am pleased to report that our unit is thriving as we have 15 Rainbows at present and a healthy waiting list until 2019. We continue to work closely with the Brownie leaders and the majority of our girls move up to the Brownie pack when they turn seven.

We have been very pleased to welcome Joanne Seddon, a member of the congregation, to our leadership team. We now have two warranted leaders and a leader in training. This may sound a lot for the number of girls attending but we are not all available for every meeting owing to work and other commitments and during the year we have welcomed a girl who benefits from additional support to take part in activities. For these reasons we have been grateful for Darren Arnold's help at a number of meetings and we cannot thank him enough for his support.

We aim to offer a varied programme of activities which reflect the interests of our girls whilst promoting the aims of GirlGuiding UK. During this year we have celebrated special occasions such as Divali and St David's day, been out for walks and had a beetle drive.

Can I suggest that anyone who knows of a girl aged between three and five years who might be interested in joining us in the future asks her parents to contact me sooner rather than later to avoid disappointment.

Jayne Myatt
(Rainbow Leader)

FINANCE REPORT

Total balances

Our church funds and the movements since last year are summarised below.

	General Funds	Internal Funds	Total - 2016/17	Totals 2015/16
Funds brought forward 1/9/2016	86,925	31,988	118,913	108,970
Movement in funds	-17,434	7,448	-9,985	9,943
Funds carried forward 31/8/2017	69,491	39,436	108,927	118,913

Our funds are invested as follows:

	2016/7	2015/16
Cash in hand	-30	50
Royal Bank of Scotland	-43,471	38,573
Central Finance Board	-65,151	80,014
Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes	-276	276
Total cash held at year end	-108,927	118,913

General funds

We ended the financial year to 31 August 2017 with general funds in the bank totalling £69,491. This is a reduction in funds of £17,434 since 31 August 2016, as our expenditure exceeded income and we needed to transfer funds to the Youth Club to correct an historic error.

	2016/7	2015/16
General funds brought forward	86,925	84,209
Receipts		
Offerings and Tax recovered	95,151	100,027
Bank and CFB interest and Investment income	264	330
Lettings	9,770	10,410
Donation	3,006	14,088
Outreach	27,539	27,406
Other income	1,336	1,590
	137,067	153,851
Payments		
Circuit Assessment or Share	(82,163)	(81,996)
Donations	(5,148)	(6,070)
Repairs and Maintenance	(20,099)	(4,380)
Utilities (Insurances, water charges, heating & lighting)	(17,437)	(17,541)
Staff costs (cleaning, admin and youth work)	(11,903)	(12,883)
Resources for Worship	(2,234)	(3,527)
Sunday Club	(428)	(499)
Catering and Outreach	(8,063)	(7,203)
Minibus	(2,355)	(2,026)
Hygiene and vermin services	(2,081)	(2,088)
Administration costs	(3,898)	(3,920)
Miscellaneous	(906)	(2,380)
	-156,714	144,512
Transfers	2,213	(6,623)
Total funds at end of year	69,491	86,925

Key messages on the general fund position:

- Income from offerings continues to fall – both in terms of cash collected in envelopes and standing orders. We have agreed wording for the notices asking people to review their level of giving.
- Donations primarily include gifts to the church from individuals and are often made at weddings, funerals and christenings. (For donations from our internal groups – see the transfers section below). In 2015/16 donations were unusually high due to the receipt of a legacy of £10,000.
- Outreach activity continues to make a significant contribution to the financial health of the church – providing a net income of £19,476 (2015/16 £19,903) - thanks to the hard work of our many volunteers. The funds raised come from a mix of regular activities and one-off events. Each individual will know the contribution they have made – not just in terms of the funds raised but the wider community benefits delivered – do not propose to name them all! However, the main activities which have contributed to this income are listed below:
 - Welcome Wednesday
 - New to You
 - Plant sales
 - Farmers Markets
 - Craft fair
 - Christmas fair
 - Sale of books
 - Sale of crafts
 - Sales of coffee on Tuesday, Friday and Sunday
- Donation from the general fund are those large grants we make each year to charities such as the World Mission Fund, Methodist Homes, Methodist Women in Britain, Methodists in Britain and the Methodist fund for Property. These donations are approved annually by the Church council. Clearly, we also make donations from our Church Project Fund and our benevolent fund, as well as from our internal groups (see internal funds below). We also raise money on behalf of other groups (see external funds below).
- Repairs and maintenance costs are a key contributor to the fall in our general reserves this year. We have now been in the new building a few years and a number of major jobs were required in 2016/17. The programme was determined by the property group. As well as our regular expenditure on things like the boiler service, we incurred costs in relation to:
 - Improving the car park
 - Electrical works
 - External property repairs
 - Roof repairs
 - Lightening protection
 - Painting
- Transfers represent the movement of fund from internal groups to the general fund, and vice versa. The total movement increased general funds by £2,213. The individual movements are summarised below:

To general funds from internal groups	To internal groups from general funds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theatre group contribution re admin costs - £3,474 • Donation to church running costs from various groups - £2,100 • Contribution for use of minibus - £29 • Contribution to Easter Eggs - £108 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer of 10% of net income from outreach into Church Project Fund - £1,948 • Transfer to Youth Club to correct historic error - £1,550

Internal funds

Internal funds are those funds which are:

- Managed by individual groups in the church – the groups raise the income and they decide how the money is spent; OR

- Designated for a specific purpose – these are funds which are managed by Church Council and used for specific purposes

	B/Fwd	Income	Donations	Other payments	TRFR from Gen Fund	TRFR to Gen Fund	TRFRS between funds	C/Fwd
Benevolence fund	744	1,875	-611	0	0	-108	0	1,900
Theatre	1,731	28,170	0	-20,906	0	-3,492	0	5,503
Kitchen fund	137	8	0	0	0	0	0	145
OMG	32	278	0	-287	0	0	0	23
Ladies after 8	99	786	-240	-325	0	-150	0	170
WOW	71	0	0	0	0	0	0	71
Womens fellowship	130	1,375	-75	-997	0	-311	0	122
Youth club	3,123	980	0	0	1,550	-1,150	0	4,503
Flower Fund	-72	0	0	-100	0	0	0	-172
Toddlers	2,776	1,276	0	0	0	0	0	4,052
AM club	200	136	-100	0	0	-100	0	136
Alphabites	0	300	-150	0	0	-150	0	0
Messy church	198	87	0	0	0	0	0	285
Knitting club	942	957	-250	-48	0	-250	0	1,351
Building imp't fund (prev Dev't Fund)	8,207	120	0	0	0	0	0	8,327
Church project fund	2,175	0	-2,596	0	1,948	0	0	1,526
District funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Special Project fund	10,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	10,000
Minibus	1,496	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,496
	31,988	36,347	-4,022	-22,663	3,497	-5,711	0	39,436

Key messages on internal funds:

- Benevolent Fund – income is raised in our communion services. Funds are spent on the charitable donations at the discretion of the Minister. Donations in 2016/17 were made to Ronald McDonald, Action for Children, Methodist Action North West, Methodist Ministers Housing Association, Christian Aid and Marie Curie.
- The Theatre Group continues to run a highly popular service – and whilst we now have professional administrative support, this success is thanks to the volunteers who lead this activity. The income figure demonstrates the volume of tickets sold each year. The reported surplus continues to be strong, especially considering the level of contribution made to the general funds towards admin costs and the fact that there is expenditure on tickets which are yet to be sold.
- Both the Youth Club and the Toddlers funds remain high due to the significant number of children paying subs, and very low running costs. The transfer from general funds to Youth Club is the correction of the historic error noted above. The transfer from the Youth Club is a contribution towards the running costs of the church, including the repainting of the hall.
- The flower fund is now in deficit as more money has been paid out for flowers than contributions made.
- The balance on the Building Improvement Fund is in place to cover future building developments as it represents the surplus on the fund we raised for the new building. We cannot therefore use it for repairs and maintenance. We are speaking to the Property Group to determine whether there are any planned works which we can use the fund to pay for, given the pressures on the general fund.
- The Church Project Fund is where we record the Outreach levy payments. We have contributed nearly £2000 to the fund in the year. Grants were made in the year to Ronald McDonald and Preston Panthers.
- We established the Special Project Fund last year when we received the £10,000 legacy. We have not yet decided what we want to use the fund for, but we wanted to hold it outside of general funds.
- We set up the minibus fund last year. We are awaiting the outcome of the minibus group to determine whether we need to set aside regular sums.

External funds

External fund are monies we collect on behalf of other bodies. This is usually in the form of a retiring collection or a specific fundraising event. When we raise the money, we bank it in our account and then hold it separately until we pay it over to the relative charity. Balances arise only as a result of timing differences.

The table below shows all the money collected for external organisations, and the consequent payments to those organisations.

	Balance brought forward	Cash collected	Cash paid	Total held
Action for children	0	782	-782	0
MWiB	0	82	-100	-18
All We Can (formerly MRDF)	0	421	-421	0
East Africa Crisis	0	531	-531	0
Fund for World Mission	0	182	-182	0
Haiti	0	415	-415	0
Staff collections	0	692	-692	0
JMA	0	61	-20	41
London fire (Grenfell)	0	247	-247	0
MANW	0	687	-587	100
Mare Curie	0	24	-24	0
Poppy Appeal	0	60	-60	0
Ronald McDonald	280	1,545	-1,825	0
Sierra Leone	0	204	0	204
Womens World day of Prayer	0	188	-188	0
	280	6,120	-6,073	327

All outstanding balances were paid across to the relevant organisation in the new financial year. Our audit is now complete and no issues arose.

Amanda Latham