

High Street Methodist Church

Witney

GENERAL CHURCH MEETING

10th June 2018

Reports

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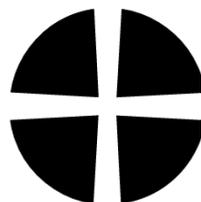
Church Groups



**MISSION STATEMENT FOR
HIGH STREET METHODIST CHURCH**

Jesus Christ who brings us to the Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit is the foundation of our life together.

High Street Methodist Church aims to be a church, which is bringing Christ to our community and our community to Christ. We want to be dedicated to the Lord Jesus Christ, devoted to each other, determined to serve our local community and to support our fellow Christians.



June 2018

Can it be that time again?

Yes friends, another year *has* flown by and here we are, once more, with the opportunity of looking back on all that we have achieved together whilst considering where God will take us next. I have purposely, this year, had a look back over the past 4 annual reports, in order, to grasp a fuller, overall picture and I can clearly see God at work amongst his people. Change, momentum and forward movement are the order of the day.

The work on the Mission Strategy and the areas of identified and deliberate intensified focus has certainly borne results. The Old School Building was successfully sold, and we are diligently discerning ways of applying for some of the funds to further the mission and outreach of the church. We have strived for excellence in so many areas but most significantly regarding Safeguarding, ensuring, to the best of our ability, that all our policies, practices and procedures are thoroughly up-to-date and fully adhered to so that we are able to provide premises and activities that are as safe as they can be for all users. It is essential that we look through the lens of safeguarding always and everywhere and I thank you all for your forbearance and generous grace that you have shown when asked to fill in yet more forms and engage in yet more training. In many ways High Street is becoming busier and

busier and therefore Safeguarding needs to be our top priority.

I am mindful that there is a myriad of things that you do well that did not get highlighted in the Mission Strategy and one that comes to mind is 'World Church' and our outreach overseas. Please be reassured that this and other areas of the life of the church are no less important but were assessed as doing 'well' and therefore did not warrant deliberate focus. Finances and our stewardship of resources was an area of mission that was highlighted, and I am grateful for your response to the TRIO (The Responsibility Is Ours) appeal. There will be a 'one year on' update during the morning Service on 10th June.

Apparently, none of us are getting any younger, or so you tell me, so I would like to say a genuine 'thank you' to those of you who have volunteered in the past as well as those of you who currently volunteer, freely offering your gifts and time for the glory of God. Without you there would be no High Street Methodist Church. In addition, I feel it is important to highlight the dedication of our paid staff.

Finally, please remember Deacon Ellie and her family as they move in the summer ready to serve God in a different place.

Every Blessing

Rev Melanie

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Church Life

Pastoral Worker and Pastoral Visitors Report 2017-18

Pastoral care is most important in the life of our church and is essential for the care and wellbeing of the church fellowship. Our objective is to show everyone the love of God, give a warm welcome to all those who come to our church and show caring concern to them.

Our aim at High Street is to allocate all members to one of the Pastoral Visitor team whose responsibility it is to keep in contact, give support and encouragement to those on their list by visiting, telephoning and looking out for them at church. Leaflets and copies of In Touch are delivered by them at Christmas, Easter, Harvest and at other times. This is a good means to keep everyone informed with news of services and other activities.

We are most grateful to the 30 Pastoral Visitors and Linda Burbage in her role as Cradle Roll Secretary, for the caring they give to the 300 or so people listed in our church directory. We remember housebound members and those living in residential care at Christmas with a card and plant, flowers at Harvest and a special card at Christmas for those who have suffered a close bereavement in the year also on the first anniversary of the death of a spouse.

We are pleased that Linda Burbage has agreed to join the team as well as continuing with her Cradle Roll duties.

We are sorry that Hilary Ewing has decided to resign as a PV but thank her for continuing to give pastoral care where needed.

We try to share news of the church family, especially specific needs

like bereavement or ill health but also rejoice in special birthdays and anniversaries.

Pastoral Training

During the year Rev Melanie led a meeting on "What is a Pastoral Visitor" including Role Descriptions for the PV's and guidance on record-keeping.

Another meeting led by Rev Melanie covered Safeguarding registration for PV's, their supervision when needed and how we can address the problem of any loneliness in our members.

All PV's now have role descriptions, comply with the Safeguarding requirements and have attended Creating Safer Spaces training.

The Prayer Chain

This an important way to communicate specific needs for prayer and also for information on the additional care and support needed. There are now 56 members on the email Chain and others receive messages by phone.

Membership

The following 7 transferred membership to High Street: Wendy Guy, Sandra and John Williams, Jane and Amy Davies, Marilyn Fraser and Mavis Evans. Mary Willis has transferred membership to Minster Lovell Methodist Church. The following 5 members have sadly died: Bill Barlow, Bob Manger, Peter Jackson, Maurice Coulter and Tony Perry. We thank God for them all that they meant to us in their individual ways and their many contributions to the life of our church.

Total Membership is now 197

We continue to do our best to follow the aims of the church Mission Statement. I keep in regular contact with Rev Melanie and the Pastoral Team and we share news with each other in order to make improvements to our pastoral care.

Anne Crawford. Pastoral Lay Worker

Prayer Opportunities 2018

The Weekly Prayer Meeting

This takes place every Thursday morning 9.30 -10.10am with 5 regularly attending and others join in from time to time. We pray for the life of our church, those who are unwell, or experiencing other difficulties. We always include those prayers left in the boxes in the Prayer Corner and Coffee Bar and any current topic, either here or overseas.

Anne Crawford

The Prayer Corner

This area of the church is available for quiet prayer every day from 10.00am until 2.45pm. There is a Prayer Box and another in the foyer with special Prayer Cards for requests which are prayed for at Thursday morning prayers.

Prayer Ministry after Sunday Morning Worship

Two members of the Prayer Ministry team are available in the Prayer Corner to anyone needing prayers for themselves or others. it is used regularly and is appreciated by those asking for prayer. Shirley Richardson organises the rota.

Prayer Chains

For church members who wish to take part in intercessory prayers for those in special need. There is an Email Chain and telephone calls for those without email. The prayers are sent by Anne Crawford and anyone can ask her to include needs as they arise. It is well used and gives important communication of comfort and healing. 56 members are on the Email Prayer Chain for receiving messages plus those using the telephone .Others are very welcome to join it.

Church Prayer Diary

Issued twice a year in January and June, listing prayer needs for High Street Church, its activities, users of the premises and others. Mike Limmer compiles it.

Space 2B for quiet reflective prayer

Every Wednesday morning 9.20-11.00 am. Held at the home of Brenda Woods. Exploring different ways of praying.

Churches Together Prayers

Breakfast at 8.00am on the fourth Saturday in the month followed by an ecumenical prayer meeting held at High Street at 8.45am to 9.30am focussing on the life and witness of the churches in Witney & District.12 regularly attend, others come from time to time and more would be warmly welcomed to join for prayers even if it is not possible to come to breakfast.

Anne Crawford

Leadership Team

The Leadership Team meet regularly, on average, every 6 weeks, ensuring that the daily needs of running such a large church are met and the decisions of Church Council are carried out as well as continuing to keep the Mission Strategy in sight and on course. In February we managed an away day allowing for worship, sharing and a focussed time to look at measurable progress in regard of the Aims and Objectives of our Mission Strategy. I would like to personally thank all members of the Leadership Team who give generously of their time and attention, in order, to serve, often juggling work and family commitments alongside other church and circuit roles. Stepping up to the responsibility of leadership often comes with much criticism and little praise.

We are currently looking at the format of the Leadership Team and asking questions about how it should look moving forward. Perhaps you are someone who could serve God and His church at High Street in this way?

Please pray for the Leadership Team members and that God will give us wisdom and guidance.

Thank You.

Rev Melanie Reed on behalf of (Brenda Edwards, Tina Limmer, Owen Carney, Ian Prince, Anne Crawford, Jude Levermore & Sue Green)

Stewards Team

This year the number of Church Stewards is further depleted and now we only number 3! While we are assisted on a Sunday by a wonderful team of Sunday stewards and evening stewards who aid

in the smooth running of our Sunday services we really do need more full Church Stewards. Could that be you? Have you read Rev. Melanie's leaflet explaining the role? Do please think about this valuable role within the Church and if you have any questions please do speak to the Rev. Melanie, Tina Limmer, Owen Carney or myself.

On a more personal note I would like to offer my sincere thanks all those who have helped and advised me during the past year, especially Tina who did an excellent job of "holding the fort" while I was unwell.

Brenda Edwards, Senior Steward

Holy Communion Services

We have six communion stewards in this essential area of our spiritual lives.

All the communion services continue to thrive – 8.30am (18+), 10.30 (100+), 18.00 (24+) and midweek (18+).

Our aim is to ensure that everyone, who wishes to, is welcome to receive the bread and wine and to this end the wine is alcohol-free and the bread is wheat, gluten and lactose free. After 10.30 communion an opportunity to donate to the Benevolent fund is available, this enables Revered Melanie, on High Street's behalf, to follow the Lord's instructions in Matthew Ch 25 v 35 (you read it!).

The communion stewards would like to thank all those who regularly help with these services.

Communion Stewards

Music

Music Coordinator– Rachael Prince

Regular organists/pianists/musicians: Rachael Prince, Keith Crawford, Peter Hunt, Katie Lowe, Jane Wilson, Laura Jones, Paul Reed

Orchestra: Rachael Prince (organiser) plus 4-12 members

Singing Group: Rachael Prince (organiser) plus 15-20 members

Band: The Reeds (organisers) plus occasional other members.

Aims:

Our main aim is to produce worship enhancing music in whatever style is appropriate to the service.

Progress and Achievements:

We continue to seek ways of using new hymns in worship whilst also using firm favourites.

The organ continues to be well used. Fundraising for the renovations continues and Stage 2 is set to be complete in the Autumn. We are grateful for grants from WODC, Oxford Historic Churches Trust, and the Charles Early Foundation plus many individual generous donations.

Jeanette Mills stood down from the rota this year, but we were very pleased to welcome Katie Lowe as a regular musician.

I am grateful to the singing group for their help in leading worship. We were unable to have a singing group at Christmas but helped lead worship on Easter Sunday.

The orchestra continue to provide valuable support to our services and we see encouraging younger players in their music making and

faith an important part of what we do. It is a blessing to see their confidence and abilities grow year on year. Imogen Harvey made her debut at Christmas on violin.

Rachael Prince

Church Flowers

The flower group aims to decorate the worship area using fresh flowers. There are ten regular flower arrangers, who donate the flowers they use.

Flowers are provided every week but Easter, Harvest and Christmas are our special projects. At Harvest we make gifts of flowers to be given to housebound friends.

A rota is displayed on the wall near the lift and anyone is welcome to sign up to provide flowers on their chosen date, perhaps to remember a loved one. We would be very pleased to have new arrangers join us and are always grateful for donations of flowers.

Mary Bradley

Display Window (Wesley Room)

Having taken over the rota for the Display window (Wesley Room) at the beginning of the year from Nancy Crewe, I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the church, to say a big thank-you to Nancy for all her organising and putting together of the displays in the past. It has been most appreciated.

The window is an important part of our outreach in telling passers-by something of our Christian message, such as the Easter message, and also something of our church activities, such as the Shoebox appeal.

So I decided to put the displays on a monthly rota with a variety of different themes and a variety of different groups or a few individuals joining together from the church to dress the window for example September - theme, harvest - Flower group led by Mary Bradley.

Thank you to everyone who took up the challenge, we have a filled rota until the end of 2018!

If anyone would like to take up the mantle and organise the rota for 2019 please let me know.

With many thanks for all your help,

Tina Limmer

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is an important aspect of our church life and particularly crucial given the extent to which our premises are used. It is essential that policies and procedures are in place to ensure that everybody in the church and those that use our premises are kept safe from any sort of harm and to prevent, as far as possible, incidents from arising and, if they do, to ensure that they are efficiently and appropriately dealt with.

The following is taken from High Street's safeguarding policy:

'High Street Methodist Church strives to ensure that its safeguarding policy and all the procedures ...are brought to the attention of

everyone and applied to everyone...This is not the same as treating each person as though they were under suspicion. It is more a matter of taking sensible measures to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults, and recognising that it is the responsibility of us all.

A robust safeguarding policy if followed also serves to protect those who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults who may inadvertently place themselves in a vulnerable position. Physical, sexual and emotional abuse can wreck the lives of those who have suffered from it. Malicious accusations can also wreck the lives of those against whom they are directed.

‘We are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God’s purpose for their lives, the life of the community and the life of the world. We seek to safeguard all members of this church community, irrespective of whether they are Church members, adherents or visitors, and irrespective of their age. It is the responsibility of each of us to prevent the physical, emotional and sexual abuse of all people on our premises or involved in any of our activities.

‘We are committed to:

- the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults
- the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable
- the establishing of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is informed vigilance as to the dangers of abuse.’

The safeguarding reference group is made up of the ministers, centre manager, senior steward, safeguarding officer, minister’s PA, a

church member involved with children and families, a Newland representative and the pastoral secretary. Health and safety is also included in the group's remit and so a property/ health and safety rep is also a member of the group.

The group meets regularly. Its duties include:

- ensuring that the church's Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually (including Newland)
- ensuring that there is a Safeguarding Risk Assessment
- ensuring that the required DBS checks are completed and kept up to date
- ensuring that all required training is up to date
- ensuring that everything connected to safeguarding is recorded and monitored in accordance with current guidelines issued by The Methodist Church
- ensuring that all those who rent rooms either have their own Safeguarding Policies or sign to agree to adhere to the church's Policy
- following through correctly and fully any safeguarding concerns
- developing a system of pastoral supervision to ensure accountability

In line with the above all pastoral visitors have now been given appropriate training and asked to provide self-declaration forms and references to ensure their own safety and necessary record keeping. Rev Melanie Reed has undertaken the task of compiling and completing role descriptions for all roles within the church, and great progress has been made with this. The delivery of updated safeguarding training to all those people who require it is in hand. The security of the church premises has been considered and various changes made to keep groups, users and premises safe and secure.

Various members of the group recently met with the District Safeguarding Team as part of the district's Quality Assurance consultations. Group members have also attended District Safeguarding Days. The latest of these brought to our attention the important incoming legislation relating to GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) which the group will be addressing in due course.

Ruth Lapworth, Safeguarding Officer

Work Among Children and Young People – On A Sunday

Junior Church

Junior Church meets on Sunday mornings at 10.30am, except on the first Sunday of the month, when our Junior Church members attend Messy Church in the afternoon 4-6pm. We currently have around 14 babies, children and young people, but will be saying goodbye to Tess, Erin and Zac this summer. They have contributed greatly to Junior Church and we wish them well in their new church. Our youngsters have been split into three age groups until recently. We are currently trialling running two groups, using the Roots materials. We are however planning to look at alternative resources for the future, including making story bags for use with the younger children. Junior Church is involved in planning and leading two services a year – the Nativity service and the Junior Church Anniversary. We have a party at Christmas and a picnic together on the Leys in the summer. In November several of our older young people went to Southport to join almost 1000 youngsters for 3Generate, the Methodist Church's annual gathering for youngsters aged from 8-23.

Helen James

Cradle Roll

There have been four baptisms of young children at High Street during the last year. There are currently 9 nine children on the Cradle Roll.

I continue to visit these families as in previous years on birthdays and church festivals.

Linda Burbage, Cradle Roll Secretary

House Groups

Colwell Drive House Group

Having gone through a period when we nearly collapsed we have realised how much we benefited from being in a House Group. Now we have got together again and are gaining new members. At the moment we are reading St Marks gospel and sharing our insights helping each other. It is good.

Elgin Crewe

New Yatt Road House Group

We have suffered some sad losses by death and long term members going into sheltered accommodation this year and also members from other denominations who now have transport difficulties. Our total membership is down to 15 with an average attendance of 12. As with all House Groups our aim is to hold regular meetings for fellowship, support and Bible Study. We have met regularly and hope we have grown in Faith together."

Ken Mumford

Thursday Night House group

Rachael and Ian Prince

Fortnightly @ 8pm, 235 Thorney Leys OX28 5NY 01993 773651

Group size: 9

New Members very welcome!

Aims: Our main aims are to meet regularly during term time for fun and fellowship and to study. We like to choose material that is challenging and has a direct impact on our everyday lives.

We meet on a Thursday and meet every fortnight during term time. More members are always welcome.

Progress and Achievements: We recently finished the book 'Holy Habits' by Andrew Roberts and have been following the York Course 'On the third day' in the run up to Easter. Our group increased in size this year when we welcomed Ann Wittrick to our group.

Rachael & Ian Prince

Seedhouse House Group

We continue to meet regularly on the first Tuesday evening of the month and continue to share fellowship and friendship, before (often during) and after studying the bible. We certainly enjoy each other's sense of humours and our meetings are blessed with laughter. We have been using one study book, looking at Names of God – which is proving challenging but nonetheless enjoyable.

Val Seedhouse

Vanner Road House Group

Vanner Road Housegroup meets on the first and third Tuesday evenings every month except August, including the occasional social evening. We now have 14 members and others would be very welcome to join us.

Our aim is to meet for Bible Study, prayer, and friendship. We enjoy lively, informal discussion, respect each other's point of view, encourage each other in exploring passages from the Bible, try to apply what we learn for living in today's world and help each other grow in our spiritual journeys.

During 2017/18 we have studied more themes in St Luke's Gospel, a York Course "Tough Talk: Hard sayings of Jesus" and some of the Parables of Jesus

Anne Crawford and Mike Limmer

Witney View House Group

Our numbers remain stable. We meet twice a month on Tuesday evenings.

In the winter months we continue to use 'Conversations Among Friends' which give us insights into some of the more difficult parts of the Bible. In the summer Rev Hilary Ewing leads us in a Bible study.

As a group we seek to provide support and friendship for our members, to deepen our faith and make it relevant to the 21st century.

Muriel Glithero

The 'Old Friday' House Group

We meet usually fortnightly but now on a Thursday afternoon in Aston but even this varies. We normally watch DVD's produced by Our Daily Bread Ministries. We usually use these as we find them very informative and easy to understand. We always welcome new members to our group and find that apart from meeting as a house group we try to support each other at other times.

Dorothy Donald, Ruth Hems, Grace Hutchins, Rosie Jones and Mary Price

Women's Fellowship

The Fellowship has continued with the pattern of meeting on the 2nd and 4th Mondays during school term times as this is the preferred structure of the ladies, several of whom have family responsibilities in school holidays.

There are currently over 30 names on the membership list but, as previously several members are unable to attend the meetings because they are now house-bound, have family caring responsibilities, or health reasons. They are prayed for regularly and are visited by other ladies from the Fellowship.

The meetings, which are open to all interested parties, continue to be lively and informal, but do reflect the caring nature of the Fellowship who pray for each other, for local issues and worldwide concerns. The range of the programme is varied with the occasional quiz, member participation events, and speakers drawn from the circuit, other churches in the area and local charity organisations,

with many having a Christian message. The meetings usually end with 'Tea, Chat and Cake' in the coffee bar.

A collection is taken at each meeting and, after a donation has been given to High Street, refreshments costs covered, and a 'Thank you' gift given to speakers, a contribution is sent to Circuit Mission, other UK and foreign charities.

in November we were responsible for providing the refreshments prior to the Operation Christmas Child Celebration. During the year, the ladies continue to contribute knitted hats, scarves, mittens and other items for the Shoe-Box Appeal.

Thanks to Anne Crawford for providing such a varied and interesting programme, to Shirley Simpson for managing the finances, Barbara Partlett for making the attractive birthday cards, Margaret Lawley for her musical talents in leading the singing, and to all the ladies who attend the meetings ensuring that is truly a 'Women's Fellowship'.

Ann Worrall

Newland Methodist Chapel

6 Helpers

28 attending

Our aim is to bless the people of Newland with a place from which to pray, spread the gospel and provide a place where people can meet and find friends.

We have a meal and meeting with guest speakers each Thursday evening which includes worship, prayer and Christian message.

We have a drop in on a one Saturday morning per month for free tea, coffee and cake.

A formal act of worship is conducted on the fourth Sunday of each month.

We continue to attract people to our various meetings.

We have started a drop in for crafts etc twice a month where we play board games, have a jigsaw out and have a time of chat with the inevitable tea and cake. There is also Christian literature available together with a quiet corner for prayer. So far we have failed to attract people from the community but it is a pleasant afternoon for those who come. We hope to take part in 'Thy kingdom come' and re-leaflet the area offering prayer and advertising our various activities.

Our Chapel continues to bring Christ to our community by being a loving inclusive fellowship, with a Christian wayside pulpit outside. The fellowship is very supportive to all who come.

Dave Richardson

In-Touch

In-Touch is a free bi-monthly magazine by and for the three Methodist fellowships in Witney. At High Street, it is available to everybody who comes in to the coffee bar. Copies are also distributed by and through Davenport Road Methodist Church. In this way the magazine brings something of the Good News of Christ to our community.

It has one editor (me). Thank you to those who provide regular copy with news about members and activities in the church fellowships. Anybody can contribute articles and all items submitted tend to be reproduced. However, items may be slightly changed for reasons of clarification and space. Opinions/thoughts expressed are those of the named contributor, not necessarily mine.

In-Touch is not only for us within the church, it also provides a window for non-churched and de-churched people as to what we are about as Christian communities and individuals. As such it is important to show, implicitly and sometimes more explicitly, that the Good News of Jesus is for everyone, that God loves them, that the Kingdom of Heaven is here and now and that people who call themselves Christians are people of joy and hope as well as being flawed human beings. I feel that it is also important to demonstrate that the Church of God is fully engaged in the business of the world – hence articles on Fairtrade, Holocaust Memorial Day, World AIDS Day etc. In this way the magazine reflects High Street's mission statement.

E-In-Touch is produced for those who want to view the magazine online. It is also put on the website, with contact details of individuals removed.

Thanks to all who contribute articles and ideas for In-Touch, they are appreciated.

I'm very aware that I have edited In-Touch for some years now. Whilst I am very happy to continue, if anybody else would like to take the role on, please do get in touch.

Ruth Lapworth

The Boys Brigade 1st Witney Company Junior Section

Membership & Staffing

Since the start of the session our membership has dropped slightly to six boys. Three members in the junior section 8 – 11yrs and three in the Company Section 11 – 15yrs. These are all keen boys and are loyal members of the Company.

The staff of the company remains the same, myself, Colin and Chris. Since the end of January Chris has been ill and unable to help at BB, which has put more pressure on me and Colin.

Church

By the end of this session we will have attended our three church parades of the year, Remembrance Sunday, Enrolment and awards services. All have been well attended by the boys.

We have run three very successful Saturday mornings in the coffee bar, raising funds for the company

Competitions

As always the company tries to take part in as many Oxfordshire BB events as possible over the year.

Our Company Section boys took part in the Ten Pin Bowling at Banbury and came away surprised winners.

We also currently hold the Company Uni Hoc and Table Tennis titles. Over the year we have hosted several competitions here at the church and at the Windrush Leisure Centre.

Awards

Throughout the session the boys have covered various subjects for their badges ranging from Ironing, Cooking and Baking for Mothers' Day, Road Safety and making Bird Boxes - all very important life skills.

Events

Socially we took the boys in November to the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock as part of their WW1 badge. For Christmas this year we had a family trip to Blenheim Palace to see the light displays.

Also in December the staff attended The Batt and Tower Hill schools Christmas fairs to try and gain new members.

Once again we are planning to take the boys to Life 2 the Max at BB headquarters in June for a day of activities along with companies from all over the country.

The Company also had a visit from the national BB Development worker for this area Gareth Hillier in February. Hopefully he will be able to help us promote BB in schools.

Donation

This year in January, some of you may have noticed that we were one of the nominations at Waitrose for their green token scheme for community matters. In April Colin Dickenson attended a coffee morning at Waitrose where the company was presented with a cheque for £189. Thanks to all who helped collect the tokens.

Future

The company now has an email address from BB and you can keep up to date with what's happening on our Twitter page.

We would like to set up a website and have all the passwords and server space from headquarters, but not the Knowledge. If anybody can help us in anyway with this matter please contact us.

Mark Tooley, Captain

2nd Witney Guides

Members

The unit continues to grow and we have 26 guides with 4 new guides joining after the Easter holiday.

The unit is run by myself Allison Warren as Unit leader and assistant leaders Becky Raven and Katy White. We have two Young Leaders (ages 14 to 17) who also help run the unit.

About Us

Girlguiding is dedicated to creating a better world for girls and young women

We empower girls, we give them space to grow and we ensure that each one of them can get involved - no matter what their background or ability. Here are some of the things that make our charity special.

(Girlguiding Website April 2017)

We carry out our aim by providing the guides with a weekly programme of events based around the 5 guide programme zones – Global Awareness, Discovery, Healthy Lifestyles, Celebrating Diversity and Skills and Relationships. Activities we have undertaken in the last year include – learning first aid, visiting the Witney Fire Station, learning about internet safety, cooking, sports and crafts.

Development

We aim to provide the guides with a safe girl only space in which to undertake activities both in and outside the meeting place. The guides take part in activities both as a whole unit and in their patrols. We currently have 4 patrols which are led by a patrol leader who is assisted by her patrol second. We encourage the guides to develop their leadership skills by becoming patrol leaders and seconds and also by leading group activities at meetings for example games. We have meetings during the year with the Patrol leaders and Seconders to help them develop their leadership skills called Patrol Leader council.

Achievements

We support the guides to achieve and gain awards and badges.

In the last year guides have completed the following badges as a unit – fire safety, first aid, clever clogs engineering challenge and surf smart (internet safety).

Individual guides have gained their camper, advanced camper, party planner and music group badges..

One of our Young Leaders has recently completed her Commonwealth award and Chief guides challenge. Both awards involved a lot of hard work and are amongst the three highest awards you can earn in Guiding.

Three guides were presented with their Baden Powell award in August 2017.

Special Projects

In May we had a summer camp at Deer park, Cowley, Gloucestershire. planning their own activities and cooking for themselves.

5 guides along with leaders from the unit took part in an adventure to Switzerland in August 2017. During the trip the group were able to visit the World Guiding Centre – Our Chalet in Adelboden where they met guides from Canada.

In September we had a Patrol camp where guides ran their own minicamps in Patrols. G

Guides took part in an activity day at Youlbury Scout camp, Oxford in February 2018.

Church Mission Statement

We have contributed to the mission statement of the church by serving our local community through community service projects.

We have taken part in the Church Shoe Box service, St George`s Day Parade and Witney Town Remembrance day service.

We visited a local care home at Christmas to sing Christmas carols and fundraised with the Rotary Santa sleigh.

We encourage the guides to think about their guide promise and at times throughout the year we take part in activities based around the guide promise and thinking about what the different parts of our promise mean. When new guides start we celebrate them making their guide promise with a special evening. Our last promise celebration was a celebration party with awards, music and food which was organised by one of our young leaders and three guides.

Allison Warren – Leader

Events & Social Group

We have seven members with Brenda Edwards our representative from the leadership group and Janet Buckle the group representative on Church Council.

We meet every couple of months to plan and organise a programme of differing events with the aim of bringing together and enhancing the fellowship of our church family through social and music events; and to facilitate an evangelical event.

We aim to run four events a year, with one which is specifically more evangelical with the leadership group, and also to support where possible others who wish to organise an event .

This past year's big event was the visit of One Sound, a Christian youth choir who stayed at the church for three days and were feed and cared for by Brenda, Mary and their team. We were rewarded by their fabulous concert and participation in the Sunday service. It was inspiring to see such a large group of young Christians walking around Witney.

In March we enjoyed a return visit from the Bath Male Choir with their specially requested guest soloist Becky Reed accompanied by Peter Hunt.

Socially, with thanks to Richard Lock, we had another very successful Quiz night and in September there was a slightly disorganised but really enjoyable harvest bring and share supper with some memorable homemade entertainment . It has been lovely to be able to extend our welcome to both those we often see in our Sunday Services and those we don't.

Janet Buckle (chair)

Mission and Outreach

Children & Families Work

Toddler Groups

Wesley Baby & Toddler Group is held on Friday mornings 9.45-11.30am during term-time. Each week we have a variety of play equipment, a craft or sensory play activity, drink and snack time and a singing session. We now run the group in two rooms simultaneously because of a big increase in numbers attending, since the Children's Centre closed down. We usually welcome around 45 adults plus accompanying children – 100 people in total! We have well over 100 families registered, with new people turning up every week. We have had a committed team of Mums and church members running the group this year. We have, however, just said goodbye to Sherri, one of our key Mum helpers and Ellie will be leaving us in the summer. We are very grateful for the difference

they both made to the group. Sherri put a lot of work into creating and maintaining a registration system, when the numbers grew and produced wonderful craft and sensory play activities for the children. Ellie often has the room set up before anyone else appears and she is also the last to leave. She has provided great encouragement and pastoral support to both the helpers and those attending. We have recently welcomed two church members Linda Burbage and Helen Williamson to our team, but more help is still needed, if we are to continue offering spaces for so many parents and children.

Witney Grandparents' Group runs on Tuesday mornings 9.30-11.30am during term-time, with around 20 adults plus their pre-school grandchildren attending each week. New people are regularly welcomed and the group usually runs close to capacity. The group is run by some of the grandparents themselves, with the support of Helen James, as our church link person. The children enjoy a variety of play equipment, craft activities, healthy snack time and a singing session. The Grandparents also meet for social sessions outside the group.

Members of both toddler groups are invited to other activities taking place in the church. We've been delighted to see some of them join us for Messy Church and for our pancake parties on Shrove Tuesday too.

Messy Church

Messy Church is held on the first Sunday of each month 4-6pm and is open to all! It's an opportunity to find out more about God in a relaxed, informal atmosphere. We welcome around 40- 60 people of all ages, including many young families. We have a committed team of over 25 people, who work together to prepare an inspiring and welcoming occasion for those attending. This year in addition to

celebrating Easter, Pentecost and Christmas, our themes have included Jesus the Good Shepherd, Jesus the Light of the World and Jesus the Bread of Life.

Each session starts with taking part in a range of activities – lots of crafts, some more thoughtful activities and some more active! Whilst being creative, there's always a question to discuss linked to our theme. We then join together for a short time of worship, which includes a talk and a song and often makes use of some of our creations. You may have seen the wonderful cross covered in paper flowers, which we used at our Easter celebration, as a focus for our prayers. We finish with a meal -a wonderful opportunity to get to know one another better, whilst sharing the delicious food prepared by our volunteers. Messy Church is free, but any donations given are shared 50/50 between our running costs and a charity. Every three months we support a different charity, chosen by those who come along. This year the charities have included Helen & Douglas House, Besom, Dementia UK and Autism Family Support Oxfordshire.

In January we celebrated two years of Messy Church here at High Street with a party and of course a special cake. One of the most moving occasions was in February, when we shared communion together for the first time. We served each other in small groups, sat around tables, covered in cloths we'd created ourselves. This was the first time some families had shared communion together.

All members of our Junior Church come along to Messy Church, but we also have other families and individuals, who attend regularly. For them High Street Methodist Church is their church. We are very grateful to all of those who have shared their gifts to help us build up and support this part of our church family over the last year. We

hope you will all want to continue to be part of our Messy family and more of you will be inspired to join us.

This report wouldn't be complete without a big thank you to Ellie and Luke. Luke has created wonderful leaflets and posters for us each month and we are now looking for a volunteer to take on this role. Ellie has led and inspired the Messy team with such grace, energy and enthusiasm, that being part of the team has become an important part of being church for many of us. She has helped us create a warm, welcoming environment, with space for fun, laughter and fellowship, but also for reflection and the chance to ask questions about faith. We pray that we will be able to continue to make Messy Church an exciting, welcoming and inspiring place to explore the Christian faith.

Helen James, Pastoral Lay Worker, Children & Families

'Experience' work with Primary Schools

Over the last 5 years the work we do with local primary schools has expanded considerably, growing from 2 schools to 5 or 6, from 4 classes to 8 or 9 (the number depending on whether Springfield bring a class or not). This is entirely due to the work of Ellie with the schools in visiting, getting to know the staff and taking assemblies. Ellie has been a great encourager and thus we now offer *Experience Pentecost*. I am grateful to all those who trustingly lend us the things we need for the displays.

We have become more organised in that we now specify which classes we are inviting, thus year 4 come to *Experience Harvest*, year 3 to *Christmas*, year 5 to *Easter* and year 6 to *Experience Pentecost*. For each class's visit we need 7 people, so over 8 visits we have 56

slots to fill, and then that happens 4 times per year. Timetabling is not always easy!! But everyone is very understanding and generous with their offers of time. Consequently we have needed to enlarge our team of volunteers and now have several people from other local churches, bringing the total to 26. We have a break time in the middle of each session, so that requires 2 people to organise drinks and biscuits and clear away after. Thus we have another team of 15 people. I am very grateful to Mary Blow from Davenport Road who has kindly agreed to take on the task of timetabling and organising the team and ensuring the drinks and biscuits etc are available. I am also grateful to Mary Willis who buys the necessary provisions for us.

Our aim is to tell the stories of our faith to primary school children, so that they might hear what Christmas, Easter etc are really about. Each class comes with several adult helpers as well as the teacher, so they too can hear the stories. We are sowing seeds though we may not see the harvest . . . It is also really important to us that the children feel welcomed and have an enjoyable experience in this church.

We all feel that this is a really important part of the church's outreach into the local community. One teacher said she was really pleased that we were giving her class the opportunity to come to the church for *Experience Easter* and that they rarely have the chance to do anything of this kind. She said that many of the children didn't know the Christmas or the Easter story. Here are a few of their responses when the children were asked what was the most important thing they had learned:

- that life's not easy and Jesus was let down too
- to serve other people like Jesus served us
- that Jesus is always alive
- that no matter what you do you're never alone.

In the autumn I contacted the vicar, Rev'd Margaret Dixon, at North Leigh to find out if they might be willing to help us offer a session for the school there instead, she said they could do so – it was great to have such an enthusiastic response! We met, along with one of the congregation, and I shared our experience of *Experience Christmas* with them. Now they are committed to offering *Experience* to North Leigh classes with our support. I hope that in the coming year we might encourage another of the local village churches to offer *Experience* to their Primary school.

On behalf of the Experience team I would like to say a big THANK YOU to Ellie for all she done with us and for us; for her inclusive, thoughtful way of working and being; for her deep, lived faith; for all we have learned from her; for being Ellie – thank you. We shall miss you enormously but have no fear, the work will continue because you have not made us dependent on you! Instead you have enabled and encouraged us.

Brenda Woods

Coffee Bar

Since we took over as coordinators, we have found that many of the volunteers have decided to leave for one reason or another and we are finding it difficult to recruit new volunteers. We intend to re-access the volunteer list and bring the emergency list up-to-date.

We have introduced aprons so people behind the coffee bar can be recognised.

Our volunteers interact with the general public on a friendly basis.

There are ongoing improvements in the coffee bar, which we are involved in.

We are implementing a check list of how many people use the coffee bar, ie to purchase beverages.

We would like to thank all our loyal volunteers, their time given is invaluable.

David & Celia Woodfine,,Coffee Bar Coordinators

Knit 'n' Natter

Knit 'n' Natter has been running for six years and continues to grow in numbers, occupying three tables in the Coffee Bar between 10.30am – 12.30 each week. We can have up to 20 ladies, both young and the more mature. Not only is it a good way of meeting other ladies (gentlemen are welcome too, however!) but you can socialise while being creative. Knitting and wool craft has made a big come-back so get yourself some needles and wool and come and join us. You don't have to be a knitter just come and natter if you want!

We have a mixture of people who are church members and people who are not. We do our own projects but also knit for the Special Care Baby Unit at the JR, CLIC Sargent, Christmas Shoeboxes and various other charities

Knit'n' Natter Group

World Church Committee

This committee has 8 members and meets twice a year in Spring and Autumn. We aim to involve and educate members of the congregation to the needs of the wider world and in accordance with our mission statement: “determined to support our fellow Christians”.

We have continued to work with these aims during 2017 – 2018 through our involvement in:

- **World Church Sunday:** We learnt about the work of MAF in our 2017 service and were grateful to Stevie for her contribution in introducing us to the work of MAF. This year's service will be held on Sunday 15th July 2018 and a speaker from Water Harvest (previously Wells for India) will be leading our worship. We are planning on sharing together in a fellowship lunch after the service.
- **Christian Aid week:** 13th – 19th May 2018. Envelopes will be given out at HS and a display put up at the back of the worship area encouraging people to donate monthly. All proceeds from the Lent lunches is given to Christian Aid and envelopes were available at the lunches.
- **Water Harvest (Wells for India):** We continue to give our small change on a Sunday morning in the large glass bottles, but there are boxes at the back of the church for those who would prefer to take a box home. Once full they can be given to Ken Mumford or Jane Heath to empty. This loose change goes to increase the availability and accessibility of water to the people in Rajasthan, India. Last year we banked £434, over £45 more than the previous year.

The coffee bar profits for last year were divided between Mission in Witney (50%), Street children in Kolkata (25%) and the Karibuni

Children (25%). The charity box on the coffee bar continues to raise funds for both Kolkata and Karibuni charities.

If you have a heart for Mission we would love you to join with us in our work, please do come and speak to me or any of the group (Ann Worrall, Tom & Margaret Jones, Elgin & Nancy Crewe, Owen Carney or Stevie Green).

Jane Heath

Christmas Shoeboxes

Administrative Information

- Name of Group Shoebox Team
- Number of volunteers between 25 and 40
- We have 12 members in the Shoebox Team

Aims

The aim of the group is to organise the collection, checking and packing of shoeboxes to be transported to countries like Romania, Belarus and Bosnia where some of the children are living in desperate circumstances. The boxes are filled with toys, toiletries, writing materials, games and sweets to delight the children, most of whom have no possessions at all.

The team tries to involve as many people from our community as possible in this activity and promote a warm and friendly atmosphere in which to check the boxes.

- We invite churches, schools, local businesses and WI to join with us and be collection points for shoeboxes.

- Hold coffee mornings to raise funds for top up items and transport costs.
- Advertise in local village newsletters and on our website asking if anyone would like to be involved in knitting, donating, checking, packing or helping in any other way to please get in touch.
- The send-off evening involves the local Fireman, Police and volunteers to load the crates onto the lorry, we have refreshments and the Boys Brigade to play carols for us.

Progress and Achievements

- The volunteers were brilliant and even though we were squashed in at times they all got on so well and did a wonderful job.
- We shared the worship area with the group of charity workers selling cards once again and that brought in extra people who came to see what we were doing. We were able to explain and we had more donations and one or two more helpers.
- The Shoebox Celebration Service was well attended by the community and we had the support of the Women's Fellowship who kindly supplied refreshments.

The shoeboxes make a wonderful display along with all the large toys and knitted items that the people of Witney and surrounding villages have donated.

Reverend Melanie arranges the service and blesses the boxes before they are packed into crates and sent off. The Brownies and Guides also attended.

- Teams4U were really supportive and it was a great experience working with them.

Marie Cotton

Lunchtime Recitals

The church hosted its 18th season of lunchtime recitals on five Thursdays between April and November 2017.

These recitals continue to be an important part of the church's outreach; the average audience at each concert last year continued at about 50-55, mostly people who have no other contact with the church. They are all grateful for this opportunity to enjoy classical music in the informal and friendly, but acoustically excellent, setting of our town centre church. The age spread is wide, and both young children and the disabled can integrate easily within the audience.

The recitals, to which entry is always free of charge, are given by 'Lunchtime Recitals', an autonomous organisation which evolved in 2014 from the small group of musicians who had provided the artistic input to the recitals from their start. Its raison d'être is to put on regular lunchtime recitals by professional musicians at High St. The church provides the venue free of charge but 'Lunchtime Recitals' provides everything else, including all performance planning and costs. The artistic director is West Oxfordshire mezzo-soprano Annabel Molyneaux and it is thanks to her enthusiasm, ability, and generosity with her time and talents that the recitals are able to continue. Her careful planning of each recital around a particular theme always ensures an inventive and entertaining mix of music. She, her regular pianist Peter Cowdrey, and her husband Paul, speaker and occasional bass, perform at all the recitals but with

different guests each time. Last year's guests brought to us music for violin, cello, oboe, flute, trumpet and ukulele; the last concert of the series broke new ground when artist Eugenie Vronskaya painted a large and colourful frieze in front of the audience, improvised as she listened to Peter's piano performance of Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition!

It is considered important by both partners in this outreach that the recitals remain free of charge. This means that 'Lunchtime Recitals' has to work hard to keep in financial balance, but both the District and Town Councils, recognising the importance to the local community, give invaluable grants. Individuals can (and do) help by becoming Friends of Lunchtime Recitals and there is also a small income from programme sales. Of vital importance too is the generosity shown by the musicians, all of them professional, in accepting fees that are significantly less than they could get elsewhere, and for this both 'Lunchtime Recitals' and the church are most grateful.

Tom Jones (High St .Liaison Person with 'Lunchtime Recitals')

Fairtrade

Fairtrade very much exists in High Street as our Coffee Bar always uses it for tea, coffee and sugar. It has the full support of the Church. We do not have a committee as such and it may be good to have one to develop Fairtrade awareness as a movement that benefits poor farmers, workers and their communities .

High Street is a member of WAFTAG, the area Fairtrade group and supports Witney as a Fairtrade Town.

Elgin Crewe

Methodist Homes for the Aged (MHA)

MHA celebrates its 75th anniversary this year, and your continued interest and generosity are much appreciated as you support MHA in its work of caring for older people in independent living schemes and care homes, including 'The Homestead' home in Carterton. An envelope collection takes place each year in June, around the time of the annual Methodist Homes' Sunday, which this year falls on June 10th. Last year, High Street raised £199 out of a total contribution of £1128 from the circuit.

Until very recently, Rev Elgin Crewe, has been the circuit secretary and treasurer for MHA, and we thank him most sincerely for his care and commitment.

I have taken over the role for this year.

Rev Hilary Ewing

Cream Tea Outreach (monthly)

Almost three years have passed since our Sunday afternoon cream teas were started and I am pleased to say they are still going strong. We have a stalwart group of 28/32 people who attend regularly, come rain or shine, even the snow did not stop them. The ethos of the cream teas remains unchanged, to provide a place to meet, share conversations and form friendships.

- The teas which consist of sandwiches, scones (with cream and jam) and cakes are freshly made by our own team of faithful helpers each month and are presented as attractively as possible. We do not make a charge, thanks to the generous support of grants from the Rotary Club and the

Witney Lions for which we give our grateful thanks. Why not come and try it? The teas are held on the third Sunday of each month, at 4pm, in the Coffee Bar. All I ask is that you contact me to book a place by the Friday prior to the date of the tea as we would hate to run out of food! The dates can be found on the Church notice board together with my contact details.

We hope to continue this venture for the foreseeable future and would ask for your prayers to support us in what we see as part of the Church's Outreach Mission especially to all who are vulnerable, lonely or elderly.

Brenda Edwards

Inter Church Relations

Churches Together in Witney and District

Churches Together Council meets three times a year and at other times when needed. Lay and ordained representatives from most of the churches in the town regularly attend. 2017-18 Chair is Rev Dr Nick Pike and Rev Ness Whiffin will take over in May 2018.

Sue Green and I are CTiW representatives for High Street. I am also its secretary. CTiW aims to foster and encourage ecumenical cooperation between the various denominations in Witney and District.

High Street always supports the annual events organised by CTiW including the Good Friday Walk of Witness and act of worship in the Market Square. The Sunrise Service on Easter Day 2018 was held again

held in the garden at the Congregational Church and was attended by about 25 from various churches including members from High Street. Other events are organised during the year including carol singing in Witney town centre on a Saturday in December. Other annual events include the Week of Prayer in January when services are held in different churches on most evenings of that week, usually three or four United Services are held annually.

Soup Lunches took place again in various churches in Witney every week during Lent in aid of Christian Aid. High Street hosted one on 14th March.

There is a monthly Prayer Breakfast held at High Street on the fourth Saturday morning and more members of High Street would be very welcome to attend. CTiW issues a Prayer Diary four times a year and High Street is always represented.

During 2017 CTiW participated in national prayer events and some members of High Street were involved in 'Thy Kingdom Come' during a week in May. High Street members are now involved in planning 'Thy Kingdom Come' prayer event in Witney from Ascension Day to Pentecost 2018 including taking part in the 24/7 prayers.

Information about events taking place in member churches is circulated regularly to give the opportunity for attendance by those from other denominations.

Anne Crawford

Women's World Day of Prayer: March 22nd 2018

All God's Creation is Very Good!

The service this year was prepared by Christian women of Suriname, South America and during the service we were urged to cherish God's exquisite gift of creation and to commit ourselves to caring for God's world responsibly. This is a country with a population of 540,000 and the official language is Dutch, but Sranan (Creole language) is also spoken. Over 90% of the country is covered by pristine tropical rainforest and it is a country of beauty and high biodiversity with 715 species of birds and many orchids.

The Women's World day of Prayer is a wonderful opportunity to share in worship with women all around the globe, all using the same service.

The WWDP service in Witney was organised by representatives of 8 churches in Witney. This year after great deliberation it was decided to put all our energy into one service at 10.30am and it was the turn of St. Mary's on the green to host it. Unfortunately, we had a very cold spell with snow which meant that it would have been dangerous for people to get out, so it was postponed until Thursday 12th April. This meant that it was not as well attended as on previous years, but was appreciated by all those who were there.

Please look out for information about next years' service prepared by the women in Slovenia, themed: "Come – Everything is Ready".

Jane Heath

Property

Centre Coordinator

Since February last year Richard and I have worked together on setting up and running a comprehensive booking and invoicing program which has greatly improved the efficiency of the Office.

It has been a challenging year many hirers are charities and have felt the pressures of funding cuts and in some cases having finances withdrawn. Two new office spaces have been opened up the Luke Room and the Peter Room are now both available for small meetings.

The issue of security is an ongoing concern and we all need to be vigilant. The prospect of Wi Fi throughout the building would greatly improve our chances of expanding future hire.

I would like to give thanks to Robin Edmunds, Robin Hambidge, Jason Thomas and Malcolm Cartner for their valuable contributions and their ability to work as a team. Graham Beechey and Sandra Robinson have both assisted on countless occasions and of course Richard Lock and Ann-Marie Purkiss.

At the heart of everything we do Jesus we work for him and the furtherance of his Kingdom on Earth

“I see no business in life but the work of Christ” (Henry Martyn)

Mary Willis, Centre Coordinator

The Property Team

The Property Team meets monthly to deal with the practical details of maintaining and running the premises, with the larger Finance and Property Committee meeting three to four times per year to consider matters of policy.

We are grateful to our paid staff Mary Willis, Robin Edmunds, Robin Hambidge, Malcolm Cartner, Jason Thomas and Graham Beechey who keep our buildings clean and secure. We also appreciate the many volunteers (including Man Friday and the Coffee Bar helpers) who do so much to keep the premises open, tidy, safe and welcoming.

Use of Premises

We are pleased to host Volunteer Link-Up, Witney Talking News, U3A, Witney Music Society, the Women's Institute and many other community activities and organisations.

After many years the Red Cross medical loan service have vacated their store due to changes in their circumstances. The church flat is let through Martin's as our managing agent. Lynne Carter has a 3-5 year lease on the shop unit.

We have a constant balancing act between maintaining open, welcoming premises and ensuring that the building is safe and secure and we are grateful to both staff and volunteers for all they do to assist with this. Similarly Mary does well the difficult job of ensuring we have sufficient outside bookings to help pay for the upkeep of the premises, while also having space available for the church's outreach work which is our primary purpose.

Major works

Serious expenditure has been incurred during the year on maintaining the heating system and the lightning conductors. A flood in the Wesley Room led to an insurance claim for repainting the ceiling and replacing the carpet.

The Old School Building

The sale of the empty Old School Building at the back of our premises to Amadeus Software was completed on 28th July 2017. Amadeus have proved to be good neighbours and are upgrading the building in a sympathetic manner.

The proceeds of sale, less a Connexional levy, are now in the Circuit Model Trust Fund, and we can apply (along with other churches in the Circuit) for grants towards actions that enhance the mission of the church.

Potential refurbishment of our buildings

It is now 22 years since the redevelopment of our premises, and some areas are showing signs of wear and tear due to the intensive use which they receive - for example the Coffee Bar and the downstairs toilets. A working group has been set up to consider refurbishment of such areas and the Church was given money from the Circuit Model Trust Fund (see above) for architects Stanhope Wilkinson Associates to do a costed feasibility study. Their very useful report has just been received, and Church Council is currently considering our next steps.

Health and Safety

The Church Council remains aware of our responsibilities towards the health and safety of all who use our premises and continues to look for someone to take charge of this work. Meanwhile we are putting in place systems to ensure that items such as emergency lights and fire extinguishers are checked regularly. A defibrillator and CPR training evening has been held.

Keith Crawford, Property Secretary

The Organ Fund

Our fine organ depends on five large bellows-like air reservoirs to store and regulate its air supply. After 99 years, these air reservoirs (which were patched when the organ was overhauled 22 years ago) are coming to the end of their life. Each has to be taken out (not an easy task as they were put in when the organ was originally erected), taken to Durham and rebuilt, brought back and reinstalled, at a cost of around £7,500 each.

A fund has been set up, separate from other church funds, to pay for this work. Thanks to generous donations, enough was raised to complete the first, and worst, reservoir last year. We now have sufficient to pay for the next two reservoirs, which will be done by Harrisons in the late summer. This has been made possible by grants from the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust and the WODC Community Facilities fund, together with a very significant donation from the Richard Early Trust.

We are very grateful for the kindness of all those who have brought us to this point. We are continuing to fundraise for the final two reservoirs (particularly with a "Songs of Praise" evening led by Pam

Rhodes and Paul Leddington Wright) so that this wonderful instrument can lead our worship and praise to God well into its second century.

Keith Crawford, Val Donoghue and Rachael Prince

Man Friday

Number of organisers

One co-ordinator through which all work requested should be channelled.

Helpers / members of group

Sadly our numbers are dwindling this year due to age and infirmity. We now have 8 Men Fridays & 2 Girl Fridays (more always welcome and **very necessary!**)

Aims

A social meeting for retired folks who, as well as enjoying each other's company, are willing to attempt minor D.I.Y jobs around the church buildings – really valuable work keeping our premises looking good & welcoming.

How this aim is carried out

With enthusiasm and the help of cakes baked by Phyllis as well as the occasional birthday cake!

Development of group

If you are available & would like to join this happy band, please come along on a Friday morning from 9.00am to 12 noon - and see what they get up to - new members are always welcome, whatever their skills. Please contact Geoff or Margaret [881316] for more information.

N.B. Attendance each Friday is NOT compulsory and if you can spare only half a morning, you will be welcome too.

Progress of projects

We usually have about 20 tasks on the books at any one time, ranging from putting up shelves and coat hooks, sorting out vacuum cleaners, changing light bulbs to mending chairs and deterring pigeons! These jobs are crossed off as they are completed - but there are always others to take their place.

Value of this group

Inestimable & a great money saver for the church!

Margaret Wright

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Treasurer's Report & Accounts

The accounts of the church have been prepared and are presented below in the format as required by the Charities Commission. These present the full picture of the activities of the church and combine both the normal church operation and the funds for the building projects.

The accounts show an overall deficit of £5,722 (2016: £24,832) with unrestricted funds showing a deficit of £9,249 (2016: £17,807) and restricted funds (the building project) showing a surplus of £3,527 (2016: deficit of £7,025).

Lettings are up by 2.5% (2016: down by 1%). Regular giving (offerings and tax credits) grew by 6% (2016: 2.5%) partly as a result of the TRIO presentation although this occurred quite late in the year. Costs, excluding those relating to the building project, were in line with 2016. Increased spend on the circuit assessment and staff salaries were offset by lower spend on repairs and maintenance.

The churches funds have dropped notably during the year. Excluding the building project money the funds stand at £62,340 (2016: £70,667) representing 25% (2016 – 28%) of annual expenditure. However, it should be noted that a level of reserves needs to be maintained to protect the fabric of the church building.

The funding position of the church building project is at £5,125.

Going forward, the challenge indicated in last year's report remains. The level of reserves cannot support the current level of deficit for more than a couple of years.

The accounts have been audited and are presented below.

Ian
Treasurer

Prince,

ACMA

High Street Methodist Church, Witney					Number	1129034
Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) for the year ended 31 August 2017						
Section A Statement of financial activities						
Recommended categories by activity	Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year funds	
	£	£	£	£	£	
	F01	F02	F03	F04	F05	
Incoming resources (Note 3)						
Income and endowments from:						
Donations and legacies	106,250	9,385	-	115,635	104,491	
Other trading activities	123,541	-	-	123,541	117,684	
Investments	127	6	-	133	271	
Other	9,677	-	-	9,677	11,397	
Total	239,595	9,391	-	248,986	233,843	
Resources expended (Note 5)						
Expenditure on:						
Church Activities	191,804	-	-	191,804	184,858	
Property	46,254	3,970	-	50,224	64,686	
Other	12,680	-	-	12,680	9,131	
	-	-	-	-	-	
Total	250,738	3,970	-	254,708	258,675	
Net income/(expenditure) before investment gains/(losses)						
	- 11,143	5,421	-	- 5,722	- 24,832	
Net gains/(losses) on investments	-	-	-	-	-	
Net income/(expenditure)	- 11,143	5,421	-	- 5,722	- 24,832	
Extraordinary items	-	-	-	-	-	
Transfers between funds	1,894	- 1,894	-	-	-	
Other recognised gains/(losses):						
Gains and losses on revaluation of fixed assets for the charity's own use	-	-	-	-	-	
Other gains/(losses)	-	-	-	-	-	
Net movement in funds	- 9,249	3,527	-	- 5,722	- 24,832	
Reconciliation of funds:						
Total funds brought forward	71,589	1,598	-	73,187	98,019	
Total funds carried forward	62,340	5,125	-	67,465	73,187	
1						

High Street Methodist Church, Witney					Number	1129034
Balance Sheet as at 31 August 2017						
Section B Balance sheet						
	Guidance Notes	Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Endowment funds	Total this year	Total last year
		£	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets		F01	F02	F03	F04	F05
Tangible assets (Note 8)	B02	2,429	-	-	2,429	3,426
Total fixed assets	B05	2,429	-	-	2,429	3,426
Current assets						
Debtors (Note 9)	B07	5,595	-	-	5,595	12,396
Cash at bank and in hand (Note 10)	B09	58,632	5,125	-	63,757	59,832
Total current assets	B10	64,227	5,125	-	69,352	72,228
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year (Note 11)	B11	4,316	-	-	4,316	2,467
Net current assets/(liabilities)	B12	59,911	5,125	-	65,036	69,761
Total assets less current liabilities	B13	62,340	5,125	-	67,465	73,187
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year (Note 11)	B14	-	-	-	-	-
Provisions for liabilities	B15	-	-	-	-	-
Total net assets or liabilities	B16	62,340	5,125	-	67,465	73,187
Funds of the Charity						
Endowment funds	B17	-	-	-	-	-
Restricted income funds	B18	-	5,125	-	5,125	1,598
Unrestricted funds	B19	62,340	-	-	62,340	71,589
Revaluation reserve	B20	-	-	-	-	-
Total funds	B21	62,340	5,125	-	67,465	73,187
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees		Signature		Print Name		Date of approval dd/mm/yyyy

Reserve Policy for High Street Methodist Church for the year end 31st August 2017

We will commence the new financial year with £30,994 Reserve Fund held at CFB and maintain our General Fund of £32,350 held locally with an additional £5,595 of debtors due to delays in raising invoices. In 2007 Church Council agreed a Fund target of six months average expenditure (approx £125k) although in recent years we have maintained a position a little short of this target it has now dropped to only 52% of the target. Whilst this can be managed at present it reduces our ability to react if there was an emergency need.

Policy for Restricted Funds

The only restricted funds that we maintain relate to the project to develop the Wesley Centre. There are no significant funds remaining in the project and they will be used for further furnishing or maintenance of the building until exhausted.