

# **Annual Reports 2022**

**- updated Feb 2024**

**the unitarians**



# 2022 Annual Reports

**The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches**  
Registered Charity No. 250788

**The Nightingale Centre**  
Registered Charity No. 242256

**This annual report was first published in March 2023, and re-published in February 2024 after receipt of the complete audited accounts.**

**Published by The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches**  
Essex Hall 1 Essex St London WC2R 3HY  
**Tel:** 020 7240 2384 **email:** [info@unitarian.org.uk](mailto:info@unitarian.org.uk)  
[unitarian.org.uk](http://unitarian.org.uk)

# Contents

**5 President's Report**

**7 Chief Officer's Report**

**10 Trustees**

Who are we? Our Report

**18 Our Activities**

Communications Congregational Connections  
Congregational Support Hucklow Summer School  
International Unitarian Collaboration Ministry  
Ministry and Lay Training & Development  
Publishing Social Action Wales Youth

**34 Projects**

Torbay Weddings

**39 Our Volunteers**

**42 Nightingale Centre**

**45 Annual Meetings**

**47 Our Organisation & Finances**

**48 2022 Annual Meetings Accounts**

**49 Financial Summaries**

GA Nightingale

**55 Organisation**

Governance Staff

**58 Our Members**

Members Congregational Contributions



# Team Reports

**Photographers:**

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

**Cover Image / design:** This Ain't Rock'n'Roll.

# President's Report

## General Assembly President 2022-23

Rev Sue Woolley



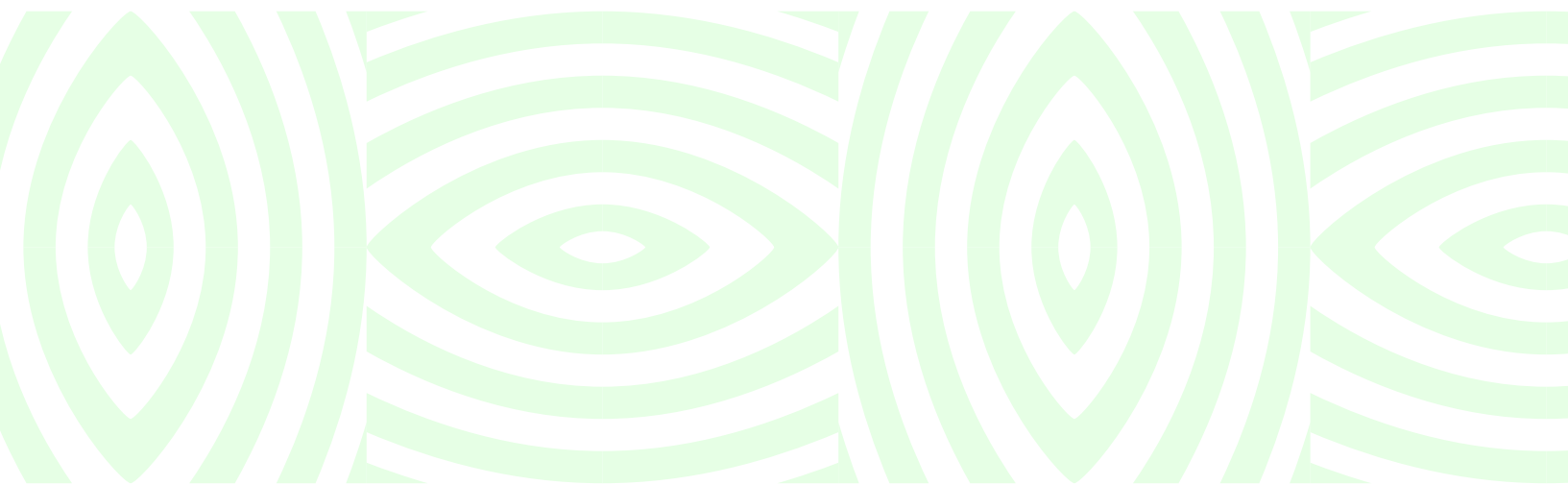
It has been a true blessing to have served as your President this year. After the alarms and excursions of 2020 and 2021, it was a great joy to be able to be installed (I still think this sounds like an engineering term!) as President at our General Assembly meetings at the Birmingham Hilton Metropole last April. The year has gone by so quickly – I can't believe it's nearly over.

Being your President has been a wonderful, wonder-full experience. I have very much enjoyed driving around the country, in fair weather and foul, visiting more than twenty congregations (so far), mainly to bring the Greetings of the General Assembly, which is all the congregations which make up our movement, and to lead worship. From the beginning of October to the end of November, I was away every weekend! I have been most grateful for the hospitality and warm welcome offered by each and every congregation. It has also given me the opportunity of starting a conversation about how to live our Unitarian values, which has been exciting. I have visited congregations who are struggling to keep going and others who are thriving. But overall, my visits have given me hope for the future, as I have experienced the deep faith of Unitarians around the country.

So many people have commented on the President's badge, which I have worn with pride. Wearing it has been a constant reminder of the privilege of serving the movement. And of representing you all too, as I did at The Cenotaph in November 2022. I hope it has also served as a reminder that we are all part of something larger than our own congregations.

Apart from leading the twenty-plus regular worship services, I have attended two District events (apart from my own), attended two Big Anniversary services, at Hull and Hinckley, led two Peace services, at Manchester Cross Street and London Golders Green, paid tribute (via Zoom) to Rev Eric Jones' 60 years of ministry, attended one ministerial induction (via Zoom), offered the Toast to Civil and Religious Liberty at Rivington Chapel, attended Stella Burney's retirement from The Nightingale Centre "do", and Past President Mike Tomlin's funeral.

It was an honour and privilege to represent the movement at the Remembrance Sunday commemoration at The Cenotaph, which was a highlight of this year. The silence (especially in such a big city) was palpable.



It has been fascinating to discover how varied our Unitarian witness is, around the country. As I wrote in *The Inquirer*, I very quickly learned that there is no such thing as “the standard hymn sandwich” – all our congregations worship in their own distinctive way. Which is as it should be. And it has been wonderful to see so many old friends and to make new ones.

It has also been interesting to attend the meetings of our hard-working National Executive Committee and to really appreciate for the first time how difficult and complex their job is, and how very dedicated they are to doing their best for the movement as a whole.

But it’s not over yet! In the New Year, I have a further four services booked, which I’m very much looking forward to. When I hand on the baton to Vince McCully at the GA Annual Meetings, it will be with hope and gratitude in my heart. This year has been an honour.

**Rev Sue Woolley**



[At The Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday 2022](#)



# Chief Officer's Report



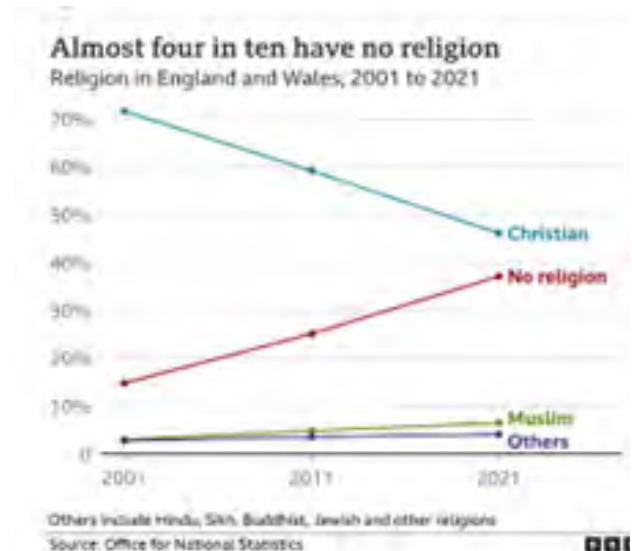
**General Assembly Chief Officer**  
**Elizabeth Slade**

This year's Annual Report covers a time of as much uncertainty as the last couple of years, as we learn to live in the long shadow of Covid.

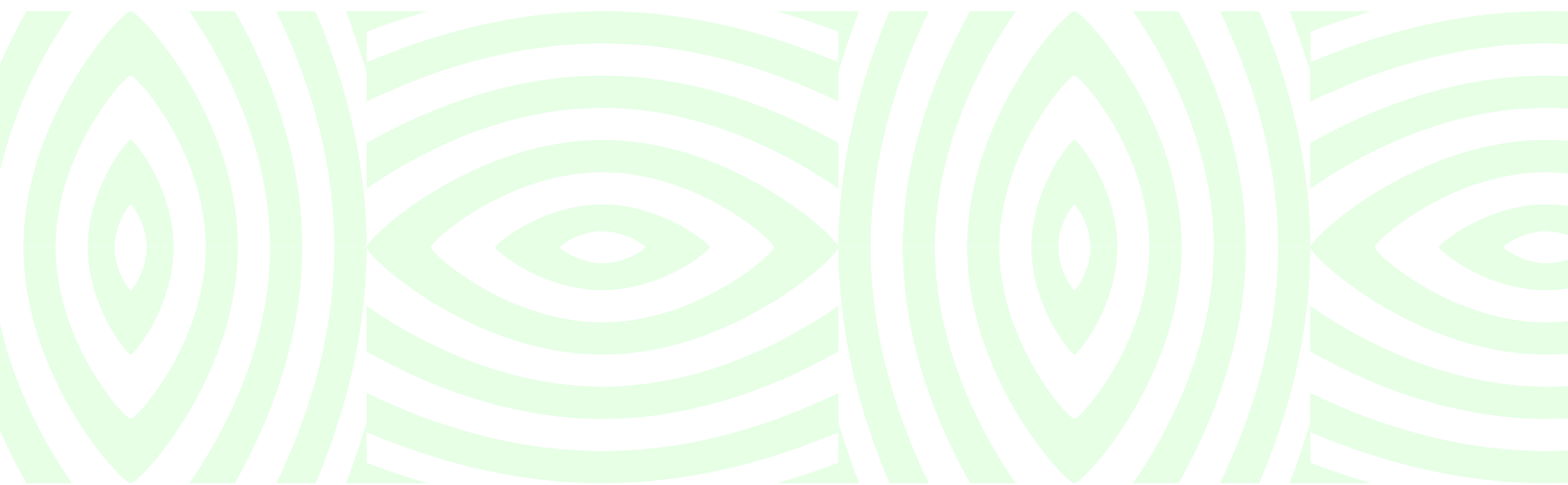
There have been many interesting shifts and new developments in this time, as congregations regroup and look to the future. Our context has changed, with the societal shifts of Covid bringing other cultural changes into focus as we look ahead to see how we serve our communities.

The 2021 census results show how rapid the change in religious culture has been in the UK. With 37% of people identifying as not religious (up from 14% twenty years ago) and 46% identifying as Christian (down from 72% in 2001), today's context is very different to that in which many of our experienced leaders came to Unitarianism. The change has been swifter than most congregations could hope to keep adapting to, and so we face the predicament of the need to adapt to today's culture without having the membership capacity to lead this change among all our congregations. It leaves us with a question of how we might work as a collective - whether there is a way to offer support in adaptation for a new lease of life, and how we might support those congregations that have naturally reached

the end of their lifespan to leave a meaningful legacy. How can we engage each other well in these tender conversations about the future? How can we ask each other for help?



There is important nuance to consider beyond the census results. We know that only around 5% of the population attend any church on a regular basis (data from UK Church Statistics), so even those identifying as Christian are mostly not taking part in regular worship. According to the Christian think tank Theos, among people identifying as 'not religious', only half say they don't believe in God, and a third would identify as 'spiritual'. And the census shows the religions



with biggest increases in membership as paganism and shamanism - traditions centred around holding nature as sacred.

To me, all this shows that we have much that we can offer people, and perhaps a responsibility to reach those who otherwise wouldn't identify as religious - and that our continually evolving faith allows us to adapt our ways of doing things without losing our core ethos.

Among those I meet in non-Unitarian settings, I see a huge appetite for and appreciation of what we stand for. In particular, there is a significant swell of interest from those who are most engaged with the climate crisis - both from those who are seasoned activists and know that burn-out arrives without a solid spiritual ground beneath them, and from those whose understanding of the scale of the crisis shows them that the materialist secular world may offer more problems than solutions.

As Unitarians and Free Christians, we are able to navigate the nuance of religious belief, just as we practise each week with the varied theologies and perspectives of those in our congregations.

As the GA, we need to balance our support of existing congregations with our support of the congregations of the future - knowing

these may look very different to those of the past. Together, we must ensure that the flame continues to be passed generation to generation in ways it can be kept alive. I've appreciated the line from the composer Gustav Mahler, "tradition is not the worship of ashes but the preservation of fire".

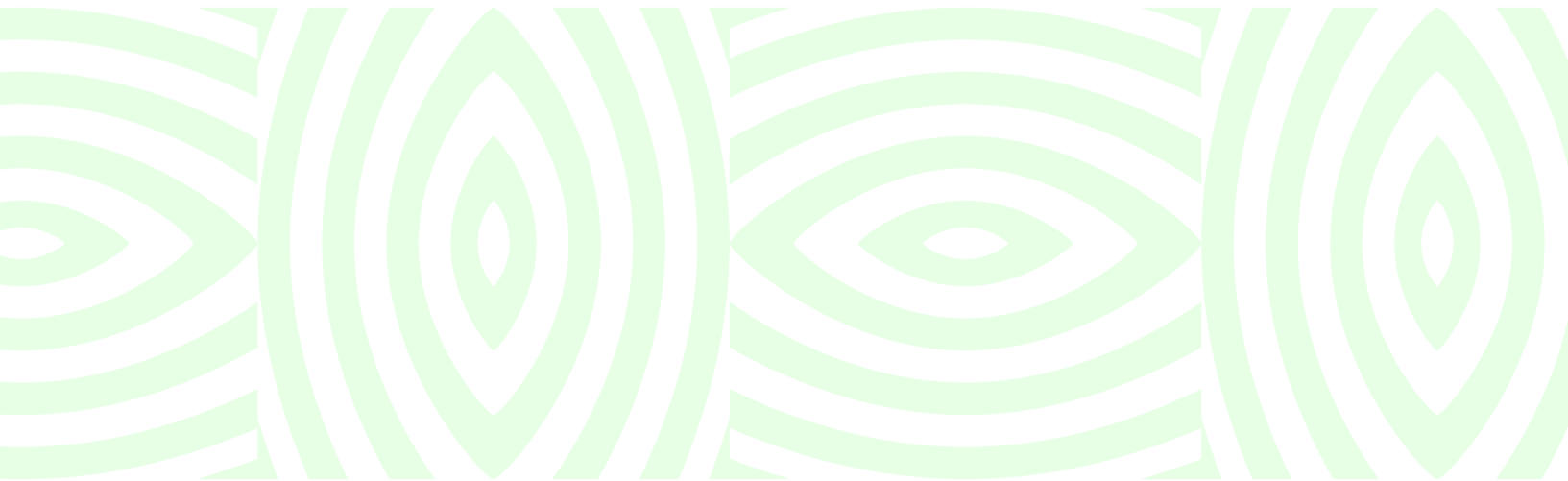
### **International collaboration**

This year I've been honoured to be part of the Leadership Design Team, tasked by the outgoing committee of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU) to discern a way forward after the closure in 2020 of the ICUU.

I have been working with Unitarians from the US, South Africa, Burundi, Romania, India, The Philippines, Australia and Brazil as we get to know each other and our very different contexts. The invitation of this work is to be decolonial and emergent in our approach to discovering how best we can collaborate with our Unitarian colleagues around the world, in a way that doesn't perpetuate unhealthy power dynamics. It is slow, careful work. I have felt many types of privilege in joining in from the UK; not only that the calls are in my native language, and we are very wealthy compared to churches in other countries, but also that unlike others I haven't had power cuts and typhoons disrupt my ability to join the calls.

**Liz Slade**





Vigil in support of refugees at Mill Hill Chapel, Leeds

# Our Trustees





### **Marion Baker (Convenor)**

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



### **Rev Celia Cartwright**

Celia has spent almost all her life within the Unitarian and Free Christian Movement; as a congregant, spiritual searcher, Lay Preacher, Lay Pastor and Minister. She was a member of 6 congregations, then as lay pastor & minister to 6 congregations across England.

Throughout her life, her Unitarian faith has guided, supported and enabled her. As a lay preacher, lay pastor and minister she has served her congregations, and since retirement has been honoured to serve as President of both the British Unitarian Women's League and the General Assembly, and since 2021 as a member of the Executive Committee.



### **Hilda Dumbleton**

Hilda is a lifelong member of the Swansea Unitarian Church and is currently the Treasurer. Her working life was in education, teaching Mathematics as well as positions of management. Although retired, she still does some work for the Welsh Examination Board. She is involved with the South East Wales District Society and also the Welsh Department.





### **Simon Hall (until 31 August 2022)**

Simon has been a Unitarian since 2011, attending both Northampton and Leicester Great Meeting over the years. He has worked in the IT Services industry for the past 20 years, supplying case-management systems/ services to local authorities around the country. In Nov 2021 he started a new part-time role with Leicester Unitarians - Congregational Support Lead and is filled with a great sense of anticipation and excitement, having already started an ambitious programme of engagement around extending fellowship/activities with the members. Simon's passions are: fast cars; developing his spirituality whilst striving to serve others from a pastoral perspective; large-choir singing; and long country hikes.



### **Robert Ince**

Robert's working career was spent in engineering and contracting consultancy in international business and he is a former Treasurer and Convenor of the General Assembly. He is currently President of the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF), President of the Sheffield District Association and chair of a number of other Unitarian bodies.



### **Jenny Jacobs**

Jenny lives in Harrogate and is Secretary and an occasional worship leader at York Unitarians. She only discovered the Unitarians relatively recently, and wishes she'd known about them sooner. This helps explain why Jenny is passionate about raising the profile and public presence of Unitarianism. She's convinced there are a whole lot more people out there who want what we offer, but probably don't know we exist. Recently retired from her main job in housing, Jenny still works part time for the Ministry of Justice as a Valuer Member of the First-Tier Tribunal (Property Chamber).

## Our Trustees



### **Rev Jo James**

Jo is minister of Mill Hill Chapel, Leeds, where he has a particular interest in theology of emergence, mental health & wellbeing, social justice, environment, creative arts and interfaith conversation.

Before training for the ministry at Oxford he worked as an actor for over twenty years including work on radio, TV & film as well as at the RSC & National Theatre. Jo is married to Ann, a ceramic artist, they have two young children.



### **Rev Dr Rob Whiteman**

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

# Trustees' Review

## Executive Committee



### EC Convenor Marion Baker

#### Members during the year:

Marion Baker (Convenor), Rev Celia Cartwright, Hilda Dumbleton, Simon Hall (until Sep 2022), Robert Ince, Jenny Jacobs, Rev Jo James, Rev Dr Rob Whiteman (Hon Treasurer).

#### Staff Support:

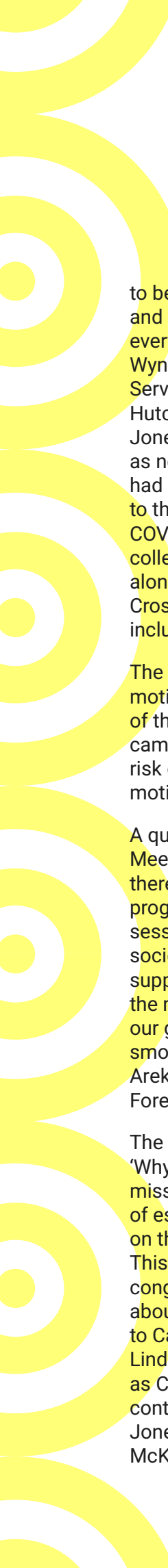
Liz Slade (Chief Officer), Andrew Mason (Minutes)

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

This year saw some relief from the acute crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic for many, but we know that the lives of many of our members and congregations have been changed in a way that means we can't go back to how things were before - some positive, and some challenging. The continuation of online and hybrid gatherings increases the variety and accessibility of our worship, and we're grateful to all those who have developed their skills in order to create this.

We were relieved and excited to hold our Annual Meetings in person in 2022, for the first time since 2019. It meant a lot to be able





to be together in the same physical space, and yet we know that it is still not possible for everyone to gather in that way. We thank Rev Wyn Thomas for his powerful Anniversary Service, where we also welcomed Revs Mark Hutchinson, Melda Grantham, Rory Castle Jones, Robin Hanford and Stephanie Bisby as new Ministers to the Roll (some of whom had waited a long time to be presented to the movement due to the disruption of COVID-19). We were glad to donate the full collection from the Anniversary Service, along with some other donations, to the Red Cross' aid work in Ukraine, a total of £5,796 including Gift Aid.

The membership debated and discussed motions on trans rights, membership of the United Nations 'We The Peoples' campaign, the GA's chalice design, and the risk of privatisation of the NHS - with all four motions passed as resolutions.

A quarter of attendees at the Annual Meetings were there for the first time, and there was an atmosphere of positivity and progress. Thank you to all those who led sessions, took part in debate, represented societies in the exhibition hall, and provided support behind the scenes. Special thanks to the ministry students who helped welcome our guests and keep everything running smoothly - thank you Hannah Stephenson, Arek Malecki, Francis Elliot-Wright, Rob Foreman, and Shana Begum.

The Lindsey Press was proud to launch 'Why are we here? Discerning our Unitarian mission in an upturned world', a collection of essays and prompts for discussion based on the previous year's Summer School. This is proving to be a valuable resource for congregations to engage in conversation about their purpose and vision. Thank you to Catherine Robinson as Convenor of the Lindsey Press Panel, and to Rev Jane Blackall as Convenor of Summer School, and to the contributors, Rev Jo James, Rev Rory Castle Jones, Shana Begum, and Rev Kate Brady McKenna.

## **Ministry**

We are grateful to the Ministerial Fellowship for inviting Liz Slade and Simon Bland to their Autumn conferences, and the commitment to collegial relationships between ministers and the GA. Since Autumn 2021, we have been holding monthly 'Ministry Coffeehouse' Zoom meet-ups as an informal space to share news and ideas - all ministers are welcome.

We congratulate Rev Dr Claire MacDonald on her appointment as Ministry Tutor and Chaplain at Harris Manchester College, Oxford (from September 2022), where she has the remit for reimagining ministry training at the college to reflect today's context.

We welcome Rev Dr Jane Blackall and Rev Julio Torres to the GA Roll of Ministers.

## **GA Staff**

Dr Lizzie Kingston Harrison joined the staff team in October 2021 as Congregational Connections Lead, and has been establishing strong relationships with many leaders across the country, sharing practical resources and inspiring stories. Lizzie is a member at Framlingham and joins us with a background in education, following her doctoral research about Joseph Priestley, which seeded her interest in Unitarianism. A major achievement this year has been the launch of Worship Words, an online repository of worship materials, created by and for Unitarians in the UK. Thank you to the team who have been working with Lizzie to create and manage this. Lizzie continues to host the 'Congregations in the Community' calls that were started by her predecessor Bob Janis, and these are available on our YouTube channel.

We welcomed Ann Howell to the team in October 2022 as Social Action Officer. We are grateful to the Bowland Trust for their support in making this role possible. Ann is Chair of Lewisham Unity, and was a co-founder of Simple Gifts, the Unitarian social action centre in East London. Ann works closely

with the Penal and Social Affairs Panel and is listening to the needs and wishes of the wider Unitarian community to discern how we best support our congregations in making an impact in social justice work.

### **Strategic priorities**

We continue to frame our work around the priorities we identified in 2021:

- Enabling people to act: recognising that the GA's role is to help build capacity and allow our movement to grow from the ground up
- Designing for spiritual health: shaping our work around the things that make the most impact to people's spiritual wellbeing
- Communicating inside the movement: sharing information and resources between the GA and our members
- Communicating with the wider world: getting our message and values out to new audiences, nationally and locally
- Strengthening our foundations: making the most of our resources for a sustainable future

These help us to keep a focus on where the GA's energy and attention is spent; they are not intended to be priorities that we impose on congregations, but local leaders may find the same lenses useful in looking at activities and priorities in congregations and districts.

We also hold these priorities in mind as we consider how we balance our focus on supporting existing congregations with the need to support the emergence of new forms in which our free and inquiring faith might be expressed. We recognise the sustainability of our membership as a key risk to our movement, as our overall numbers have declined for many years, and so we continually try to prioritise our work with this context in mind.

We are currently developing a toolkit to support congregations in the practical matters that they deal with week to week. This will cover administration, governance, communication, and supporting congregations' move towards their vision. As well as providing guidance and resources, we will be facilitating local leaders to connect with each other so we can strengthen peer-to-peer support.

We recognise the need to support emerging leaders, both those who lead worship and those who provide leadership behind the scenes.

We also recognise the need to make space for the deeper conversations about trends and currents within our movement; it is not a straightforward task to hold the diversity of cultures, beliefs, and practices in a sense of unity, and the distance that COVID-19 brought has often made this harder.

### **Finance**

The accounts of the General Assembly are set out later in this report in summary form along with those of the Nightingale Centre. A full copy of the annual accounts is available on the Charity Commission website and from Essex Hall.

The Finance Group of the EC has continued to meet regularly by Zoom, Chaired by Rob Whiteman as Honorary Treasurer, with Marion Baker, Robert Ince, David Joseph (Finance Manager) and Liz Slade (Chief Officer), the Finance Group supports the in-year budget planning process, and looks at longer-term financial sustainability for the GA.

The General Assembly's reserves policy is to hold sufficient free reserves, not restricted by their purpose or by virtue of endowment, to ensure that it is able to service its annual budgeted expenditure and to ensure that its risks in relation to its pension obligations are mitigated. The Finance Group will be reviewing the adequacy of this reserves policy in line with the GA's investment policy.

# Trustees' Review

Discussions have continued with Newtons, our investment manager, around how best to disinvest from fossil fuels, in line with the resolution passed by the membership in 2021.

We have sought advice from a fundraising consultant, particularly in the domain of legacy fundraising, to build on the generosity of those gifts bequeathed to the GA recently.

We are grateful for the ongoing financial support from The British & Foreign Unitarian Association Inc, the Bowland Trust, and the Essex Hall Trust that makes so much of our work possible.

## Risks

The EC have taken a revised approach to risk management, and have identified the following as our key risks:

- Membership sustainability: Inability to retain and improve our membership numbers leading to existential failure
- Safeguarding: accusation or discovery of inappropriate or harmful behaviour (historic or current)
- Fraud: fraudulent or illegal activity leading to a loss of assets and inability to function
- Ministers Pension Fund: failure of existing fund management leading to a funding shortfall requiring cash input from GA as guarantor of last resort
- Pandemic: Inability to respond to a new COVID-19 or similar outbreak leading to failure to protect individual health
- Financial sustainability: Inability to generate sufficient financial resources
- Buildings sustainability: Inability to maintain our buildings to an appropriate standard

Many of these will be relevant at the congregational level, and we are happy to provide information about our approach to risk management to those managing risk locally.

# Our Activities



# Communications

How we communicate with each other and with the world continues to evolve in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and as our congregations and denomination continue to change. As our denomination's part-time Communications Officer, I am responsible for: running Unitarian HQ's website and social media; our publicity materials such as leaflets; our email newsletter uni-news; sending out communications to our ministers and congregations; and supporting the latter in developing their own communications. I am also involved in other related projects like the new Worship Words website and the LGBT+ Unitarian Voices project. Outside of my Comms Officer role, I have served as minister to Gellionnen Unitarian Chapel in Wales since 2021.



The new 'Welcome to your spiritual home' leaflet

Within our movement, there are many ways in which we talk to each other. Some of these are facilitated by Unitarian HQ, such as Zoom events, our website and social media, and Uni-news. Others are run independently, such as The Inquirer and the Liberal Christian Herald, or Facebook groups like 'UK Unitarians'. Communicating with the outside world – expressing who we are, what we believe, and our deepest values – has always been a challenge and preoccupation for Unitarians, from the old days of the Unitarian van missions and into the internet era.

In the past two years, we have been working hard on what our communications to the

public look, sound and feel like. The first fruit of this work was a new website and design programme, launched in 2021. Following this, we have been supporting all of our congregations in improving their communications, from new paper leaflets (a general information leaflet and a wedding leaflet so far, with more to come) to colourful banners outside church buildings, and from revamped social media pages to helping our congregations transition from the old volunteer-run congregational websites, which had served us well in the past but now needed updating, to attractive new websites which invite new people in.

As we work in a context of declining attendance in traditional church communities and acknowledge that many of our congregations face an uncertain future, we cannot rely on the old ways of doing things. We are excited to support congregations that are evolving, adapting, and seeking to thrive by developing ways of doing church and living spiritually that match the present context. I look forward to continuing to work with our dedicated and imaginative ministers, congregational leaders and comms experts in the months and years ahead. If you're interested in getting more involved in communications within your congregation or at national level, please get in touch!



Rev Dr Rory Castle Jones



# Congregational Connections

In the October of 2021 it was my great pleasure to take on the role of Congregational Connections Lead. I applied for the job because I care about our Unitarian and Free Christian movement and because I am excited by the possibilities that arise when we make sincere and authentic connections with one another. I am motivated by a spiritual sense of our interconnectedness, and this gives me inspiration and motivation to try new ways to strengthen the fabric of our movement.

I have been focussing on building relationships with people across the movement, listening carefully to what you are telling me you need and trusting my instincts to facilitate new connections as they emerge. The most joyful part of my job this year has been to watch the great things that occur when the right connections are made.



Lizzie speaking at the Annual Meetings, April 2022

Part of my vision for this role has been sharing resources and inspiring stories. I have been holding regular Congregations in the Community online workshops. These give a minister or lay leader a chance to share their work and to discuss their ideas in conversation with Unitarians from across the country. This year we have had an update from Ed Fordham in Great Hucklow; heard from Rev Kate Dean about the inspiring ways in which she engages with the community at Rosslyn Hill, Hampstead; discovered how Sarah Cobham and Paul Lindsay Dawson have transformed Westgate Chapel in Wakefield; how Rev Lizzie Harley has created a

vision of warmth and hospitality at Bridport; and how Rev Melda Grantham and Rev Phil Waldron are leading the way when it comes to weddings. All the videos are available on the GA YouTube channel, and I am currently developing resources for committees to use alongside the videos.



The Opening Slide from Wakefield Unitarians' Congregations in the Community workshop

Sharing resources and inspiration for worship has also been an essential part of my work this year. Worship Words is a new, collaborative, space for the whole movement to share worship materials. The collection hosts 200 readings, from over 40 authors, includes voices from across the movement and can be easily searched by category, theme, or keyword. I'm so proud of the site and grateful to the team of volunteers who gave up their time to make it happen and to our web designer for his hard work and support. It has been a pleasure to read the work that has been so generously submitted to the site and I am really looking forward to seeing the collection grow next year.



The home page for our new Worship Words website [www.worshipwords.unitarian.org.uk](http://www.worshipwords.unitarian.org.uk)



Looking towards next year I am helping to explore other ways of sharing resources and ideas. For example, developing an online forum and working with my colleague Ann Howell to establish peer-sharing networks linking congregations that have things in common. Our first network will be 'Small and Thriving' and you are welcome to get in touch if you'd like to join us.

Alongside sharing ideas and resources, I am also keen to create spaces to provide support and promote wellbeing for anyone who needs a place of nurturing calm and spiritual connection. I have helped start two new online meditation groups this year, Sacred Stillness for Worship Leaders, and Together in Meditation. These nourishing collaborations with Richard Bober of The Meditation Fellowship, Rev Sheena Gabriel, and Rob Oulton have provided Unitarians and Non-Unitarians with a regular online space to find tranquillity and insight through meditation. If you'd like to join these groups, you can find the details on the GA website.



Together in Meditation meets via Zoom, every Thursday at 7.15pm, for music, readings, meditation, quiet time, and discussion

Another joyful collaboration for me this year, has been the chance to work with Rory Castle Jones on developing our new Oral History and Archiving project, LGBT + Voices. The project seeks to lift up the voices of LGBT + Unitarians by gathering, recording and sharing their stories and to learn from the past and to celebrate the movement's significant contribution to LGBT+ inclusion

within the denomination and beyond. It has been a pleasure to work with our Advisory Panel - Ann Peart, Jeff Gould, and Derek McAuley - and with Kate Alderson Smith from Harris Manchester College Oxford.



The logo for our new Oral History and Archiving project, LGBT + Unitarian Voices

There are also many ways in which I have worked to provide support for everyone involved in congregational life. Sometimes this is simply connecting individuals who I know can help and support each other. On other occasions it is through larger-scale projects. For example, I have provided administrative support through a trial of new hiring and invoicing software, and I am gradually developing an Administrator's Network. Looking ahead to 2023, I will be drawing on this experience and working closely with Simon Bland to help develop an online Congregational Support toolkit.

It has been such a joy to get to know so many wise and wonderful people and to explore so many new ways to nurture spiritual health. It might be that the movement grows because of these exciting new connections but, in essence, it is about creating the right spaces and the nurturing of rich, meaningful connections between people. In doing so I know that new projects will come to fruition - in turn this will help our congregations thrive and become even more embedded in the heart of their communities.

**Lizzie Kingston Harrison**  
Congregational Connections Lead

# Congregational Support

Themes that were particularly relevant to the year have been around re-opening, recovery, and revitalisation.

The previous year had generated many challenges, which congregations rose to meet, but as circumstances allowed the reopening of chapels, it also provided a chance to refresh practises and procedures.

Again, the issue of Governance modernisation was at the forefront for many congregations and despite the extension granted to 'Excepted Status' to 2031, many congregations felt a move to the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) model was the correct one for them. We continue to support congregations wanting to refresh or review their governing documents.

The year also saw congregations more confident about their ability to offer stipend-supported leadership, and a number of vacancies came onto the list. It is unfortunate that the number of available ministers is so limited, due in part to the pandemic impacting on people entering training, but we are seeking to address this issue.

Building-related matters figured largely, as spaces effectively mothballed came back into use, and challenges arose from often a cold start. Some chapels like Ipswich completed significant renovations undertaken during pandemic conditions. Others, like the Bolton Bank Street building, unfortunately closed as a chapel. In both circumstances the team at the General Assembly are keen to help explore options.

Employment issues and recruitment was another area of activity. A number of support staff, caretakers etc changed over the year and the requirements and legalisation around employment practices needs careful consideration. Again support is available.

The groundwork for support to treasurers, and a new congregational toolkit bringing together various strands of support, was undertaken.

With both myself and Lizzie Kingston seeking to provide support to congregations in complementary ways, we look forward to a positive future.



**Simon Bland**  
**Ministry & Congregational Support**  
**Officer**

# Hucklow Summer School



Summer School Convenor  
Jane Blackall

The core activity of Hucklow Summer School (HSS) is religious education. We aim to promote diversity in all our activities, representing the breadth within our movement, in terms of our demographics, theologies and varied forms of spiritual practice.

As in 2021, Summer School 2022 was an online experience. Over five evenings from 23 to 27 August between 60 to 70 people joined each evening to hear our speakers on the theme 'Right Relationship: Practicing Love, Justice and Peace in Everyday Life'.

In each theme talk shared by two speakers we heard the voices of: Rev Dr Jane Blackall and Rev Sarah Tinker, Nicola Temple and Lizzie Kingston-Harrison, Rev Laura Dobson and Arek Maleki, Torry Glinwell and Dr Alex Brianson, Rev Cody Coyne and Rev Winnie Gordon.

Each talk can be viewed on the Hucklow Summer School Website:

<https://www.hucklowsummerschool.co.uk/talks/>

The online experience of Summer School, different from spending a week together in Hucklow, has its own distinct energy. One blessing has been that it gave around half of those joining each evening the opportunity to 'taste' one of the pillars of Summer School's pillars: the theme talks.

Looking ahead to 2023, we are in the early stages of planning for our return to Hucklow and, based on our experience of the last few years online, we plan to include a hybrid element into the week for the first time so that those who are unable to travel to Hucklow in person will still be able to get a flavour of the experience through an online engagement group.

**Jane Blackall**



# International Unitarian Collaboration

I am honoured to have been invited to be a member of the Leadership Design Team (LDT) that was tasked by the outgoing committee of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists to explore what the future of international collaboration might be.

Our remit is to work in a decolonial and emergent way; it is important to the group that we acknowledge the power dynamics between different countries and cultures, and that we listen well to each others' perspectives in order to let the direction of travel unfold, rather than rush ahead with a predefined plan.

My fellow members of the LDT are based in Transylvania, South Africa, Burundi, North East India, The Philippines, Australia, Brazil and the USA. We have been meeting regularly online and allowing the work to take the pace that it needs - which is perhaps slower than some of us expected! Our contexts are of course very different, and as a new team coming together for the first time, we have needed to give ourselves space to find our common ground and build relationships between the team.

We held an intensive online retreat in October 2022, which was brilliantly facilitated so that we could work in small groups and use virtual whiteboards to explore our purpose, values and strategy in more depth than our regular Zoom calls allow. We hope to meet in person at some point, when the stars align around funding, time and visas.

You can follow our progress online at:

<https://sites.google.com/uua.org/intl-uu-collaboration/home>

**Liz Slade**



# Ministry Matters

## **Mission Statement:**

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

The Ministry Strategy Group (MSG) holds oversight of Unitarian ministry training, with ongoing responsibility for the GA's Roll of Ministers and for the work of ministers in congregations. During the year covered by this report discussions continued about transferring the group's work to a new Ministry Matters body. Whilst this move is clarified MSG work has been continued primarily by the Interview Panel.

We remain keenly aware of pressures on ministers and congregations resulting from the pandemic and recognise the changing social circumstances in which ministry is now happening.

Work continued on reviewing ministry training competencies and the Guidelines for Partnership between Congregations & Ministers, including a significant piece of work on the recruitment of both ministers and lay leaders for congregations. This will be formally launched at the 2023 Annual Meetings.

## **Interview Panel**

The Interview Panel called candidates for ministry training to interview at Harris Manchester College, Oxford (HMC) in January 2022, undertaking interviews over two days. It was good to be able to meet in person, with some necessary precautions to minimise risks.

The Interview Panel recommended that Francis Elliot-Wright, Robert Foreman and Hannah Stephenson be offered training with Unitarian College (UC).

# 6

## Ministerial students in training in the academic year to Summer 2023

In July 2022 we held our usual Ministry Inquiry Session online again, not because of COVID-19, but because it was the most accessible method of enabling people to attend. This year actually had the highest number of attendees for many years. Inquiry Sessions are an excellent way to start to explore leadership opportunities within the Movement and anyone considering applying for leadership training is encouraged to attend.

We ask all those who sense a call to ministry to engage in a process of long-term discernment, often over a number of years. Those interested in ministry will learn much by observing and consulting with Ministers at work in our congregations and nationally, and it is always helpful to be actively engaged with the life of their congregation and district association to ensure a broad view of the movement.

Student vivas were conducted online again this year, with independent academic input. Our thanks go to our viva panel members and congratulations to our students, Jane Blackall and Julio Torres, who joined the GA Roll of Ministers with Probationary Status.

During the academic year to the summer of 2022 six students were in training:

Unitarian College: Shana Begum (Foundation Course), Robert Foreman, Arek Malecki, Jennifer Sanders, Hannah Stephenson and Francis Elliot-Wright.

The Interview Panel gave thanks to Rev Alex Bradley on his retirement as Tutor of HMC in Summer 2022. We welcome Rev Dr Claire MacDonald who started work as Ministry Tutor and College Chaplain at HMC in October 2022. Thanks were given to Rev Daniel Costley who stepped down from both the Ministry Strategy Group and the Interview Panel after many years of very active volunteering.

As ever, we continue to seek contributions to our Ministerial Students Fund, providing essential grants for students in training, administered by Essex Hall Staff. As a Movement we are committed to ensuring that students receive some assistance with the costs of training but the financial support offered to students is still inevitably modest and the circumstances of this year have been particularly challenging. We are also grateful to congregations for their support of our students, by offering placements and preaching opportunities, and all those making generous contributions to the funding of our colleges, both independent charities. It really does take many individuals and groups to train a minister.

Ministers provide a key foundation to leadership across the country. Our ministerial students uphold and are part of a rich legacy and our continuing support and encouragement will help to ensure a vibrant and visionary ministry leading our Unitarian & Free Christian congregations forward.

**Simon Bland, Ministry & Congregational Support Officer and Sarah Tinker, Interim Chair**

# 2

## Ministers admitted to the Roll with Probationary status



# Ministry and Lay Training & Development

## **Ministry Matters**

Facilitator: Simon Bland

## **Interview Panel:**

Chair: Rev Sarah Tinker

## **Unitarian College**

Director: Helen Mason

Tutor: Rev Ant Howe

Chair: Dot Hewerdine

## **Harris Manchester College, Oxford**

Tutor: Rev Dr Claire MacDonald

Principal: Prof Jane Shaw

We are at an exciting time with Unitarian College going from strength to strength while Harris Manchester College, Oxford embark on a new approach to their ministry training offer. Our movement is well served by these two excellent colleges, as we work together to look at how their different strengths and opportunities can meet the needs of our movement's leaders.

Rev Dr Claire MacDonald began as Tutor at Harris Manchester in September 2022, and has the remit of reimagining how the college best supports the training and development of Unitarian ministers in today's context,

as well as taking on the role of Chaplain to support the college community and deliver midweek services in the chapel. Plans are underway for research opportunities involving ministers in the UK and from overseas.

A total of seven ministers have now completed their training at Unitarian College, with six currently in training, and three new students due to start in 2023. Strong collegial bonds are being formed between the students via the residential training programmes and we are proud of the new cohort of ministers serving our movement.

The Worship Studies Course that had been under the remit of the GA is now being delivered by Unitarian College, and we are delighted that 120 people have participated in leadership courses for lay people, in a mix of online and in-person training.

Unitarian College has merged with the North West Provincial Assembly and the Unitarian Association of Lay Ministry, and is also delivering training for Czech Unitarians.

The Ministry Matters group is forming under the facilitation of Simon Bland, as we move beyond the work of the Ministry Strategy Group to support the smooth running of operational matters around ministry and training.



Ministry In The Making 2022

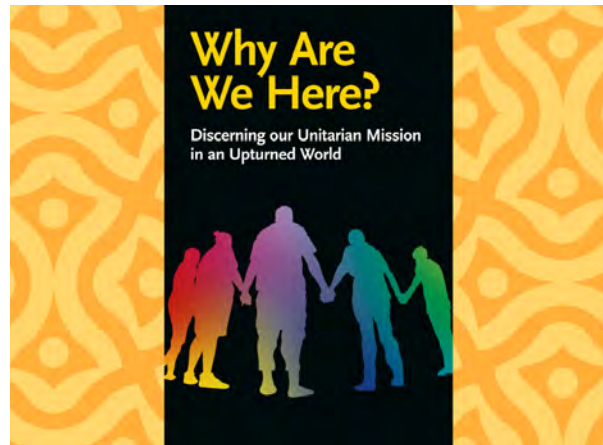
# Publishing

One new book was published under the Lindsey Press imprint in this financial year: 'Why Are We Here? Discerning Our Unitarian Mission in an Upturned World'. Containing edited transcripts of talks given at the online 2021 Summer School by five Unitarian speakers, it was described as “a little gem of a book, a rich and thought-provoking collection” in a review by Rev Sue Woolley.

Total sales of Lindsey Press books (583 copies) were higher than in the previous year (457), presumably because the easing of Covid restrictions meant that the GA Annual Meetings could be held in person, with a well-stocked bookshop, rather than via Zoom. But annual sales were still low compared with pre-lockdown totals (1,122 in the f/y ending September 2019), partly because only one new title was published this year, and one in the previous year, whereas two best-sellers had been launched in the f/y ending September 2019.

Currently our major work in progress is a volume of essays entitled 'Cherishing the Earth – Nourishing the Spirit', commissioned by Rev Dr Maria Curtis from a wide range of Unitarian thinkers on eco-spiritual themes. Like most Lindsey Press books, it contains questions for reflection and discussion, to encourage its use as a congregational resource. It is due to be launched at the GA Annual Meetings in 2023.

A longer-term work in progress is 'Soul Journey: Finding Our Spiritual Way' (working title), an eight-session resource for congregational use, compiled by Rev Kate Dean and Rev Michael Allured, and possibly accompanied by recorded meditations.



Future ideas (currently in need of authors and/or commissioning editors) include a third volume of worship resources in the series 'With Heart and Mind' ... a collection of essays presenting Unitarian perspectives on LGBT+ issues ... a practical guide to congregational development ... and an introduction to Unitarianism for beginners (to replace 'Elements of Unitarianism', which is out of print). Further suggestions (submitted to the Panel's Convenor at [cmrobinson.oxford@gmail.com](mailto:cmrobinson.oxford@gmail.com)) are invited.

There has been no response to our appeal for help from volunteers with experience of e-publishing. We may have to pay a professional consultant to train at least one Panel member in the legal and practical aspects of electronic publishing via Kindle and other digital media.

All our books continue to be readily available direct from Essex Hall, and online via the GA website ([Shop - The Unitarians](#)), from where they can be ordered from [Bookshop.Org](#) (a more ethical alternative to Amazon).

As always, we are grateful to staff member Audrey Longhurst at Essex Hall for her invaluable support with sales and the analysis of sales patterns.

**Catherine Robinson**

# Social Action

Thanks to support from The Bowland Trust, there has been a renewed commitment to organised Social Action within the Unitarian movement with the creation of the Social Action Officer post. This 5-year position has been filled by Ann Howell, one of the co-founders of SimpleGifts, the Unitarian social action project in Bethnal Green, east London, who joined the team in October 2022. She will work closely with the Penal and Social Affairs Panel (PSAP), along with the rest of the GA programming team, to take stock of the important work already being done across the UK, assess the issues that are fuelling our collective imagination, and develop programming that will inspire UK Unitarians.

You will see Ann around more this coming year, virtually in UK Unitarian social media spaces, and in person at the GA, FUSE, and round-table meetings she will host at various locations. She is open and ready for consultation, so email her with any suggestions or questions about social action/social justice issues.

The PSAP is proud to announce the launch of a book written by member Jo O'Sullivan, "(Almost) Anything but Family Court". This book outlines the people and processes separating parents need to know about if they are to avoid family court. The PSAP will be sending out copies to active ministers in order to make them available to their congregations.

In April of this year, member Ian Minter presented to The Foy Society a very well researched paper regarding deaths in custody in the UK entitled, "It Can't Happen Here". With high-profile cases in the US sparking civil unrest in 2020, it is important to shine a light on similar cases here in this country.

The PSAP is looking for new members who care about issues such as those above, as well as working with Ann to build the framework for organised UK Unitarian social action. Please get in touch with Chair Bruce Chilton for more information.



**Ann Howell**

**Social Action Officer**



# Wales

The members of the Unitarians Wales Committee continue to meet on Zoom rather than in person as this is proving to be a more accessible and cost-effective way for younger, working people to take part, as well as making it possible for the Chief Officer to attend. The way that we are working as a group has been more strategic this year with in-depth conversations having been held at every meeting around the EC objectives and how we can work differently to provide what people want now. We recognised that coming out of pandemic, members and congregations are tired and lacking in energy, although there are some shining lights that continue to innovate.

There has been much discussion about where we should focus our energies and resources, and the need for us to be relevant to the wider community and not-yet Unitarians while continuing to provide some support for existing congregations. This led to some new objectives being agreed upon early in October, which will allow for greater innovation and flexibility.

There was a good Welsh attendance at the Annual Meetings at Birmingham this year with many attending for the first time. The Anniversary Service sermon was delivered by our Chair Rev Wyn Thomas and was an inspirational and uplifting experience for all those attending. Another inspirational highlight of the meetings was the Unitarians Wales session which was presented by members of the Gellionnen Youth Group #Blessed. They shared their journey so far and how their faith is the basis for all that they do.

The younger members of the South Wales District took a prominent part in hosting the Unitarians Wales stand at the National Eisteddfod which was held in Ceredigion this year. They also took part in a presentation about Unitarianism in Wales, and its history, on another part of the Eisteddfod field and this was very well-attended. The committee was very grateful to the members of the Undodiaid Aeron Teifi group for providing the funding to enable the stand to be twice the size that we could have afforded.



The Eisteddfod Stand

Many of the congregations have worked incredibly hard to provide support for charitable causes, notably providing an enormous amount of aid for the victims of the war in Ukraine.



Aid Collections for Ukraine

The impact of the efforts of these congregations has been substantial, not only for the recipients but also through the way that members of the wider community view us. It is through putting our faith at work that we are judged by others and these activities, as well as attending Pride marches etc., provide an open door for others to enter through without committing to attending worship services.



Gellionnen Chapel at Swansea Pride

The death of Queen Elizabeth II was noted in Wales by holding a bilingual interfaith service of prayer and reflection at Llandaff Cathedral. I was honoured to be invited to represent the Unitarians at this event as a member of the Interfaith Council of Wales, as well as to attend a much smaller reception at Cardiff Castle where I was able to meet and chat with the King and the Queen Consort.

The greatest sadness for us this year was the loss of one of our members, Rev Cen Llwyd, after a long and difficult illness. We extend our deepest sympathies and condolences to his widow Enfys and his daughters Heledd and Gwenllian.

The future for Wales feels exciting and the year ahead will see us working differently with the aim of having a greater impact within the wider community as well as enabling our current members and congregations to become more proactive.

**Melda Grantham**

# Youth

Gav, I'm curious... What have you been up to since the last youth report?

The short answer to this question is that I have continued to nurture the many youth initiatives which have emerged since the first lockdown.

Bad Coffee Club (BCC), an online Unitarian youth group which came into being at the start of the pandemic, continues to grow in scope, confidence, and capacity. For those unfamiliar, the group describes itself as, 'A light-hearted yet supportive space for young people to meet, relax and form lasting friendships. A space built on kindness, mutual respect, and a desire to live life to the full.'

At the time of writing, BCC is planning their first in-person meetup. It will take place in Sheffield around September 2023. In their own time, the participants have met to imagine, design, and plan a Unitarian event of their liking. As a result of this process, they're developing lots of skills from working effectively as a team, writing proposals, and communicating well with funders.

In addition to the above, one of the group members is exploring what might be involved in creating an additional space centred on the question of what brings meaning to our lives. It's been fascinating to watch a more contemplative space grow out of a social space, and participants grow in confidence and independence.

My role in these initiatives has been to give folk space, encourage their efforts, and provide support when specially requested.

#Blessed, another youth group which emerged around the time of the first lockdown, continues to develop in leaps and bounds. They're based around Gellionnen Chapel but with other members peppered around the country. They will be running a workshop at the 2023 Annual Meetings to share their work with the wider Movement.

Over the past 12 months, the GA Congregational Youth Leader Support Group has continued to meet and welcome new members. Its purpose is to support congregations in their efforts to develop forms of youth and family ministry which are in harmony with their respective settings. It's been great to have new people join us as well as continue to see our regulars, eager as ever, share best practice and offer encouragement and support to others. My role is simply to hold the space with our participants using it in whatever way works best for them. All are welcome.

Since its first gathering in March 2022, International Unitarian / Unitarian Universalist Connections has continued to meet monthly via Zoom. This new space is specifically for young Unitarians / Unitarian Universalists aged 18 – 24. During each meetup, inspired by the reflections of the previous, the participants explore a theme of interest to them. They chart our direction of travel. So, there's no long-term pre-determined programme as such. Rather the space seeks to respond to the immediate needs and desires of our participants. My role, as a facilitator, is to hold the space, hear what's surfacing for the group and prepare a few questions for our next meet up. To date we've had folk join us from England, Scotland, Wales, USA, Canada, France, and Czech Republic. We're at that stage where we feel it's time to get some feedback and review how things are going.

A group for Unitarian parents is now meeting monthly via Zoom. The purpose of the meetup, as identified by the participants, is to explore parental life together. So far, we've created a contemplative sharing circle where participants offer their reflections on a piece written by a fellow parent based on their own personal experience. It's early days but already it would appear that a kind, empathetic and supportive community is forming. To date, my role has been to offer a space, provide an appropriate stimulus for discussion and hold each gathering. This type for provision, one specifically aimed at supporting parents, has a lot of potential.





Young Unitarians, supported by the GA Youth Coordinator, enjoying a retreat of their making at the Unitarian Ministerial Fellowship annual conference in October

It was a real pleasure to partner with the Unitarian Ministerial Fellowship and together explore what could be added to their Autumn Conference which would enable ministers with children and teenagers to attend.

In the run up, the four participants aged 13 – 17 met on 4 separate occasions via Zoom and (just like Bad Coffee Club are doing now) planned an experience of their liking. This included trips to the local bowling alley and Peveril Castle as well as time indoors playing board games, having chats and some free time to relax and, of course, nap.

During the planning process, my role was to facilitate the group gatherings, nurture a playful and exploratory culture, encourage and support the participants when completing their various research tasks (Yes, they had homework!) and host an information evening where the participants presented their programme to parents and the UMF President. At the event, I simply held the space and let them get on with delivering their own event.

I should say that some initiatives, like our exploration into having a Unitarian presence at the Greenbelt Festival, mentioned in last year's Annual Report, sadly fizzled out. In a nutshell, the team just ran out of steam, and

it was felt best for everyone if we wrapped this enquiry up and maybe revisited it another day. Of course, if this sort of thing appeals to you then please get in touch.

So, in all, a pleasing year. We've a rich, healthy mix of very different youth provisions emerging right across our Unitarian and Free Christian landscape. Personally, I'm very curious as to how these various initiatives are going to unfold. Evidently, the soil is rich! I'm wondering too what else will surface over the year ahead.

If you've any questions or would like to partner in some way, then get in touch. I'd love to hear from you. Drop me an email and let's have a conversation.



**Gavin Howell**  
**GA Youth Coordinator**

# Projects - Torbay

What's emerging in Torbay and the surrounding area?

As a recap and for those of you who don't know, in January of 2022, I relocated to Torbay to embark on a new inquiry with the General Assembly. Its remit is to explore how working in a more emergent way could facilitate growth across our Unitarian and Free Christian communities.

Emergence describes small things coming together to form bigger things that have different properties to the sum of their parts. It is complexity arising from simplicity.

For some, emergence is linked to the idea of allowing things to happen organically or naturally, over time, without being forced or planned.

One space where the different elements are synergising well and therefore producing more than the sum of their parts is Torbay Faith and Belief Forum. The organising group came into being around nine months ago when a few strangers, including myself, met over Zoom to explore the potential of establishing a regular in person interfaith meetup in Torbay. I'm pleased to say that a group has taken root which is meaningful,

## How did this initiative come about? Liz Slade

In 2019- 2020, Simon Bland was working with the Torquay congregation as they felt like they had come to the end of the road. In order to help prevent the loss of a chapel to the movement, Simon facilitated two new trustees to come on board - Philip Colfox and Martin Ternmouth from Bridport Unitarians. This would allow more time and space to find a path forwards.

Separately to this, in 2020, Gav Howell got in touch with me and Simon to say he was contemplating a relocation, and wondered where in the country there might be an opportunity to use his skills and experience in service of the movement.

Torquay came instantly to mind - and Simon's experience of different church models identified the opportunity for creating a new GA role that would enable us to support Gav in a way that can benefit the wider movement.

There were careful explorations of this with the EC, to help find the right scope of the work that chimed with GA strategy, the team's skills, and our collective resources.

Part of the opportunity with Torquay is its unique context - a chapel in a good location in a seaside town that is being regenerated; close to Totnes, a hotbed of spiritual and community innovation thanks to Dartington College, Schumacher, the Transition Town movement all located there; and Torbay is part of the LocalMotion movement, where major UK funders are working together with communities and local institutions "to inspire new ways of tackling the common social, economic and environmental issues that communities face, so they can thrive and flourish".

The ways of working here are important; it's not the kind of initiative with pre-defined milestones and project plans. It is based on working in an emergent way, building relationships, understanding the context, not pushing an agenda.

It's a leap of faith for all of us, and one that feels timely.



Attendees at one of the first Torbay Faith & Belief Forum events

financially sustainable, and manageable in terms of volunteer time. At our last gathering we had over 40 in attendance.

When I think back, a few things come to mind which may have contributed to its growth. To begin with, I feel we were intention-led rather than agenda-driven. We were clear in our desire to see an interfaith community grow in Torbay. However, we were open as to the form it might take. We also, relatively quickly, came together as a team. We've synergised well. There's also a healthy variety to what we do. We have business meetings only when necessary and spend most of our time engaged in hospitality (coffee and cake) and attending our 5 public events per year. Finally, at present, I feel like there's a healthy balance with regards to us being and doing together.

In contrast, another interfaith initiative, involving a different mix of individuals, sadly, decided to wrap up. On reflection, despite it having a valuable objective in mind, it was too focused on achieving it as efficiently as possible. With a few dominant characters directing operations, and fixed ideas as to how things should be, there was little space to express our various perspectives or explore how we might go about achieving

our task well in harmony with our different ways of working. Unfortunately, as a result, a once-interested group of individuals were unable to synergise well as a team and, with little in the way of meaningful relationships, folk simply dropped off and the group slowly disintegrated.

Stuff & Things, a group made up of local Unitarians, the Unitarian-curious and other kind, friendly folk in the area, continues to meet monthly in a different pub or café of the group's choosing. It came about when one of the group members emailed The General Assembly website asking if there was a Unitarian community in Torbay. I met them, had a conversation and, well, the rest is history. Initially, we met purely for social reasons or to be around folk with a similar outlook on life.

However, as a result of us getting to know each other better and the growth of Torbay Faith and Belief Forum, which some of the group members now attend on a regular basis, we've started having gentle tentative conversations around the creation of space with a spiritual focus to complement the social one.



Stuff & Things is interesting to reflect upon in that, to begin with, its focus wasn't spiritual growth but rather social connection. Yes, the folk attending were Unitarians or people who knew of Unitarianism but initially they weren't overtly talking about spiritual nourishment or a need for meaning-making spaces. However, interestingly, once the group members entered a different space – the interfaith one – the conversations around creating an additional more-spiritual space started to emerge. This is classic emergence in that two things came together; they synergised well and something new was created.

After a year of attending countless community events, sending buckets of emails and, of course, meeting folk for coffee and cake, it feels like I'm well plugged into the various local networks. Overall, people like what they hear about us Unitarians and are very interested in the idea of working in a more emergent way. Indeed, one organisation is embarking on a similar journey to us.

LocalMotion was created by six big established UK funders (City Bridge Trust, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Lankelly Chase Foundation, Lloyds Bank Foundation, Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF) Tudor Trust) who share a desire to find new and better ways to tackle the common social, economic and environmental issues communities face. They too are seeking to work in a more emergent way. I was quite impressed by how their Systemic Change Partner, as part of a presentation to a room full of community workers, councillors and other not for profit organisations, stated that neither she nor the 6 funders she was representing had any idea how their work in Torbay was going to play out. It was incredibly refreshing. I came away thinking that on this initiative, both The General Assembly and a major funding body are in alignment. Presently, I am exploring with LocalMotion and other groups within Torbay how we could potentially come together.

It's been great linking up with others in the Western Union and collaborating on a few new initiatives. Along with Rev Kate Whyman, Rev Liz Birtles and Rev John Harley, I've been exploring with a group of adolescents aged 11-15 what we could do within the district in terms of youth work. If honest, during those early conversations, it wasn't entirely obvious if anything could be done. The participants were quite dispersed and had, understandably, varying interests and other time commitments.

However, thankfully, my fellow facilitators remained patient, kept faith and, as is the way with these things, moved when the ideal opportunity decided to present itself. So, in October 2023, we're going to pilot our very first youth and family retreat down here in the southwest. Our venue is the Hilfield Franciscan Friary in rural Dorset. For our participants, one of the big selling points, apart from having something relatively local, was the opportunity to share mealtimes with the resident community.

Finally, I'm part of a group of millennials (those aged 26-41), based here in the South-west, that have created a new online Unitarian community. All of us have links to Unitarian chapels within the district. The group was born out of various conversations around a common desire to be in community with others at a similar stage of life.

We've been playing with creating different spaces to meet different needs. It's been a fun exploration to date.

**Gavin Howell**  
**Torbay Project Lead**

## Projects - Weddings

We are grateful that this project to support Unitarian and Free Christian congregations to strengthen their offer of weddings has been made possible from a generous legacy gifted to the GA by Rev Jay Deacon, a UU minister who spent time here in the UK.

Due to the effects of the Covid 19 pandemic the weddings project got off to a very slow start just before Christmas last year. With many congregations still being very nervous about re-opening their buildings, and the uncertainty making it difficult to plan ahead and book weddings, it was not the best time to be too ambitious.

However, as confidence re-emerges there have been some very positive stories emerging. The Celebration of Love events which took place last year between Santes Dwynwen Day (January 25th) and St Valentines Day (February 14th) were wonderful, joyous occasions and the aim is to hold this event again in 2023. Hopefully those who did not engage with the event last year will have been inspired by the diverse range of events which took place up and down the country and will want to join in this year.

Through using different ways of data collection, we now have a clearer picture of the position regarding which congregations have the capacity to undertake more weddings.

Conversations with those who are excelling in the wedding market have been extremely useful and I'm immensely grateful to those people who have been so generous with their time. During the early part of 2023 we will be sharing the learning from these conversations through a Congregations in the Community Zoom session, as well as hosting a session in the next Annual Meetings.

New Weddings leaflets have been produced which are bright and modern and there is a plentiful supply available from Essex Hall for any congregation.

Increasing and improving our wedding offer is an option which provides an income stream, brings attention to our congregations and buildings, and offers a valuable service to the communities around us. It's a lovely, joyous way for people to experience Unitarianism.

So, if you still need convincing, encouragement or practical help and advice, just send me a message or pick up the phone and together let's get the word out there. The Unitarians provide beautiful, inclusive dream weddings - for everybody!



**Rev Melda Grantham**  
**Weddings Lead**





## a dream location

What makes your dream wedding special? The location?

With over 160 Unitarian churches, chapels and meeting houses to choose from, ranging from traditional and modern city churches to remote mountain top chapels we can offer beautiful, sacred and often historically significant venues. Like our congregations, no two are the same so if it's Gothic grandeur or a smaller space for a more intimate celebration that you are looking for then there's almost certainly one near you which will provide the perfect setting. Loved and cared for by our local Unitarian communities, we are eager to welcome you into our spiritual homes.

## the unitarians

Essex Hall 1 Essex St. London WC2R 3JY  
Tel: 020 7340 2384 email: [info@unitarians.org.uk](mailto:info@unitarians.org.uk)  
Facebook: @unitariansuk  
Twitter / Instagram: @UKUnitarians  
[unitarian.org.uk](http://unitarian.org.uk)

© 2022 The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches  
Registered Charity No. 250786

## your dream wedding

## the unitarians

## a bespoke ceremony

What does your dream wedding sound, look and feel like? Apart from declarations required by law, that is up to you. It's your wedding and our talented ministers and celebrants will work with you to make it exactly what you imagine. We're not confined by a standard marriage ceremony and are equally happy providing a traditional religious service or a bespoke ceremony which reflects your own values and beliefs. You may choose to include ancient rituals or something more personal, but whatever you choose will result in a deeply meaningful ceremony which is uniquely yours.

## a welcoming space

We warmly welcome people of all cultures and faiths and are always delighted to conduct weddings for couples who may be from different faith backgrounds, incorporating elements of both faiths into the ceremony. We are extremely proud to be LGBT+ inclusive and of being one of the first churches in the UK to offer legal marriage to same-sex couples after decades of campaigning. We stand firmly on the side of love.



## a perfect wedding

We offer ceremonies created with love and care, in great locations, with the warmest of welcome. Whatever your dream wedding looks and feels like, choose a Unitarian venue and you will enjoy a truly unique, meaningful and memorable celebration of your love. Let us help you to make your dream come true.

To find your perfect wedding visit  
[www.unitarian.org.uk/your specialevent](http://www.unitarian.org.uk/your specialevent)

# Our Volunteers



# Volunteer Committees

## Buildings Advisory Group

### Members during the year:

Mike Barber (Acting Convenor), Viv Aylmer, Adrian Isaac, Geoff Levermore, Howard Wilkins

### Staff Support:

Simon Bland

### Historic Consultants:

John Goodchild, Graham Hague, Judy Hague, Mark Pearce

## Lindsey Press

### Members during the year:

Catherine Robinson (Convenor), Colleen Burns, Torry Glinwell, Penny Quest, Leslie Schipa (until Sep 2022)

### Staff Support:

Audrey Longhurst (Administrator), Rory Castle Jones (Communications Officer), Liz Slade (Chief Officer)

## Hucklow Summer School

### Members during the year:

Jane Blackall (Convenor), Michael Allured, Kate McKenna, Nicola Temple

## Ministry Strategy Group

### Members during the year:

Rev Sarah Tinker (Interim Chair), Rev Daniel Costley (until Apr 2022), Jane Couper, Helen Mason, Jo James (EC Link)

### Staff Support:

Simon Bland (Ministry & Congregational Support Officer), Liz Slade (Chief Officer)

## Interview Panel

### Members during the year:

Rev Daniel Costley (until Apr 2022), Jane Couper, Rev Patrick Timperley, Rev Sarah Tinker (Chair), with College Tutors involved in the January interviews: Rev Alex Bradley (retired 2022) and Rev Ant Howe

### Staff Support:

Simon Bland (Ministry & Congregational Support Officer)

## Penal & Social Affairs

### Members during the year:

Bruce Chilton (Chair / Secretary), Tony Cann, Jenny Jacobs, Ian Minter (from May 2022), Jo O'Sullivan, Tony Rees, Tony Ward, David Warhurst, Paul Wheeler, Jane Williams



# Volunteer Committees

## Welsh Department

### Members during the year:

Zak Baker (from Jan 2022), Hilda Dumbleton, Mattie Evans (Co-opted), Lis Dyson Jones (Co-opted), Tony Foster (until Oct 2021), Rev Eric Jones (life member), Megan Jones Roberts, Rev Cen Llwyd (until Jun 2022), Julie Nedin (until Oct 2021), Morwen Thomas (until Jun 2022), Rev Wyn Thomas (Chair), Alun Watts (until May 2022), Stephen Wilson (from May 2022)

### Staff Support:

Melda Grantham (Secretary)

## Youth Panel

### Members during the year:

Jim Blair, Jen Hazel, Claire Maddocks, Sara Robertson, Claire Wilton

### Staff Support:

Gavin Howell (Youth Coordinator), Andrew Mason (Minutes)



## Nightingale Centre - Great Hucklow

October 2021 saw the beginning of a quieter time at The Nightingale Centre enabling the staff to tackle the many tasks that cannot be tackled when the Centre is buzzing with guests. It was an opportunity to take stock of the hectic months since re-opening after lockdown restrictions were eased and for our hardworking staff to take some much-needed holidays.

Guests continued to book and our regular Christmas weekend in December, and the ever popular Winter Walking Weekends in January, were a joy having been much missed during the lockdown. Though flexibility was key in responding to last-minute changes due to Covid, confidence began to grow as additional bookings were confirmed and the Centre was prepared for a full Summer.



Winter Walkers enjoying the beautiful countryside around Great Hucklow



We were delighted to welcome back the Send a Child to Hucklow groups with extra weeks to make up for some of those cancelled the previous year. Most of our regular bookings returned and new enquiries translated into firm bookings leading to a very full diary!

Although the Centre continues to attract bookings from new groups as well as repeat bookings (not least from schools and Send a Child to Hucklow groups), we still have some periods of lower occupancy, especially in the off-peak months of the year. We have found it important to acknowledge that, although, for many Unitarians, Hucklow is a special place, even their "spiritual home", there are at least as many Unitarians who have never visited the Centre. We have been grateful that the General Assembly has given a more prominent position to events at the Centre on its website and a number of articles in The Inquirer in the last year have brought the Centre to the notice of readers. More use has been made of national and local Facebook pages to spread information about what the Centre has to offer (including cream teas!) and also from time to time to assist staff recruitment.

The Centre's stall had good visibility at the General Assembly Meetings. The key benefit of our attendance of course was promotion of the Centre and what it can offer for potential guest groups. However in addition to this the silent auction raised significant funds for the Centre, supplementing the generous donations received during the year from many supporters, including our Friends of the Nightingale Centre.

Vital in developing good occupancy, and ensuring the Centre's future, is our continuing to provide as closely as possible what guests are looking for. Hence our commitment to continuous improvement. Our experience in the last year gives us confidence we can meet those needs and we look forward to providing the very best for our guests over the next year and beyond.

Once again we are indebted to our dedicated staff who worked tirelessly under sometimes very challenging conditions to ensure that our guests' experiences remained of the high quality of pre-pandemic years. Indeed, we were able to enhance those experiences through some small changes including new recipes and menus, more home-grown produce and extra attention to preparing all areas of the house to ensure comfort for all.



Centre Staff at the Christmas Party

We have 4 Ukrainian refugees living locally and working at the Centre on permanent contracts. They are a welcome addition to the team and have, as well as their own professional skills and experiences, brought insights from their cultural heritage which enhance our understanding and add to our ongoing quest for improving our services.



The village welcomed the new Ukrainian presence

The members of the Management Committee also gave of their time and energy to support the staff in the several absences of key members through illness. The ability of staff members to step into unfamiliar roles at a moment's notice in order not to disappoint guests was truly wonderful and much appreciated.



Retiring Treasurer, Colin Partington

This year-end saw the retirement of Colin Partington from the Treasurer duties of the Management Committee. Colin's contribution over some fifteen years has been immense. The role has included production of monthly accounts (with all the gathering of information required), producing an annual Financial Report for the GA (distinguishing between charitable and non-charitable income, Unitarian and non-Unitarian, etc) and for many years reporting orally to the GA. Importantly, Colin has developed user-friendly methods for presenting financial information and trends to fellow Committee members by imaginative use, via whiteboard, graphs, pie charts and other means.

Alongside his financial responsibilities, Colin has contributed in so many other ways. Borrowing from his professional experience, he has led completion of the Centre's Risk Register and carried out health and safety inspections on a regular basis. He has produced house plans, undertaken house inventories and taken on so many other tasks – even producing wooden chalices for sale at GA and making shelves for the bedrooms.

Fortunately, while relinquishing his finance lead role, Colin is not retiring from the Committee so we will not be saying goodbye to his enthusiasm, creativity and energetic contribution to the Centre.

In August 2022 the Centre Manager, Stella Burney, retired following a long period of illness. The Peach Hall was packed at a party for Stella when we celebrated her many achievements during her time at the Centre. It was a delightful afternoon with many of Stella's family present learning, some for the first time, of the many projects Stella managed and the love and appreciation for her of the members of the Management Committee, staff, guests and suppliers who came along to wish her well.



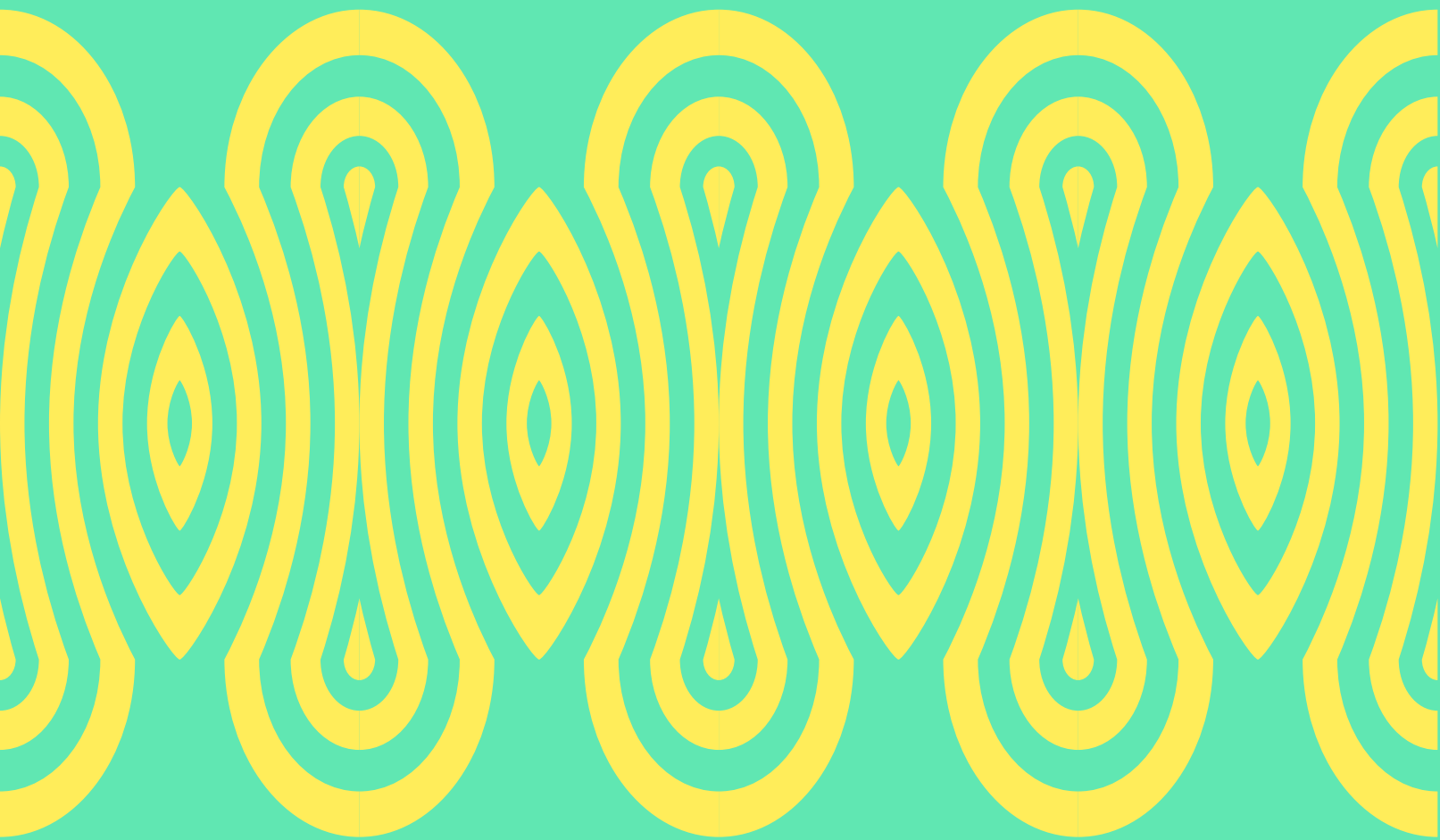
Centre Manager, Stella Burney at her Leaving Party

As we start the year in October 2022, we are in the process of recruiting a new Manager for the Centre and reviewing and celebrating with the staff the wonderful work of the last 12 months.

Bookings are again looking good and we are hopeful that we can ride out the current economic crisis without impacting on the quality of the service offered to guests. Indeed, we are confident that our staff team working collaboratively with the Management Committee will face all challenges with determination and innovative ideas to ensure our guests will continue to enjoy a warm welcome and a relaxed and comfortable stay at The Nightingale Centre.

**Mike Tracey**

# Annual Meetings





# Annual Meetings 2022

The Annual Meetings were held at the Hilton Metropole Hotel in Birmingham on 19-21 April 2022. There were 273 participants, of whom 134 were voting members. The meetings were a time to be together in person – reconnecting with spiritual friends and making new connections for the journey ahead. This year's Annual Meetings were like no other, after so much time of being apart during the coronavirus pandemic. We gathered in person for community building, spiritual nourishment, learning, inspiration and togetherness.



The resolutions passed covered topics including NHS funding, transgender rights, the new chalice logo, and supporting the 'We The Peoples' campaign. You can find full information about the resolutions [here](#). During the meetings, the national Presidency was passed from Mrs Anne Mills to Rev Sue Woolley.



A fascinating keynote talk on 'The Politics of Waking Up' was delivered by Indra Adnan, the founder of The Alternative Global – and Indra also led a workshop of Community Power. There were a wide range of interesting, informative and inspiring workshops and break-out sessions, with highlights including sessions by Rev Erika Hewitt, the #Blessed youth group, the book launch for 'Why Are We Here?' and many more.

Throughout the meetings, worship was led by a range of lay people and ministers. The opening worship was led by Janine Hurley, Hannah Stephenson, Robert Foreman, and Jacqueline Woodman. Various other worship sessions were led by Shana Parvin Begum, Louise Reeve, Rev Celia Cartwright, Jan Smith, Mary Jones, Rev Ant Howe, Rev Robin Hanford, and Arek Malecki. The inspiring Anniversary Service was led by Revs Melda Grantham and Mark Hutchinson, with Rev Wyn Thomas preaching the sermon.





# **Our Finances and Organisation**



## Annual Meetings 2022 Accounts

Summary of Financial Results	2022	2021
	£	£
<b>Income</b>		
Accommodation & Conference Fees	60,447	
Group Registration	4,242	
Donations to Meetings	16,232	2,041
	<b>80,921</b>	<b>2,041</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Postage and Printing	1,291	
Pre-AGM Expenses	136	
Receptions & Social	622	
Room Hire and Audio Visual	13,379	2,400*
Speakers and Fees	1,339	
Sundries	2,051	180
AM Travel	614	
AM Van Hire	1,756	
Venue Account	58,493	
Youth Honoraria & Expenses	1,216	
	<b>80,897</b>	<b>2,580</b>
<b>Balance: Surplus / (Loss)</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>(539)</b>

**\*Note:** In the 2021 AGM costings shown in the last Annual Report, the AV costs had not been received. These were for having Popularis Ltd set up, test and run live a voting system to enable online voting for registered voting delegates in accordance with the GA Constitution's voting provisions, while still allowing attendance by non-voting participants. These have now been added in.

# CA Financial Summary – Income

## Finance Manager

David Joseph



### Overview

The result (or Net movement in funds) for the year ending September 2022 was a deficit of £314,360 (2020/21: surplus of £1,013,394). This is after allowing for the unrealised losses on investments of £366,522. The Net Incoming/(Outgoing) Resources before unrealised losses was a surplus of £52,162 (2020/21: deficit of £77,242).

### Income

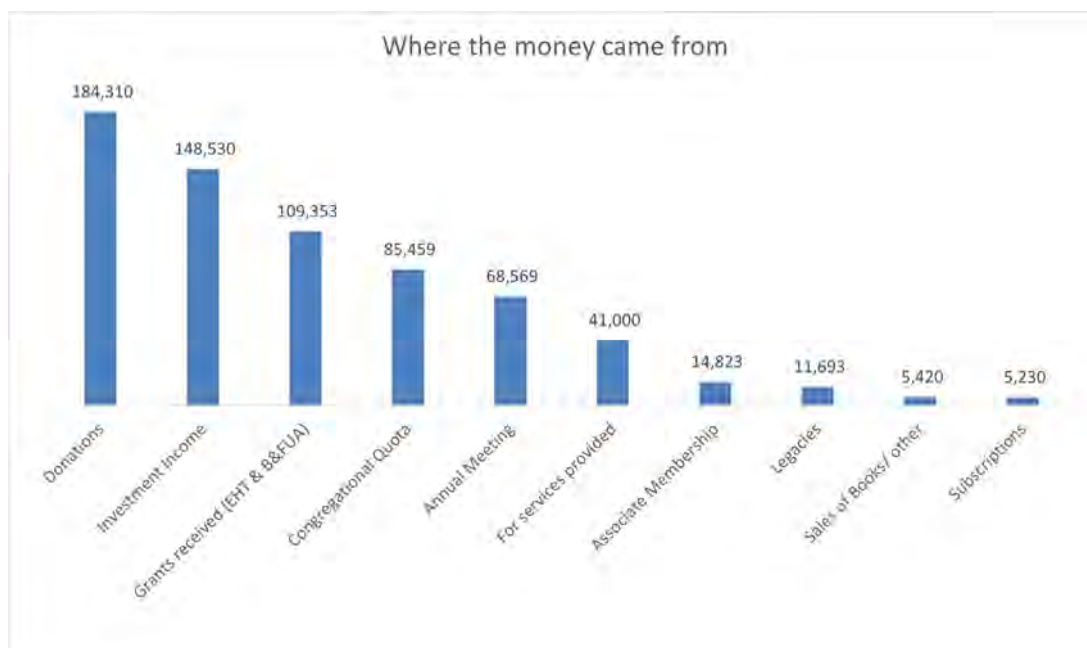
Total income for the year was £785,388, up £144,612 on 2020/21. Legacy income was £11,693 (2020/21: £119,292); donations were £184,310 (2020/21: £12,806) and included a significant contribution to the Ministerial Students Fund. Other operating income includes revenues from Live Giving, book sales and investment income.

### Grants from Essex Hall Trust and B&FUA

The Essex Hall Trust grant, gifted accommodation and management fees charged to the Trust amounted to £226,000. The gift-in-kind of free office space included in this sum is valued at £111,000. The B&FUA grant was £29,353 (2020/21: £27,693).

**Investment Income** was £148,530 (2020/21: £135,935).

**Unrealised and realised gains** There was a fall in market value giving an unrealised loss of £366,522 (2020/21 – realised and unrealised gains of £1,090,636). This was due to severe financial market volatility in September 2022.



Note: The income chart excludes the non-cash element of the EH grant.

# CA Financial Summary – Expenditure

## Expenditure

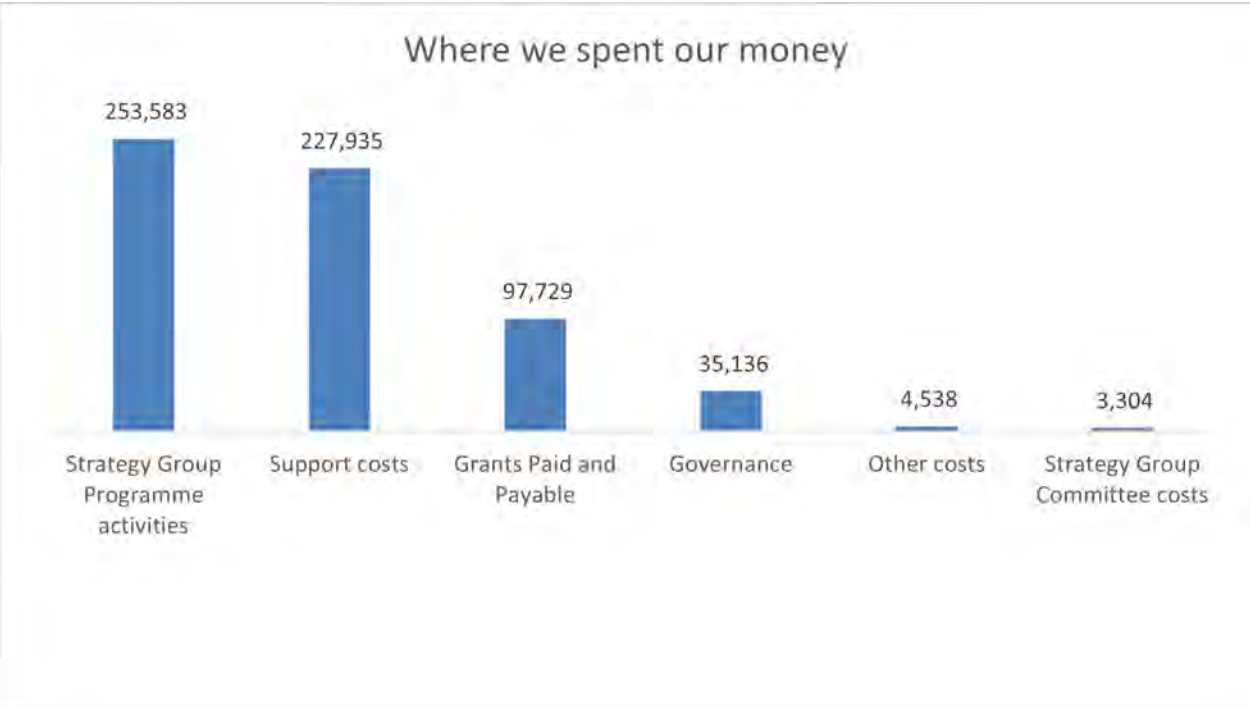
The GA spent £733,225 (2020/21: £718,018) in the year to 30 September 2022, an increase of £15,207 on 2020/21. This includes expenditure from programme activities, grant payments and other charitable activities as well as administration expenses.

Grants paid amounted to £97,729 (2020/21: £130,033).

Governance and EC activities amounted to £35,136 (2020/21: £6,746). Administration costs include the non-cash notional accommodation cost of £111,000.

## Long-term liability

This arises from the General Assembly’s participation in the staff pension scheme and represents the amounts payable to the Pensions Trust under the deficit funding agreement. It has been actuarially calculated and shown in the balance sheet at £6,599. (30 September 2021: £38,430).



Note: The expenditure chart excludes the non-cash office space notional cost.



# Balance Sheet

	2022	2022	2021	2021
	£	£	£	£
<b>Fixed Assets</b>				
Tangible Assets	54,532		56,667	
Investments	6,213,902		6,580,425	
Investment property	<u>150,000</u>		<u>150,000</u>	
		6,418,434		6,787,092
<b>Current Assets</b>				
Stocks	1,475		3,194	
Debtors	193,030		355,325	
Investments	76,229		-	
Cash at Bank and in hand	<u>371,246</u>		<u>273,445</u>	
	641,980		631,964	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>				
Creditors falling due within one year	<u>(55,935)</u>		<u>(68,386)</u>	
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		586,045		563,578
Long-term liabilities		(6,599)		(38,430)
<b>Total Assets Less Liabilities</b>		<u>6,997,880</u>		<u>7,312,240</u>
<b>Charity Funds</b>				
Endowment Funds		881,453		933,836
Restricted Funds		3,254,828		3,471,437
Unrestricted Funds		2,861,599		2,906,967
<b>Total Funds</b>		<u>6,997,880</u>		<u>7,312,240</u>

# Income and Expenditure Report

Where the money came from	2021-22	2020-21
<b>Income from Donations &amp; Legacies</b>		
Legacies	11,693	119,292
Associate Membership fees received	14,823	18,995
Subscriptions from Related Charities	5,230	7,100
Community Appeal	0	0
Sundry donations and other income	184,310	12,806
Essex Hall Accommodation and Grant	191,000	191,000
B&FUA Grant	29,353	27,693
	<b>436,410</b>	<b>376,886</b>
<b>Income from Charitable Activities</b>		
Furtherance of GA Objects	110	395
Annual Meetings Income	68,569	2,041
Congregational Quota	85,459	82,653
Sales of Books	5,310	1,866
<b>Income from Other Trading Activities</b>	<b>41,000</b>	<b>41,000</b>
<b>Investment Income</b>	<b>148,530</b>	<b>135,935</b>
	<b>785,388</b>	<b>640,776</b>
<b>Where we spent our money</b>		
<b>Cost of Books</b>	<b>3,460</b>	<b>1,097</b>
<b>Grants Paid and Payable</b>	<b>97,729</b>	<b>130,033</b>
<b>Support costs</b>	<b>338,935</b>	<b>367,626</b>
<b>Strategy Group Programme activities</b>	<b>253,583</b>	<b>163,940</b>
<b>Strategy Group Committee costs</b>	<b>3,304</b>	<b>5,342</b>
<b>Governance</b>	<b>35,136</b>	<b>6,746</b>
<b>Investment Management Fees</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>40,062</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>1,078</b>	<b>3,172</b>
	<b>733,225</b>	<b>718,018</b>
<b>Net Incoming / (Outgoing) Resources</b>	<b>(52,162)</b>	<b>(77,242)</b>
<b>Gains/ (losses) on investments</b>	<b>(366,522)</b>	<b>1,090,636</b>
<b>Net Movement in Funds</b>	<b>(314,360)</b>	<b>1,013,394</b>

# The Nightingale Centre Financial Summary

We are getting back to normal.

Our income for the year is down 15% on pre-pandemic levels, and our expenditure is 10% lower than before, but our booking numbers for this next year look good already.

There are, as expected, rises in wages and heating costs, but we have saved in other areas. Our big challenge is to increase prices next year to a level where we can cover our increased operating costs whilst not turning off potential guests.

We carried out an impairment review and have increased substantially our depreciation for past work on the building infrastructure. By the end of next year we expect to have



written off all historical depreciation and that future improvements will be paid out of current income and investments.

A special thanks for the donations we have continued to receive this year – they are an important part of our income.

**Colin Partington,**  
Financial Secretary up to Sept 2022

**Ian Hicks,**  
Financial Secretary from Oct 2022

## Income and Expenditure Report

Where the money comes from	2021-2022	2020-2021
	£	£
Donations	13,788	18,284
Charitable Activities	264,681	47,493
Non-Charitable Activities	29,410	42,070
Investment and Rental Income	31,905	30,929
Government Grants and Furlough Scheme	1,845	109,372
<b>Total incoming Resources</b>	<b>341,659</b>	<b>248,148</b>
 Where we spent the money		
Providing the Services - Charitable	470,621	328,242
Providing the services - non-charitable	48,613	36,471
Governance Costs	1,305	1,260
<b>Total Outgoing Resources</b>	<b>558,028</b>	<b>365,973</b>
 <b>Net Incoming resources</b>	<b>(216,369)</b>	<b>(117,825)</b>
Gains/losses on investment assets	132,349	135,482
 <b><u>Net Movement of Funds</u></b>	<b><u>(84,020)</u></b>	<b><u>17,657</u></b>

## Balance Sheet

### Total Assets of The Nightingale Centre as at 30 September 2022

	2022	2022	2021	2021
	£	£	£	£
<b>Fixed Assets</b>				
Tangible Assets	1,185,188		1,431,076	
Investments	209,544		224,286	
Investment Property	1,182,943		1,035,852	
		<b>2,577,675</b>		<b>2,691,214</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>				
Stocks	945		929	
Debtors	42,450		31,127	
Cash at Bank and in hand	621,965		609,940	
		<b>665,360</b>		<b>641,996</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>				
Creditors falling due within one year	(71,178)		(77,333)	
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		<b>594,182</b>		<b>564,663</b>
<b><u>Total Assets</u></b>		<b>3,171,857</b>		<b>3,255,877</b>



# Covernance

## The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches

**The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches**  
**Registered Charity No 250788**

**The Nightingale Centre**  
**Registered Charity No 242256**

The General Assembly :

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

### The objects of the General Assembly:

#### Preamble

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

#### Object

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

To this end, the Assembly may:

Encourage and unite in fellowship bodies which uphold the religious liberty of their members, unconstrained by the imposition of creeds;

Affirm the liberal religious heritage and learn from the spiritual, cultural and intellectual insights of all humanity; Act where necessary as the successor to The British and Foreign Unitarian Association and National Conference of Unitarian, Liberal Christian, Free Christian, Presbyterian and other Non-Subscribing or Kindred Congregations, being faithful to the spirit of their work and principles (see appendix to the constitution), providing always that this shall in no way limit the complete doctrinal freedom of the constituent churches and members of the Assembly;

Do all other such lawful things as are incidental to the attainment of the above Object.

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

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

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

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

## The Nightingale Centre

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

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

### **The objects of the Nightingale Centre:**

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

(a) the relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health, financial hardship or other disadvantage; and

(b) the provision of facilities for the education of students of educational establishments.

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

## Being a Charity

### **Advantages**

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

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

### **Responsibilities**

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

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

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

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

# Our Staff

**The following were members of the GA Staff during the financial year:**

Chief Officer	Elizabeth Slade	<a href="mailto:ESlade@unitarian.org.uk">ESlade@unitarian.org.uk</a>
---------------	-----------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------

## PROGRAMME STAFF:

Ministry & Congregational Support Officer	Simon Bland	<a href="mailto:SBland@unitarian.org.uk">SBland@unitarian.org.uk</a>
Welsh Department Secretary & Weddings Lead	Melda Grantham	<a href="mailto:MGrantham@unitarian.org.uk">MGrantham@unitarian.org.uk</a>
Youth Coordinator & Safeguarding Lead	Gavin Howell	<a href="mailto:GHowell@unitarian.org.uk">GHowell@unitarian.org.uk</a>
Congregational Connections Lead	Lizzie Kingston Harrison	<a href="mailto:EKingston@unitarian.org.uk">EKingston@unitarian.org.uk</a>
Social Action Officer	Ann Howell (Joined Oct 2022)	<a href="mailto:AMason@unitarian.org.uk">AHowell@unitarian.org.uk</a>

## SUPPORT STAFF:

Operations Manager	Andrew Mason	<a href="mailto:AMason@unitarian.org.uk">AMason@unitarian.org.uk</a>
Administrator (External)	Audrey Longhurst	<a href="mailto:ALonghurst@unitarian.org.uk">ALonghurst@unitarian.org.uk</a>
Communications Officer	Rory Castle Jones	<a href="mailto:RCastleJones@unitarian.org.uk">RCastleJones@unitarian.org.uk</a>

## FINANCE:

Finance Manager	David Joseph	<a href="mailto:DJoseph@unitarian.org.uk">DJoseph@unitarian.org.uk</a>
Finance Assistant	Cherralyn Davies	<a href="mailto:CDavies@unitarian.org.uk">CDavies@unitarian.org.uk</a>

## VOLUNTEER:

Rosemary Ruston	<a href="mailto:c/o Info@unitarian.org.uk">c/o Info@unitarian.org.uk</a>
-----------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------

**The following were members of the Essex Hall Trust Staff during the financial year:**

Lee Warren	Caretaker
Hepzi Lewis	Cleaner

# Our Members





# Our Members

## Honorary Members

Rev Dr Peter Godfrey	Mrs Dawn Buckle
Mr Michael Tomlin (Deceased)	Rev Dr Ann Peart
Rev J Eric Jones	Mr Alan Ruston
Rev Cliff Reed	Mr Martin West
Rev James McClelland	

In accordance with rule 4 of the Constitution of the General Assembly the following persons, having contributed not less than £40 each to the funds of the Assembly in the financial year 2021-22, are Associate Members of the General Assembly. Names of Honorary Members and Full Members who have subscribed not less than £40 each during the financial year are also mentioned.

Aaronson, Jane	Cann, Tony	Faiers, Elizabeth	Hill, Andrew
Adkinson Barbara (Deceased)	Carter, John	Ford, Janet	Hill, Margaret
Allured, Michael	Cartwright, Celia	Fordham, Ed	Hird, John
Ashworth, Joyce	Chilton, Bruce	Foster, Katie	Hoskins, Gareth
Atkinson, Jennifer	Chilton, Carol	Foster, Megan	Howarth, Jane
Attfield, Robin	Cockroft, Brian	Fowler, Angela	Howarth, Miles
Aylmer, Vivien	Cockroft, Lena		Hughes, Mary
	Code, Ross	Gabriel, Sheena	
Baker, Marion	Coldwell, AH	Gaines, Richard	Ince, Robert
Barber, Mike	Cook, Joan	Gienke, Martin	Isaac, Adrian
Barwick, Sheila	Copley, David	Gillman, David	
Beck, Robert	Copley, Helen	Godfrey, Peter	Janes, Jennifer
Benfield, Sarah	Corrigall, Jim	Greenwood, Craig	Jeorrett, Adrienne
Bennett, Diane	Costley, Daniel		Johnson, Ken
Birtles, Elizabeth	Costley, Janet	Hague, Gillian	Johnson, Penelope
Blair, James	Cotterill, Kevin	Hague, Howard	Jones, Aled
Boyce, Sarah	Cotterill, Susan	Hague, Judy	Jones, Anne
Boyle, Brendan	Crompton, Judith	Hanford, Robin	Jones, Brenda
Boyle, Dee	Cupper, Anthony	Harris, Lucy	Jones, Eric
Bradley, Alex		Harrison, Marjorie	
Bradley, Jean	Dawson, Christine	Hartley, Lesley	Kay, Hazel
Brooks, Beryl	Day, Mike	Hartley, Roger	Kenyon, Betty
Brown, Arthur	De Silva, Marco	Hastie, James	Kenyon, Neville
Brown, Iain	Dolso, Corrina	(Deceased)	Kerr, Donald
Buckle, Dawn	Dyson-Jones,	Haughton, Dorothy	King, Linda
Buckle, Roy	Elisabeth	Hewerdine, Claire	Kirk, Margaret
Buckley, David		Hewerdine, Dorothy	
Burns, Colleen	Edwards, Juliet	Hewerdine, John	Lake, Mavis
	Egloff, Urs	Hewis, Heddwen	Laycock, Barbara
	Elder, Raymond	Hewis, Peter	Lingwood, Stephen
		Higgins, Martin	Lloyd, Gavin
			Ludbrook, Babs

## Our Members (ctd)

Mardle-Moss, Kieren  
 Marks, Brian  
 Martin, Christine  
 Mason, Gavin  
 Mason, Helen  
 McAuley, Derek  
 McClelland, Anne  
 McClelland, James  
 Merritt, Helen  
 Merritt, Richard  
 Midgley, Celia  
 Midgley, John  
 Mills, Anne  
 Mills, Colin  
 Mills, Roger  
 Mitchell, Susan  
 Murray, Sian  
  
 Newsam, Chris  
 Nicodei, Eduard

O'Connor, Feargus  
 O'Neil, Sandie  
 Oulton, Robert

Palmer, Bryce  
 Parsons, Helen  
 (Deceased)  
 Partington, Colin  
 Partington, Joan  
 Paxton, Margaret  
 Payne, Beryl  
 Peace, Ian (Deceased)  
 Peart, Ann  
 Pebody, Isabel  
 Pennington, Alan  
 Percy, Annette  
 Perry, Margaret  
 Price, Derek

Quest, Penelope

Ramage, Roderick  
 Rathbone, Betty  
 Reed, Clifford  
 Reed, Paulette  
 Rees, Clare  
 Rees, Tony  
 Reynolds, Amanda  
 Richards, John  
 Richards, William  
 Roberts, Wilna  
 Robinson, James  
 Robinson, Margaret  
 Rogers, Jocelyn  
 Rogers, Louise  
 Rowland, Jennifer  
 Ruston, Alan  
 Ruston, Jennifer  
 Ruston, Mark  
 Ruston, Rosemary  
 Rycroft, Keith

Sakurai, Shige  
 Sampson, Peter  
 Sanders, Neil  
 Scott, John  
 Seccombe,  
 Josephine  
 Sellman, Jennifer  
 Shaw, David  
 Shaw, Elizabeth  
 Short, Alison  
 Silk, Joyce  
 Silk, Philip  
 Simmons,  
 Josephine  
 Sinclair, Ann  
 Slaven, Sarah  
 Smith, Carole  
 Smith, Kenneth  
 Smith, Matthew  
 Soulsby, Peter  
 Storey, David  
 Sykes, Jenny

Teagle, Jeffrey  
 Teagle, Sue  
 Temple, Nicola  
 Thompson, Christine  
 Thursfield, Alison  
 Tinker, Sarah  
 Tombs, Susan  
 Tomlin, Jane  
 Tomlin, Michael (Deceased)  
 Tucker, Andrew

Usher, Ann  
 Usher, Geoffrey

Varley, Lynne  
 Varley, Richard  
 Varney, Deborah  
 Voegeli, Iris  
 Voegeli, Rodney

Wagner, Erich  
 Walker, Frank  
 Warhurst, David  
 Warhurst, Hazel  
 West, Jackie  
 West, Martin  
 West, William  
 Whitell, Martin  
 Whitham, Margaret  
 Wightman, Robert  
 Wilcox, Ann  
 Wilkie, Chrissie  
 Wilkins, Howard  
 Wilkinson, John  
 Williams, David  
 Williams, Jane  
 Woodman, Jacqueline  
 Woolley, Sue  
 Wykes, David  
 Wykes, Elizabeth

# Congregational Contributions

1 October 2021 to 30 September 2022

England (and Isle of Man)	Quota Members	£
Ainsworth	4	140
Altrincham	31	1,085
Ansdell (Lytham St Annes)	0	0
Ashton in Makerfield	35	1,225
Atherton	39	1,365
Bath	3	105
Belper	12	420
Billingshurst	8	280
Birmingham New Meeting	20	700
Birmingham Hollywood	60	2,100
Blackpool	10	350
Bolton Bank Street	30	1,050
Bolton Chorley New Road	9	315
Bolton Egerton	30	1,050
Boston	3	105
Bradford	17	595
Bridgwater	9	315
Bridport	13	455
Brighton	45	1,575
Bristol Brunswick	10	350
Bristol Frenchay	18	630
Bury	36	1,260
Bury St Edmunds	6	210
Cambridge	39	1,365
Chatham	6	210
Cheltenham and Gloucester	18	630
Chester	5	175
Chesterfield	6	210
Chorley	8	280
Cirencester	9	315
Coseley	0	0

Coventry	2	70
Cradley	10	350
Crewkerne	8	280
Croydon	15	525
Cullompton	6	210
Dean Row	55	1,925
Denton	10	350
Derby	3	105
Ditchling	15	525
Doncaster	17	595
Douglas (Isle of Man)	3	105
Dover	4	140
Dukinfield	30	1,050
Eccles	40	1,400
Evesham	16	560
Framlingham	10	350
Godalming	33	1,155
Great Hucklow	14	490
Great Yarmouth	10	350
Hale Barns	9	315
Hastings	12	420
Hinckley	34	1,190
Horsham	27	945
Hull	30	1,050
Hyde Fellowship	2	70
Hyde Flowery Field	0	0
Hyde Gee Cross	0	0
Ipswich	32	1,120
Kendal	43	1,505
Knutsford	47	1,645
Leeds	34	1,190

Leicester	28	980
Lewes	1	35
Lincoln	12	420
Liverpool Gateacre	12	420
Liverpool Sefton Park	19	665
Liverpool Toxteth	10	350
London Brixton	16	560
London Golders Green	35	1,225
London Hampstead	84	2,940
London Kensington	57	1,995
London Lewisham	12	420
London New Unity	81	2,835
London Stratford	5	175
Macclesfield	8	280
Maidstone	6	210
Manchester Chorlton	18	630
Manchester Cross Street	32	1,120
Manchester Gorton	3	105
Mansfield	31	1,085
New Mill	4	140
Newcastle under Lyme	18	630
Newcastle upon Tyne	14	490
Newport (Isle of Wight)	0	0
Northampton	5	175
Norwich	56	1,960
Nottingham	3	105
Oldbury (Black Country)	3	105
Oldham	12	420
Oxford	34	1,190
Padiham	26	910
Plymouth	36	1,260
Portsmouth	39	1,365
Rawtenstall	5	175
Richmond	34	1,190
Rivington	20	700
Rochdale	17	595
Scarborough	4	140

Sevenoaks	30	1,050
Sheffield Fulwood	34	1,190
Sheffield Norfolk St	47	1,645
Sheffield Stannington	20	700
Shelf	10	350
Shrewsbury	16	560
Sidmouth	4	140
Southampton	0	0
Southend	5	175
Southport	5	175
St Albans	0	0
Stalybridge	5	175
Stockton	15	525
Stourbridge	6	210
Styal	6	210
Taunton	13	455
Tenterden	9	315
Torquay	0	0
Trowbridge	8	280
Urmston	18	630
Wakefield	10	350
Warrington	10	350
Warwick	16	560
Watford	6	210
Whitby	6	210
Whitefield (Stand)	24	840
Wirral	17	595
Woodhall Spa	1	35
York	44	1,540

<b>Scotland</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>£</b>
Aberdeen	10	350
Dundee	8	280
Edinburgh	70	2,450
Glasgow	38	1,330



<b>Wales</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>£</b>
Aberdare	19	665
Alltyblaca *	2	50
Bangor	9	315
Cardiff	10	350
Cefn y Coed	12	420
Cellan *	1	0
Ciliau Aeron *	0	8
Cribyn *	3	80
Cwmsychbant *	3	110
Cwrtnewydd *	4	106
Felinfach *	1	44
Lampeter *	9	150
Llandysul *	3	42
Llanwnnen *	5	154
Nottage	4	140
Pontsian *	3	60
Prengwyn *	4	100
Swansea	8	280
Talgarreg *	6	200
Trebanos	18	530
Wick	4	140
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2,549</b>	<b>£88,779</b>
<b>Prior Year Adjustments</b>		<b>- £3,425</b>
<b>Adjusted Total</b>		<b>£85,354</b>

#### **Notes on congregational contributions:**

\* The churches in South Wales pay collectively via the District Treasurer. The contribution for each congregation is as notified to us. It does not relate directly to the quota figure. Membership numbers for each congregation have not been provided and we have therefore used a previous year's figures as an estimate.



# **the unitarians**

**Published by The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches**

Essex Hall 1 Essex St London WC2R 3HY

**Tel:** 020 7240 2384 **email:** [info@unitarian.org.uk](mailto:info@unitarian.org.uk)

[unitarian.org.uk](http://unitarian.org.uk)