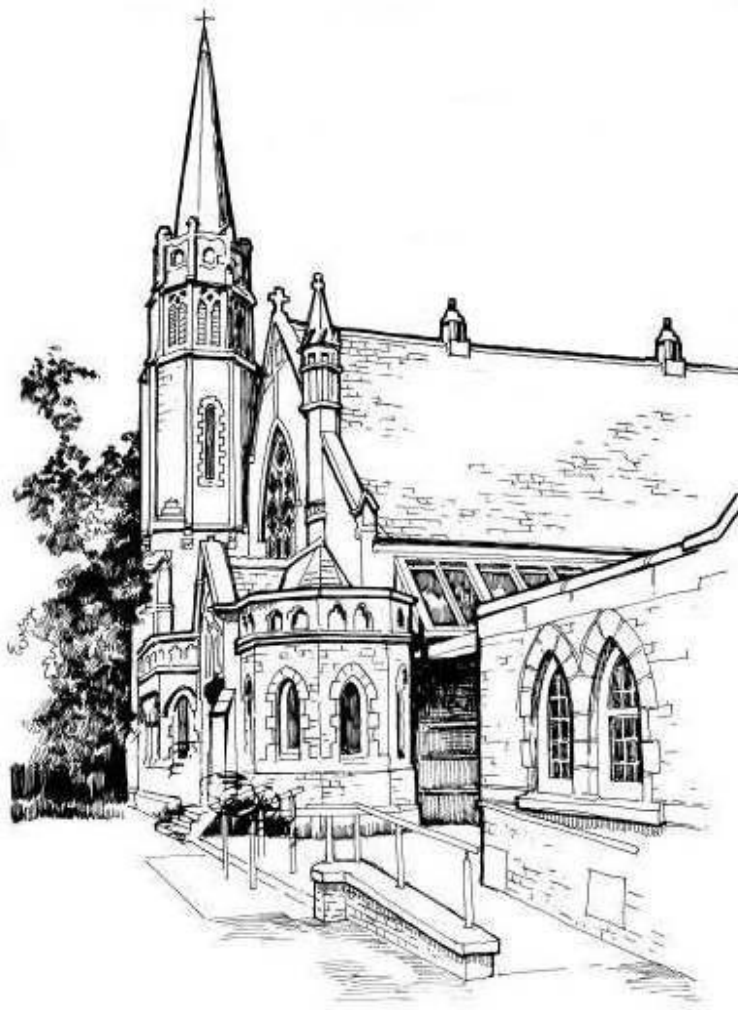


Fulwood Methodist Church

Registered Charity No. 1133929

Watling Street Road, Fulwood, Preston, PR2 8EA

www.fulwoodmethodist.org.uk



Annual Report 2014 – 2015

for the General Church Meeting - 14th June 2015

Church Council Membership

Superintendent	Revd Mark Slaney
Ministers	Revd Malcolm Hickox Deacon Yasha Mashoko
Church Stewards	Mr Stephen Grice Mrs Amanda Latham Mrs Libby Stone Mrs Anne Garsed Mrs Margaret Squire
Church Treasurer	Mr Ted Lowes
Secretary to Church Council	Mrs Linda Butterworth
Secretary to Pastoral Committee	Mrs Sue Penrith
15 Elected Reps from GCM	Mr Ray Armstrong Mrs Janice Astley Mrs Hilary Banks Mr Andrew Bennett Miss Ali Birkett Miss Ann Done Mr John Ferris Mrs Veronica Frost Miss Beryl Hoyle Mrs Pam Johnson Mr Colin Maudsley Mr Geoff Oldham Miss Charlotte Penrith Mr Ken Wales Mrs Delma Whitman
Co-ordinators of Church Groups	
Church Life	Mrs Wendy Bennett
Church Outreach	Mrs Margaret Squire
Finance	
Property	Mr Mike Ellis
Policy	Mr Stephen Grice
Co-opted members	Mrs Janet Wales (Junior Church) Mrs Lesley Birkett (Safeguarding) <i>until Nov 2014</i> Mrs Barbara Hothersall (Fundraising)
Circuit Steward	Mr John Spencer

The Ministers' Reflections

From Revd. Malcolm Hickox & Deacon Yasha Mashoko

Over the last year various events have caused changes to take place in the general life of Fulwood Methodist Church. These changes have challenged people to adapt and encouraged them to work collaboratively with each other and with members of the wider Circuit. Extended periods away from ministerial duties for both of us serve as an example. We have benefited from these extended periods, Yasha on maternity leave for most of last year and Malcolm on a three months sabbatical at the beginning of this year. We are grateful to the church not just for making these possible, but also for the support we received over those periods. This report also gives us the opportunity to express our thanks to those who covered our areas of responsibility in our absence – other members of the Circuit Ministry Team, the Church Stewards and a variety of folk in the Church. Yasha's maternity leave resulted in a new addition to her family, Kuda, who celebrated his first birthday in March this year. Malcolm and Christine spent the first six weeks of his sabbatical in New Zealand visiting family members they had not seen for years, or in several cases, had never met. It also provided an opportunity for some travel and meetings with Ministers of the New Zealand Methodist Church. Free from diary commitments, he was able to spend some more time back in this country with other family members and explore two aspects of particular interest for our Church – the Christian education and nurture of children and 'open' youth work with young people from the local community.

Once again this annual report gives a 'snap shot' of the last year at Fulwood Methodist Church and highlights the diversity and quantity of activities which take place each week on the Church premises or elsewhere in the name of the Church. Many of these activities have 'taken off' in recent years due to the refurbishment of the premises and one of last year's great achievements was the closure of the Church's Development Fund as the last outstanding debt was repaid, a year ahead of schedule. In thanking those who made this possible our small group of fund raisers must come top of the list. Their tireless efforts over such a long period demonstrated a wonderful commitment and has been an inspiration. It is a tribute to their work that many of the activities they initiated as fund raising events have now become part of the Church's outreach programme, greatly valued by many outside the church. These will continue, but under the oversight of the Church Outreach Group. At the same time there has been a desire to continue with some of the social activities and with this in mind we have been trying to recruit a small group to co-ordinate future events. The other individuals who should be acknowledged are those who made interest free loans, saving the Church significant interest payments and others who increased their giving specifically for the Development Fund. To all of them we offer our gratitude.

The last year has seen significant growth in a whole variety of groups and activities. All our adult fellowship groups have seen new members join from outside the church. Several of our uniformed groups have had to restrict the intake of new young people as they have reached their maximum numbers and the Friday evening youth clubs have seen extraordinary growth in numbers. Part of the success of the youth clubs has been due to a new teamwork approach from our volunteers and the extra leadership made possible due to a partnership with Preston Youth for Christ and the services of one of their youth workers. Yasha has also been spending time going round the Circuit observing the work done with families in neighbouring Methodist Churches, in order to develop Fulwood's ministry to families. Your prayers and support will be appreciated as we seek to further the work of the various church groups. At the same time we have seen an increase in the number of local people making use of the activities and refreshments in the Willow Grove

on weekday mornings. All of this activity is an affirmation of the vision of those who planned the development scheme and had the courage to enable the Church to step out in faith with a £1M refurbishment project.

The challenge of the growth in Church activity is to make sure that we have sufficient volunteers to sustain the work and there are signs that several of our teams are becoming overstretched. Our administrative support also needs to be fit for its task and in the last eighteen months we have been attempting to refocus the work in new teams. The Finance and Property Groups are now well established and a newly formed Publicity Group is helping to co-ordinate a range of activities. With the success of the Theatre Visits Group additional administrative support is now needed for their activities, but at the same time income has increased from the group. As a result the Church Council has agreed to create a part-time Church Administrator post (nine hours per week) to support the Theatre Visits Group and undertake general administrative duties for the Church. This will be funded by a contribution from the Theatre Visits Group and from General Church Funds. We hope to have someone in post by the beginning of July. Whilst this will provide assistance in one area, we are still concerned about the difficulty we have in finding members to serve as Church Stewards and in a number of other vital roles in the Church. Each January at our Annual Covenant Service we are encouraged to reflect on how God might be calling us to offer our time and talents in service within the church and the community. We would ask all who read this report to reflect prayerfully on what they might be able to offer as part of their discipleship.

Whilst this report has its focus in the life of Fulwood Methodist Church, we are conscious that members are involved in a host of charitable activities in the local community. Several make a very significant contribution to the Churches Together help desk at the hospital, the drop-in at Central Methodist Church and the work of Methodist Action North West, to name just three projects. This report provides the opportunity to acknowledge their service and also for us to thank everyone who contributes in any way to the life and witness of our Church. A special word of appreciation must go to our Church Stewards and to Sue Penrith, our Pastoral Secretary, who with us make up the Church Leadership Team. Without their commitment and their personal support for us, we would not have been able to undertake all that has been expected of us in our ministry.

Malcolm & Yasha

General Overview from the Church Stewards

The small but dedicated group of stewards has been working hard over the past year to sustain the life of the Church and support our ministers in their work. We must thank the team of Worship Stewards who assist the Church Stewards on Sunday mornings to support worship.

Last year Delma Whitman stood down as lead steward and we thank her for all her excellent hard work in co-ordinating the team. We would like also to thank the Church Family in their support of the Stewards' Team during the three months of Malcolm's Sabbatical earlier this year. We were well supported by the Circuit Leadership Team and I know that both the Circuit ministers and our own congregation enjoyed the diversity of preaching which we received. We thank the ministers especially for leading the Wednesday Morning Communion Service, which also gave them a huge insight into our community work each week. Thankfully no major problems arose during this period!

We welcomed Malcolm and Christine back over the Easter weekend and they have come back refreshed and encouraged in their ministry among us.

Following her maternity leave we welcomed back our Deacon, Yasha, in December. She is now back to full health, (although kept on her toes by Vimbi and Kuda!) and has enjoyed being much more involved and active within the life of the church. Yasha is working particularly with the children, youth and young families of the church and is making contact with schools in the area too. She is still in her Probationary years before ordination so she has to study alongside her work within the church.

The role of Steward is a very rewarding one and we work as a team to support each other. We provide support for the ministers in their role and assist with the leadership of the church through the Church Council. We do need to appoint new Stewards so please consider prayerfully if you could offer yourself to this role. If we were a few more in number then the load would be more evenly shared. If you would like to know more of what we do please ask us – we don't bite!

Margaret Squire
On behalf of the Stewards Team

Church Life

Church Life Group

The Church Life Group has again had a full and worthwhile year. All the existing church groups seem to be doing well and there is a variety of activities available for all age groups. The youth leader group are continuing to meet to discuss their successes and issues surrounding youth work.

The **Child Friendly Church Award** is still on hold until we receive further guidance from the District. It is then hoped Yasha will carry this forward.

Development of Spirituality and Discipleship - This is still in its early stages. We have regular café style worship monthly on Sunday evenings and the Alphabites Group is now well established in the life of Fulwood. Over the year a book club has also started. It is hoped that the co-ordination of this important area will develop over the next few months.

Formation of Social Committee/Group - This exciting role is still waiting for someone to come forward. We still continue to have an active social life within the church.

Harvest – The Harvest weekend was used as a time for us to celebrate clearing the debt on our Development fund 'Building Together'. It has been a long and often challenging time, but now as a church and a community we can celebrate and reap the benefits of God's vision.

Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Appeal - This appeal again was very well supported, we donated over 200 boxes. Many thanks to all of you who supported this worthy cause.

Toy/Gift Service – This service was again very well supported but we still only had two local charities, Parkinson House and Surestart. Some toys were sent to a Lancaster Methodist church where the gifts were used for outreach in a deprived area. Again any ideas of local charities would be gratefully received. Thank you to everyone who co-ordinates and supports the invaluable work within our church - without you the church we know would not exist!

Prayer Table - This is now in situ in church. Please encourage people to use this as a focus for prayer. You can also use the prayer book/tree for prayer requests but please

read the guidance before adding names.

The position of Church Life Co-ordinator will become vacant at the end of May as I step down. I encourage you to pray about this important role. Thank you to everyone who has contributed and supported the meetings during the year.

Wendy Bennett
Church Life Co-ordinator

Worship

We have enjoyed a variety of styles of worship over the past year. These have included all-age parade services, café-style evenings, Taizé liturgy, Compline, informal evenings, songs of praise, seaside and garden services, in addition to our 'normal' services. We have been well served by Yasha, the Circuit ministers and local preachers, especially during Malcolm's sabbatical. We are extremely fortunate in having three organists, two keyboard players, and the 316 Band to provide a range of music, and despite declining numbers the choir continues to lead the singing, including an occasional anthem. The band and choir joined forces for Remembrance Day and the Carol Service, which was much appreciated.

Our communion services alternate between receiving at the rail and 'take-round' distribution. Malcolm has used a great number of different liturgies from all over the world. The evening communions are held at the URC, and are quieter and more intimate. The Wednesday communion has been led mostly by Malcolm but also by the Circuit ministers, and is a very valuable part of our Church's life of worship and prayer.

My thanks to the Worship Stewards, who support the Church Stewards in the smooth preparation for the services; the Communion Stewards; the musicians; the team of sound operators; all the people willing to read and participate in dramatic presentations; the welcomers; and the coffee servers. You are all an integral part of our worship team. But please – more volunteers are always needed!

Stephen Grice (Steward)

Sunday Club

The Sunday Club has had to meet many challenges over the last few years and these have necessitated a complete review of our purpose and the way we support children on Sundays to learn about Christianity and faith. There are currently about 35 children and young people on the database although the weekly attendance averages considerably less than that. Patterns of attendance have changed completely so that very few children or families attend every week. This in turn affects the content of the Sunday sessions as there has to be more repetition of key learning whilst ensuring variety, activity and fun. Each week Sunday Club is organised into two groups – under and over five - although different levels of activities are prepared for each session relevant to the different developmental stages. The advantage of this format is that children and young people are able to choose from a range of different activities; this allows the older ones to do more practical things if they wish and the younger ones can choose to participate in discussion topics.

Over the last year we have talked about several themes – 'Prayer', 'the Church Year', 'Easter', 'Old Testament Figures / Jesse Tree' and 'This is me'; the latter is one of the more popular themes as it can be studied at so many different levels and is relevant to all. We were also able to include some singing in this topic with the help of Christine Hickox. A further development this year has been the provision of activities for young children during Parade / Family services as it was felt that some of the under 5s found staying in the whole service too difficult. This has been very popular with both children and parents.

Help would be appreciated with these activities. The growth area in Sunday Club is with the under 5s and numbers are quite buoyant compared to a few years ago.

This year we intend to:

- Re-write our mission statement and prepare information about Sunday Club for the church website.
- Continue to develop the way we work with a mixed age group, particularly devising challenging questions for the over 11s to help them think more deeply about topics whilst giving them opportunities to participate in craft activities.
- Contribute to the church application for the Child Friendly Church award.
- Work with parents to maximise learning and experiences.

The demands of such flexible provision are challenging and time consuming. We are firmly committed to providing the best possible learning for our young people and are lucky to have such a team of dedicated leaders who spend considerable amounts of time every week to realise this ambition. We continue to need the support and prayers of the whole church family to ensure this is truly a child friendly church.

Janet Wales

Pastoral Care

During Revd Malcolm's sabbatical, we as a Church family have been supported by Deacon Yasha and all members of the Circuit Staff. They have taken Sunday worship and the Wednesday Communion Services and also taken meetings and supported the Stewards of the Church. This support has been appreciated.

Our Church family has diverse pastoral needs and expectations. These we try to meet in numerous ways and by many people both Ministerial, Pastoral carers and the Church family. We can only meet the needs we are told about and are therefore very grateful for all the people who keep us informed and keep their eye on people who may be in need. Confidentiality is important and there are times when people have been upset by what hasn't been done when the family have asked that no-one is told of a situation or they don't want visitors.

At a recent Pastoral meeting the Church family were invited to a talk on Dementia, the implications of the illness and care. Following this meeting the following topics were suggested, to be covered as a way of helping us understand different problems and how to address them. The topics being Mental Health issues, Loneliness, Bereavement, Listening Project and End of Life Care.

The Prayer life of this Church is important. We continue to have the Prayer chain, a Prayer Table and a Prayer Book where needs or situations which need prayer may be written. This book is then taken into Wednesday Communion.

Appreciation is given to all, who continue to share in our Pastoral Care in so many different ways.

Sue Penrith

Church Membership Statistics

Each November a statistical return is completed for the Methodist Church, giving details of our Church membership and activities. Last year we recorded that in addition to 306 church members we were in contact regularly with over 900 other people, of which around 420 were children and young people who attend our weekly activities. Our membership details were as follows for the year ending 31st October 2014:

Membership as at 1st November 2013 - 323

Members Transferred In	4	Deaths	9
		Members Transferred Out	2
		Ceased to be members	10
Total Gains	4	Total Losses	21

Membership as at 31st October 2014 - 306

Baptisms during year November 2013 - October 2014	16
Weddings	5
Funerals	10

Malcolm Hickox

Women's Fellowship

Our average attendance has been 22 at our weekly meetings. We are pleased that we have gained new members during the last twelve months and this has enabled us to invite more outside speakers to visit us as we have a larger membership than in previous years. We have once again had a very varied programme from September 2014 - April 2015 and plan to have an outing during May, June, July and August, before commencing our weekly meetings on September 15th 2015. We regret that through bereavement we lost one of our members, Violet Birchall, during last Summer.

Muriel Crossley

Ladies After Eight

The Ladies After Eight have had another good year. There are currently 50 names on the register, with attendance at meetings usually between 25 and 30. New members are always welcome. We have enjoyed interesting talks from our own members and members of the church and the wider community, and have been able to make donations to several charities. We have continued our tradition of an outing in June, a meal in December and a Christmas Communion Service, but the highlight of 2014 was undoubtedly our 50th birthday party in August for all past and present members. We are very grateful to all who helped in any way to make this such an enjoyable and happy occasion.

Libby Stone

WOW (Women on Wednesdays)

WOW has continued to run this year on a monthly basis and still has a mailing list of thirty. Between four and ten meet on a regular basis, but more come to specific events such as our Christmas meal which was enjoyed by sixteen this year, once again at 'Vincents', the restaurant run by catering students at Preston's College. Most of our cohort are working mums so it can be difficult to fit in a WOW meet between organising the kids, work shift patterns and partner's hobbies, but I feel that many people appreciate being invited even if they can't always come out. From a church point of view WOW is about fellowship and peer support and we would like to extend that to anyone who would like to come along. I need to remember to put it in the notices, but I am happy for anyone to pass on my email with extending our hand in mind. Some more examples of our activities are cited below.

Last July we held a campfire evening in my garden and that was a lovely and relaxed occasion and a lot of people came to join us. By popular request we are repeating it this year and may extend a similar invitation to partners and children if the occasion arises. Quite a few members of WOW took part in the panto in February, which was a marvellous

cross generational enterprise. We got to know each other better and our children did likewise..... the peer support was fantastic and the production was one to be proud of! In the near future we have a pottery evening planned and hopefully we can make the most of the lighter evenings for walking and chatting. Perhaps even a hat trying session (Royal Ascot here we come!). Ideas are always welcome and as the months pass by in a flash it is important and beneficial that we continue to make time for each other.

Sarah Farrell

AM Club

We have really enjoyed another season of fellowship with our normal fortnightly programme. Members of our Church have given illustrated talks on international travel and local topics beginning with the life and skills of Sir Tom Finney and ending with the history of trams along the coast. Nova Scotia, Hawaii, Cambodia, Alaska and Budapest have been toured from the Cedar Room.

Attendance has been regular at sixteen, with some members attending occasionally some visitors. We also have two members who never miss, but are not church attenders here. Fred Simmonds and Charles Wisbey have been resident in care homes and we have kept in touch with them frequently. Sadly, Charles died in May this year. Our 28th year has been a happy and worthwhile one. Finally, we have given £50 to the charity 'Christians Against Poverty' and this has been supplemented with an additional £200 from the Church Benevolence Fund.

Allan Clarke

Alphabites

The Alphabites group continues to meet on the first Tuesday of each month at 7.00 p.m. We begin with a two course meal and enjoy fellowship together. This is followed by a time of praise and Bible Study and always finishes by 9.00 p.m.

Many thanks to Malcolm for leading the group and looking at 'What is Church' using the Bible as an inspiration. We continued to meet during Malcolm's sabbatical. Thanks go to Ken Walton who led us on a whistle stop journey through the Bible, Liz Ellison who helped us explore the book of Psalms, and Derek North who looked at Chapters 1 and 2 of Revelation.

Attendance has remained steady with 13 - 15 at each session. New comers are very welcome. For further information see Margaret Holmes or Beryl Hoyle.

Beryl Hoyle

Book Club

A new group was created earlier this year to bring together those who are interested in reading and discussing their observations with others. It is a gentle group, who meet to share their views freely and constructively. So far, we have held three meetings and two more are planned before the summer holiday period. We have chosen books which have been of interest to all of us and which are not too taxing but which tell us something about others and ourselves. One has been a biography whilst the rest have been fiction. So far about twelve people have shown interest in the group and there has been an average attendance of eight. We meet on a Tuesday evening in the Sycamore Room at 7.00 p.m. Everyone is welcome and details of what is to be the next book appear in the Church notices. Everyone is welcome.

Ken Wales

Theatre Visits Group

The Theatre Visit Group goes from strength to strength. Since it was established we have made over 100 visits usually to matinee performances in the north west. But for the last three years we have included an overnight stay in Stratford-upon-Avon to see Royal Shakespeare Company performances. Numbers on each trip vary from 15 to 50 with a large proportion having few other connections with the Church. This is a service to the community and brings people in to the Church building where we meet beforehand. We regularly receive messages of support and thanks especially from those who otherwise would no longer be able to visit the theatre. A new development is to shape one of our visits around children and in January we will be going to see BFG at Bolton taking a party from Ribbleton Avenue Methodist Junior School with us. (Everyone else is welcome as normal). This report provides an opportunity to say thank you to Joyce Rae who later this year (timing to be finalised) will cease to be our bookings person. Joyce has had thousands of contacts with people over the last few years and has been a real human face of the Church. We owe her a huge vote of gratitude as she has responded so gracefully to the vagaries of so many different people.

Ken Wales

Knitting Group

The knitting group continues to meet weekly with most members attending every week. It is a very informal gathering and quite often members share their problems, worries etc. with the others and feel benefits from this chat. Members also attend other functions at the church such as table top sales and the Christingle service and by request we had a Christmas party and on occasions throughout the year we go out for meals together. We also provide other services such as lifts to the airport for the less mobile which is much appreciated.

Jan Astley

Publicity Group

The Publicity Group is in its infancy, having been formed in late Autumn 2014. Our first task was to improve how we display and advertise what we do within our Church family. Thus a number of new Notice Boards have been installed within the building. In order to find information more easily, and at the same time for members to display and advertise various activities, all the boards are clearly labelled. Our next activity will be to look at how we inform church members and visitors of what is happening within the Church, this will encompass various channels from the weekly notice sheet, website layout, to the information we use for advertising our facilities for hire - the various rooms etc.

Joe Hamilton

Other Groups

In addition to the above, we have a Zumba dance session which contains a significant number of people from outside our usual church circles and provides a good outreach opportunity. Several other local community group from AA to children's dance and drama classes, and the Alzheimer's Society also meet regularly at the church for their activities.

Activities for Families, Children & Young People

Toddlers' Club

We currently have 144 children on the register with several more in the pipeline. Our average attendance is 45 which is quite a nice number for us though it keeps the toaster very busy! As well as toys we have a regular singing session at the end of the morning

and frequently have a craft table where the children use play dough or make things to take home.

120 families are in contact with the Church through Toddlers' Club and most weeks we see new people coming along to give us a try. About half of those who visit us for the first time will continue to attend. As new folk arrive the older children tend to leave to go to pre-school or nursery so our numbers remain fairly stable. Our finances are good, we are able to buy new toys when necessary and are also in a position to make occasional donations to the Church.

We are well staffed with seven of us regularly helping and a few we can call on to help out when we are short. All who help out thoroughly enjoy doing so, it is a great joy to watch the little ones setting out on life's journey.

Janet Porter

OMG (Our Methodist Group)

We have had another successful year and our numbers have maintained at around 18 regular members aged from 10 - 14. We still meet once a month at church between 4.00 - 6.00 p.m. The group enjoy activities such as cooking, arts and crafts, big games and the food and tuck shop are always popular. Earlier this year, we had a great night out watching ice hockey in Blackburn. Our programme up to the summer includes 'balsam bashing' in the woods along the Savick Brook and we hope to combine our summer games afternoon with the annual 'Day at the Seaside'.

We will soon be sending out invitations to the new school year five age group so they can join us in September. Thank you to all who help and support this group

Wendy Bennett

The Big Group

The Big Group (TBG) re-started for those too old for OMG. We have met a couple of times while OMG has been running. The aim is to have activities/social times and perhaps some discussions around life questions. Probably to also include food. The group is mostly made up of girls who would like to meet twice a month but we would need more helpers/leaders to be able to do this.

Christine Hickox, Charlotte Penrith & Yasha Mashoko

Escape and Youth Club

Both Escape (juniors) and Youth Club (seniors) have had to adapt to a lot of change this last year. Change in the leadership, change in the roles of the leadership team and change in the culture of the groups, particularly the seniors. Following some challenges faced with certain members of the previous Youth Club, which resulted in a significant decline in attendance, the group was closed in the late Spring of 2014 while Escape, continued. A small group of girls, who had been very regular at the Youth Club were invited to assist with Escape so as to maintain contact with them. Towards the end of the summer term it became clear that there were about twelve members of Escape who would be moving up to Secondary School in September and would therefore be too old for that group. After careful thought and planning it was decided to re-launch the Youth Club in September with those twelve young people forming the core membership. Part of the time in the early sessions was spent involving the young people in shaping the style and content of future sessions. Since then, the group has grown rapidly with 70 registered members and a weekly average attendance of about 25 - 30 youngsters.

Escape has maintained steady growth throughout the year with new children registering membership almost every week. At the end of May there were just over 100 registered members, with a weekly average attendance of 55 - 60. We recently took the decision to close the membership until further notice, as we have reached our capacity. As the group is so popular, we are currently exploring the possibility of having a waiting list, and developing new strategies to ensure a smooth week by week running of such a large group of children.

The change in leadership originally began with the recruitment of Stuart Johnson, a Youth Worker from Preston Youth for Christ, to cover Yasha's leadership role during her maternity leave. This partnership has continued since Yasha returned, as it was recognised that with the additional members the joint leadership of Yasha and Stuart added value to the running of the two groups. Over and above this, the team of volunteers have shown a great level of commitment, taking on greater responsibility in decision making, planning and running the groups. The time commitment given can only be admired, so I take this opportunity to thank the team for all their hard work and commitment. Without such dedication we would not be able to run such successful open youth work. Out of the weekly subscriptions paid by the children, Escape and Youth Club have been able to purchase a new television and a table football game to share with other groups within the Church. We are proud to have been able to offer these items to the Church and hope that other groups will benefit from having these resources as much as we have.

Yasha Mashoko

Crèche

Our Sunday crèche facility continues to evolve as we seek to meet the needs of families with babies and toddlers in our Church. We are pleased to be able to have a more suitable baby changing facility in the toilet available to the crèche at the back of the Church. We are also pleased to have a new Crèche Co-ordinator, Emma Byers, while we show appreciation for all the work done by our previous co-ordinator, Catherine Vesty. We recognise and are thankful for the contribution made by a few of our volunteers who have had to step down from their duties and are grateful for the new volunteers we have acquired. We acknowledge the effectiveness of moving the crèche into the Copper Beech during baptism services when we have an increased number of children. Just a note to parents with children particularly between the ages of 3 and 8, the Church has purchased children's bibles and biblical story books for the children to borrow during services. These books are brought out each week and placed on a small table near the entrance as you walk into the Church.

Yasha Mashoko

4th Fulwood (Methodist) Scout Group - Beavers, Cubs & Scouts

The Scout Group is continuing to grow with over 100 leaders and young people. Over the last year we have had to turn youngsters away from us and into other Scout groups as we are full to capacity. It is generally now only possible for a young person to join the group as a Beaver Scout from age six. We do have a list of young people wishing to join when they are six so it is a good idea to get young people on that to ensure a place in the group.

As usual we have been active completing badgework with many Beaver Scouts, Cub Scouts and Scouts all receiving the highest award in their section. The programmes that are delivered by the leaders covers all that is needed to achieve these awards and if the children are keen and participate in all that is offered to them they will succeed.

In the spring of last year we started assisting the Friends of Highgate Wood with the upkeep of the woods as part of the Community Challenge. We are continuing to support

the woods with events during the year. The most recent event was a litter pick which involved clambering up trees as well as wading in a stream so also fun for the youngsters collecting the litter. We are also assisting by providing shelters and assistance at events such as Easter egg hunts and were pleased to assist when the new paths were officially opened.

We are also helping to raise money towards Toilet Twinning and hope to be able to pay for another one in the near future.

My thanks goes to the Church for the support they give us in providing a safe location for us to hold our meetings. Also, thanks go to all our leaders who give such a lot of time to assisting at meetings and so much that goes on, not just on Monday and Tuesday evenings. The Exec provides us with a committee of willing volunteers and they have run several events including a successful beetle drive over the year and we are thankful to them too. Our AGM is to be held at Waddecarr on Saturday 20th June and all are welcome.

Lesley Thomas
Group Scout Leader

Rainbows

Our Rainbow unit, which caters for girls aged between five and seven, continues to thrive. We have changed our meeting time to 6.00 p.m. – 7.00 p.m. on Thursday evenings in school terms. We decided to put back our meeting time by 15 minutes as it was difficult for us to get to Church earlier owing to work and family commitments.

We decided to raise our numbers to 18 girls in line with guidance from Girlguiding UK and to cater for the strong demand for places. At present we have a waiting list and no places available until February 2016.

Our Leadership team consists of Jayne Myatt, Gemma Roberts and Ellie Sedgewick with Rhianne Hodgson and Ashleigh Parker as unit helpers. Ellie is currently on maternity leave following the birth of her son, Harrison, but plans to return in September.

We have a varied programme of activities including crafts, walks, parties and games. The girls themselves take an active part in planning our programme. We take part in special events organised at district, division and county level, the most recent being a Winter Wonderland Rainbow event last December. We have strong links with the Brownie pack leaders to ensure that all Rainbows who would like to are able to move up to Brownies and we sometimes take part in joint meetings and events.

Although our unit is open to all girls in the relevant age group it is our policy to give priority to those who are part of the Church family and siblings of girls who are already attending. We try to be proactive in offering places on the waiting list to girls who fall into these categories. We would encourage anyone in the congregation who knows of girls who may like to join us to contact me as the girl approaches her 4th birthday so we can make sure a place is available for her

Jayne Myatt

Brownies

Over the last year we have been really busy with the Centenary celebrations, plus Commonwealth Games, WAGGGS (World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts) and Crime Prevention badges in the Summer term. The centenary celebrations finished with a Star Quest at Guy's Farm in June and a North West Region day out at Chester Zoo (5000 Brownies in attendance) in September.

The Autumn Term saw several trips out and our usual work for Operation Christmas Child (25 boxes) and the Tombola at the Christmas Fair. We also had a visit from Roy Smith who taught the girls some folk dances. Spring saw the girls learning how to draw cartoons (thanks to one of our parents) and a County Thinking Day event at Ashton Community College. We are now looking forward to a sleepover at Guy's Farm in May and a Pack Holiday at Waddecarr in July.

We have 29 Brownies (aged 7 – 10 years), rising to our maximum of 30 at the end of May. If anyone has a daughter who wants a place at Brownies but hasn't been a Rainbow, please give us at least a year's notice as we have a long waiting list, particularly as we automatically reserve a place for every Rainbow (they too are full) and we rarely have any extra places available.

Diane Bird

39th Preston Guides

We currently have 28 Guides on the register, 2 Young Leaders (we welcomed back Danielle Gould) and 3 Guiders. This year we returned to The House at Guy's Farm for 'Glittery Guides at Guy's' where we celebrated an early Christmas, the girls enjoyed the bouldering wall, crafts and the pedal cars! We also enjoyed the pantomime at The Playhouse with the Rainbows and Brownies. The Guides have completed various badges this year including Cooks, Healthy Lifestyles, Craft, Film Lover and Holiday Badges. The Confectioners and Camp badges are this summer's focus. Amelia and Olivia have completed their Baden Powell Challenge. We are looking forward to our Summer Camp in June, Guystonbury at Guy's Farm.

Alison Allcock

Messy Church

At the end of last summer we sent out a questionnaire to review our work over our first three years. The results were very positive and encouraging and we have tried to build on suggestions made. Several replies highlighted the convivial family atmosphere which is great as one of our aims is to provide time and space for families to spend time together conversing, creating and eating within our Church family. Eating is quite important and we regularly see around 60 people sitting down for tea together!

This year we have taken as our theme Old Testament Characters, looking at Ruth, Joseph, Noah, and Jonah and relating our craft activities to aspects of their lives – I am not sure that the jelly-baby Moses would have been very dry in his chocolate cornflake basket, but the children enjoyed making and eating them and learnt the story.

Our Good Friday Messy Church was very well attended with 75 people booking in! Many stayed on to finish crafts and chat together.

It is great to have a hard-working and inventive team to deliver our aims. Thanks to all concerned. Please feel free to offer help on a regular or one-off basis, we'd be glad to see you. If you know of anyone who would enjoy Messy Church do encourage them to come along.

Delma Whitman

ACTS

Martin Burt and I wondered if anyone would want to do a production this year but on asking for an expression of interest, we couldn't ignore the overwhelmingly positive

response. We chose 'Pirates of the Currybean' a script from the same author as last year's production and set about making it our own.

We truly represent all ages in our Church family (from the pre-schoolers to the OAP's) and display a very wide range of talents. We have great fun together as a Church family and hopefully portray this to our audience as well as entertaining them. It is a great way for all to develop their talents and grow in confidence using them. We have a group of people now who can participate in short dramas in Worship.

We raised just over £1,000 for Church funds and we bought 4 new microphones which can be used in worship as well as for productions.

Delma Whitman

Church Outreach

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.

World Church

Ali Birkett has led our World Church group and continued to keep us up to date with what is happening in the Methodist Church worldwide. Throughout the year we have responded to special pleas for help from our District World Church Partners. The devastating Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone has affected staff at the Nixon Memorial hospital, and the Red Rose Training Centre was closed for many months due to the epidemic. Papua New Guinea was hit by a volcanic eruption which caused major disruption in many areas. We were able to send support to help the clean up of the vegetable garden at the Methodist Ministers' training college which provides food for the local area as well as the students. The Principal of the college is Revd Garo Kilagi who was a Mission Partner in our District a few years ago.

The Toilet Twinning project caught the imagination of all the groups in the church and to date we have twinned at least 25 toilets across the developing world, and money is still coming in. Thank you to Anne Garsed and Lesley Birkett for organising and encouraging support of this worthwhile project.

Christian Aid

At Christmas we were encouraged to take home a plate to place on our dinner table, remembering those across the world who would not have enough to eat. In Lent we screened the film Hunger for Justice, which highlighted the plight of Christian Palestinians in Israel who have been marginalised and displaced over the past years so that they are finding it harder and harder to earn enough money to survive. The house to house collection continues and unlike many other charity collections is still well supported by households in our area.

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. Whilst the Church redevelopment was ongoing we set aside 5% of all money raised through fundraising activities to give money to the Church Project. Now that our building debt has been paid, we needed to find a new policy for continuing this kind of support. The Church Council has agreed that we will 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 each year for a specific project, with additional funding raising events being organised should the target not be reached from the 10% levy. We recently sent a donation of £1,000 to the Macmillan Organisation and canvassed the congregation for suggestions for future charities to support. Our new project will be raising money for Embrace the Middle East (formerly The Bible Lands Society) and information about this charity is now available.

Eco Church

We continue to work towards becoming an Eco-Congregation and we are now registered on this programme. This is an ongoing work and as a Church we need to support this very worthwhile scheme and look at how we work responsibly as a Church. We recently began using Fairtrade eco hand wash in the toilets.

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. This work continues to grow and we now provide coffee on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday mornings to a wide range of local groups and others who just pop in for a chat. Numbers are increasing each week so if you would like to consider having your name on a rota to serve coffee please see either Libby or myself and we can share the load. Welcome Wednesday is an amazing success story with the whole of the Oak Hall and Willow Grove buzzing with activities all through the morning. Our lunches are so popular now that in order to make sure there is enough food, orders are taken during the morning! We regularly serve up to 40 hot meals with often only a few scraps left for the kitchen staff!

Fairtrade and Farmers' Markets

The Fairtrade stall is available on the second Sunday of each month and the Farmers' Markets take place on the fourth Saturday of January, March, May, July, September and November. Do remember to support these events as we continue to encourage everyone to think of where our produce and foodstuffs are sourced.

Christmas and other Activities

By popular request Lancashire Sings Christmas returned last year. We decided not to link in with our own community carol singing, but encouraged people to join with other venues around the Circuit. The event will take place again this December so watch out for the date and venues if you want to be part of this joint event with BBC Radio Lancashire.

We had a good response to our appeal for singers to join us singing carols around the residential homes on two evenings. Our visits are always well received and it was much easier with many more voices to swell the throng. We are looking for someone to liaise with the homes before our visit this year. Sue Penrith has done this for many years and we thank her for all her hard work. If you think you could take this on please contact Sue or myself.

The Friendship Lunch was much appreciated by those who attended although numbers were smaller than past years. 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.

In February we held a heat of the Rosemere Bake Off. Although this was quite a small event several people surprised us with their talents for baking. We had offerings from a wide range of the congregation from the youngest to the oldest and those who have been baking for years to someone who baked his first cake ever! Judging was very professionally done by Janet Lowes and Mary Fox and everything was sold off raising £300 for the Rosemere Cancer Trust.

Messy Church

This is reported upon in another place but I want to thank Delma and the team for all their hard work and commitment in organising these evenings. The numbers are increasing and on Good Friday morning over 75 people of all ages joined together for activities, hot cross buns and worship. Families are joining together for food, fun and fellowship and learning more about our bible stories through the activities provided.

We are a very active Church at Fulwood, trying to connect particularly with our local community. 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
Outreach Group Co-ordinator

Action for Children

We raise money for Action for Children in several ways. We have the League of Light lantern boxes which folk keep in their homes. These are emptied annually by Pauline Kirkham and Margaret Holmes and raised £1,383.21 over the last year. Our thanks go to all who contributed. Pauline and Margaret would be delighted to supply lantern boxes to anyone who feels they would like to collect in this way. It is an easy way to raise money for one of our traditional Methodist charities. On Action for Children Sunday in July there is an annual envelope collection and last year we received £49.75. In November we had a new venture, a store collection at Morrisons on Riversway, instead of the House to House Collection, and raised £219.00. Our collectors thought it was worthwhile so we intend to do another one some time later this year and I shall be looking for helpers. Finally, £650.00 was donated to Action for Children from our special Christmas collections at the Church.

Barbara Hothersall

Property Group

The Property Group has met five times during the past year. Membership has remained the same except for Sue Penrith joining the Group in June 2014 as a representative of the cleaning group. Recent work by the Group and its members includes:

New equipment within the premises

- **Notice Boards:** Eight new notice boards have been purchased and fitted in the Willow Grove, the front porch and by the rear entrance, to meet the requirements determined by the Publicity Group.

- **Organ camera:** A camera and monitor has been fitted to the organ to give the Organist an improved view of the worship area and the PowerPoint presentations.
- **Lighting in the choir/stewards cupboard:** A suitable fitting has been provided.
- **Answerphone in the Vestry:** A triple phone system with answer phone has been purchased. The third phone would be used by the Church Administrator.
- **Telephone in the passage to the rear car park:** A shelf has been fitted next to the telephone, to make it easier to take messages.
- **Vacuum Cleaner:** A replacement vacuum cleaner has been purchased to meet the requirements of the Cleaning Team.

Repairs & maintenance within the premises

- **Heating:** One boiler kept lighting and tripping out. The sound deadening pad around the air intake had come loose and when the boiler went onto full rate the pad moved and blocked the combustion air. The flame detector saw an abnormal flame and so it tripped. The pads on both boilers have been re-fixed! The notice advising that radiators be left on I or II is to be revised. It will advise that radiators be left on I.
- **Modifications to the garage:** Two scaffolding poles, that straddle the garage, have been installed so that the Scouts can dry their tents.
- **Dado rails:** These have been fitted in various rooms to prevent the chairs damaging the walls.
- **Improved baby changing facilities:** Baby changing facilities have been installed in the Palm Room toilets.
- **FMC Crossroads Centre sign at the front of the premises:** A temporary white backing was fixed to the banner over the front doors to improve its visibility from outside. A permanent backing has now been purchased and installed.
- **Cleaning rota:** Additional help is needed to spread the load of keeping our premises clean.

Repairs & maintenance outside of the premises

- **Floodlights:** The floodlight in the car park has been repaired.
- **Access through electronic front doors:** The external handles on the doors have been removed, to prevent any inadvertent forcing of the doors.
- **Christmas Tree Lights:** The control have been modified so that the lights will stay on and not flash during worship.
- **Hatching in the rear car park:** Yellow 'no parking' hatching has been applied to the rear car park in the area extending out from the garage doors to make manoeuvring the minibus more straightforward.

Health, Safety and Security

- **Lone Working Policy:** The policy has been approved by the Church Council.
- **Incident Book:** Following a request at last year's Church Meeting, a form has been developed to record property defects so that action can be taken by the Property Group. The Incident Book is kept next to the Accident Book.
- **Portable (Electrical) Appliance Testing (PAT):** All electrical equipment has been tested by the in-house team. In future testing will be on a 2-year cycle.
- **Security issues:** The key codes to the front and rear electronic access doors have been changed.

- **Provision of first aid equipment and consumables:** The scouts have agreed to review and top up the church's first aid kits.

Ongoing and near-future work

- **Forthcoming quinquennial inspections:** The quinquennial inspections are due in 2015. The Building inspection (which is a Circuit responsibility) will not be carried out until 2016 (the Circuit are re-organising these inspections). The Electrical System quinquennial inspection will be conducted in 2015 (this is currently the responsibility of FMC).
- **West Chancel Window wall:** Repainting of this wall will require scaffolding and will probably take more than a week to complete, in which case the scaffolding would have to be in place for at least one Sunday.
- **Additional storage space:** The Property Group are looking at providing new storage space in the Cedar Room by installing cupboards against the external north wall of the room.
- **Computer Projector:** A projector has been donated to the church. It is intended to mount it to the ceiling in the Cedar Room. It will be mounted so that it will project onto the south wall or a screen in front of the proposed cupboards.
- **Improvements to signage in the Willow Grove:** Two additional signs will be installed in the Willow Grove pointing to the Sycamore Room & Exit and Cedar Room & Toilets.
- **Portable ramp:** The Property Group are looking into the provision of a portable ramp for use in church to give wheelchair access to the Olive Grove (Chancel).
- **Five Year Programme:** A Five Year Programme of major property maintenance, repair and renewal expected in the near-to medium-term future will be developed, to support the Church's financial planning.

Mike Ellis & Martin Burt

Finance

Balance Sheet	General	Restricted	Endowment	31-Aug-14	31-Aug-13
Fixed assets	3,616,370	0	0	3,616,370	3,618,837
Current assets					
Debtors and prepayments	9,390			9,390	31,521
CFB and TMCP	17,086	23,046	1,015	41,148	
Cash	52,061	0		52,061	91,227
Net current assets	78,538	23,046	1,015	102,599	122,748
Creditors	0	0	0	0	3,097
Loans	0	0	0	0	51,500
Net current liabilities	0	0	0	0	54,597
	3,694,908	23,046	1,015	3,718,969	3,686,988
Funds					
General Funds	3,694,908			3,694,908	3,635,673
Restricted funds		23,046		23,046	50,300
Endowment funds			1,015	1,015	1,015
	3,694,908	23,046	1,015	3,718,969	3,686,988

Statement of Financial Activity (SOFA)

	General funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment	Total 2013/14	Total 2012/13
Brought forward	3,635,673	50,300	1,015	3,686,988	3,634,749
Income					
Offertory and tax recoverable	110,482			110,482	107,392
Interest and investment income	471		6	477	703
Lettings	11,130			11,130	15,928
Other income	20,991			20,991	32,365
Donations and grants	10,056	23,676		33,732	71,550
Internal orgs		26,918		26,918	0
Total income	153,129	50,594	6	203,729	227,938
Expenditure					
Circuit assessment	80,003			80,003	74,000
Grants and donations	0	8,901		8,901	22,512
Repairs and Maintenance	10,139			10,139	15,604
Insurance, utilities etc.	16,545			16,545	17,347
Depreciation	2,467			2,467	5,558
Provisions	0			0	0
Other Expenditure	25,654			25,654	41,121
Loan interest	0			0	-10
Internal orgs		28,039		28,039	
Total	134,808	36,940	0	171,748	176,132
Net incoming resources	18,321	13,654	6	31,981	51,806
Transfers between funds	40,914	-40,908	-6	0	433
Net investment in funds	59,235	-27,254	0	31,981	52,239
Carried forward	3,694,908	23,046	1,015	3,718,970	3,686,988

Finance Group

The financial year 2013/14 was very exciting for us as we finally paid off the last of our loans relating to the development of the church.

At 31st August 2014, we had £93,000 in the bank, which is similar to the balance at the end of last year, despite making £51,000 in loan repayments. This is due to the fact that income from donations and fundraising in the year was sufficient to cover our repayments.

Our general fund has grown by £8,523. As well as increased offerings, we have seen a growth in income from the success of initiatives such as Welcome Wednesday and other catering services, which contribute to our financial position as well as providing a much needed community service.

In the year, we have been able to increase our circuit contribution from £74,000 in 2012/13 to £80,000 in 2013/14. We had reduced our contribution in previous years as we had concerns over the affordability of the cost during our development. We should be proud that we are now able to contribute our fair share

General funds

The movement in the general fund is summarised below.

	2013/14	2012/13		
Balance brought forward	35,673	34,007		
Income	153,129	138,889		Note 1
Expenditure	(134,808)	(139,077)		Note 2
Transfer of funds	40914	1,854		Note 3
Balance carried forward	94,908	35,673		

Note 1 - General income

Our sources of income are summarised below.

General income	2013/14	2012/13
Offerings and Tax recoverable	110,482	107,392
Interest and Investment Income	471	693
Lettings	11,130	15,928
Other Income	20,991	1,096
Donations & Grants	10,056	13,780
Total	153,129	138,889

In terms of the key movements:

- The increase in income from offerings has exceeded inflation, which is a positive message.
- We received less income from lettings.
- The growth in other income is due mainly to the growth of Welcome Wednesdays and catering income. It also includes around £2000 from fundraising which was included within “donations and grants” in the prior year.

Note 2 - General expenditure

Our costs are summarised below.

General expenditure	2013/14	2012/13
Circuit Assessment or Share	80,003	74,000
Grants and Donations		15,839
Repairs and Maintenance	10,139	15,604
Insurance, Utilities etc	16,545	17,347
Depreciation	2,467	5,558
Provisions		
Other expenditure	25,654	10,739
Loan Interest		-10
Internal Organisations		
Total Resources Expended	134,808	139,077

This illustrates the increase in our circuit contribution.

Other expenditure reflects the increased catering costs, which are linked to our income growth in this area. The costs also include expenditure we were not able to allocate to other headings due to the handover of records from one treasurer to another. This will largely explain why there is also a corresponding reduction in repairs and maintenance and utility costs.

Overall, the main reason for the reduction in total cost is due to us paying all of our grants and donations out of restricted funds this year (see notes below).

Note 3 - Transfers

The transfer of funds into the General Funds reflects the transfer of £51,500 of funds from the development fund to the general fund to match the loan repayments made in the year. A further £600 was transferred from internal groups, in order to contribute to the running of the church. It also includes £6 of interest earned on the endowments.

These transfers were offset by a transfer of £11,192 to the grants and donations fund (see overleaf).

Restricted funds

As well as the balance on our general fund, the bank balance includes balances from our restricted funds. These are the funds which we hold for a specific purpose and cannot be expended on the day to day activities of the church. These are summarised below:

	31 August 2014	31 August 2013	
Development fund	0	44,319	Note 1
Building improvement fund	7,679	0	Note 1
Internal groups	3,075	2,322	Note 2
Benevolence fund	3,651	4,643	Note 3
External grants and donations	9,341	6,926	Note 4
Total	23,046	59,300	

These funds are described in more detail below.

Note 1 - Development fund

The development fund has now been reduced to zero, reflecting the completion of our project and the repayment of loans. This is summarised below.

	2013/14
Balance brought forward	44,319
Income	17,456
Expenditure	(2,946)
Transfers from internal groups	350
Sub-total	59,179
Less transfer to general funds for loan repayment	(51,500)
Sub-total	7,679
Balance transferred to new Building Improvement fund	(7,679)
SOFA	0

Due to our success in continuing to raise funds in 2013/14 and with transfers from internal groups, the fund has more than covered the loan repayments. We have therefore used

the remaining balance to establish a new building improvement fund which will support future projects.

Note 2 - Internal organisations

The financial activities of our internal groups is summarised below.

	Brought forward	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Total
Theatre Group	2,256	24,232	23,867		2,621
OMG		734	1,076		-342
Ladies after 8	11	690		-572	129
WOW		132			132
Women's fellowship	55	590	100	-500	45
Toddlers		390	50		340
AM club		50			50
Alphabites		100			100
	2,322	26,918	25,093	-1,072	3,075

The transfers represent transfers to the development fund as well as our fund for external grants and donations.

Note 3 - Benevolence fund

Balance brought forward	4,643
Income	2,348
Expenditure	150
Transfers	-3,890
Balance carried forward	3,651

The main movement on this fund is the transfer of funds to support the payment of external grants and donations below.

Note 4 - External grants and donations fund

Balance brought forward	6,926
Direct income (eg appeals)	3,872
Contribution from General Fund	3,282
Contribution from benevolence fund	3,890
Contributions from other church groups and activities	122
Sub-total	18,092
Payments to external bodies (see below)	(8,751)
Balance carried forward	9,341

We collect money for external organisations throughout the year through specific appeals. Our internal groups also contribute to this fund and we make contributions from our fundraising and catering activities.

We have made the following grants and donations from these funds:

Mission in Britain	1,500
Methodist Fund for Property	750
Methodist Homes	500
MWiB	515
MFHN	500
MRDF – Phillipines appeal	1000
MRDF - Other	555
Methodist Action – Cedar House	1,000
Toilet twinning	240
St Catherine's Hospice	340
Marie Cure Cancer Care	147
Somerset Levels Relief Fund	500
Derian House	65
Christian Aid	1,120
Misc	20
Total	8,751

Other work of the Finance Group

Our focus in 2013/14 was to support Ted as he took on his new Treasurer role. Each meeting, we discuss the financial position compared to budget.

You may also be aware that we have introduced a safe. This enables everyone who handles cash to leave money in a secure place for collection and banking. Please ensure that any money posted into the safe is in an envelope with a clear note to say what it relates to.

We have identified and closed a number of old, unofficial bank accounts. These old accounts had been set up in the past by various church groups. It is important that we, as a church, only keep money in our main accounts. That way, we can account for the balances.

Looking ahead, we are keen to strengthen controls over any money we collect on behalf of external charities. We are proposing the following new controls:

- Stewards will decide which external envelope collections will be allowed in church each year and when. This is to ensure we do not ask people too often for money. If you are keen for a charity you support to be considered, please let me know.
- For each collection, we will asked a named individual to take responsibility for accounting for the money collected.
- Anyone collecting money in other ways, such as retiring collections or sponsored events, please can you place all money in the safe to ensure it goes through the proper counting, banking and recording controls.
- On no account should anyone take any cash off church premises.

Finally, we are in real need of further support with some of the administration tasks needed to keep the financial records for our church. If anyone feels able to help, please let me know.

Amanda Latham
Chair, Finance Group

Fund Raising

As I am sure by now everyone knows the debt on the Development Fund has been cleared and the Fund Raising Group has been disbanded. However, fund raising still continues because we still have the Church Project and also the much depleted Church funds need to be replenished. To this end, we still have the Plant Sales, Cakes Stalls and Books and Craft tables. Every week we run the New-2-You sale which is an integral part of Welcome Wednesday, an outstanding success and a wonderful form of outreach. We have Table Top sales, usually held every third month. The weekly Knitting Club raises a small amount and the Catering Team raise a lot of money from Welcome Wednesday and the special events which utilise their talents. Other groups from within the Church continue to make donations so it can be said that we are not resting upon our laurels.

Barbara Hothersall