

Annual Reports 2023

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General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches
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2023 Annual Reports

The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches
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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, Electoral Panel,

Hucklow Summer School, International Collaboration,

Ministry, Publishing,

Social Action, Wales,

Youth

37 Projects

Torbay,

Weddings

41 Our Volunteers

43 Nightingale Centre

46 Annual Meetings

48 Our Organisation & Finances

49 2023 Annual Meetings Accounts

50 Financial Summaries

Nightingale Centre

52 Organisation

Governance,

Staff

55 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 2023-23 Vince McCully



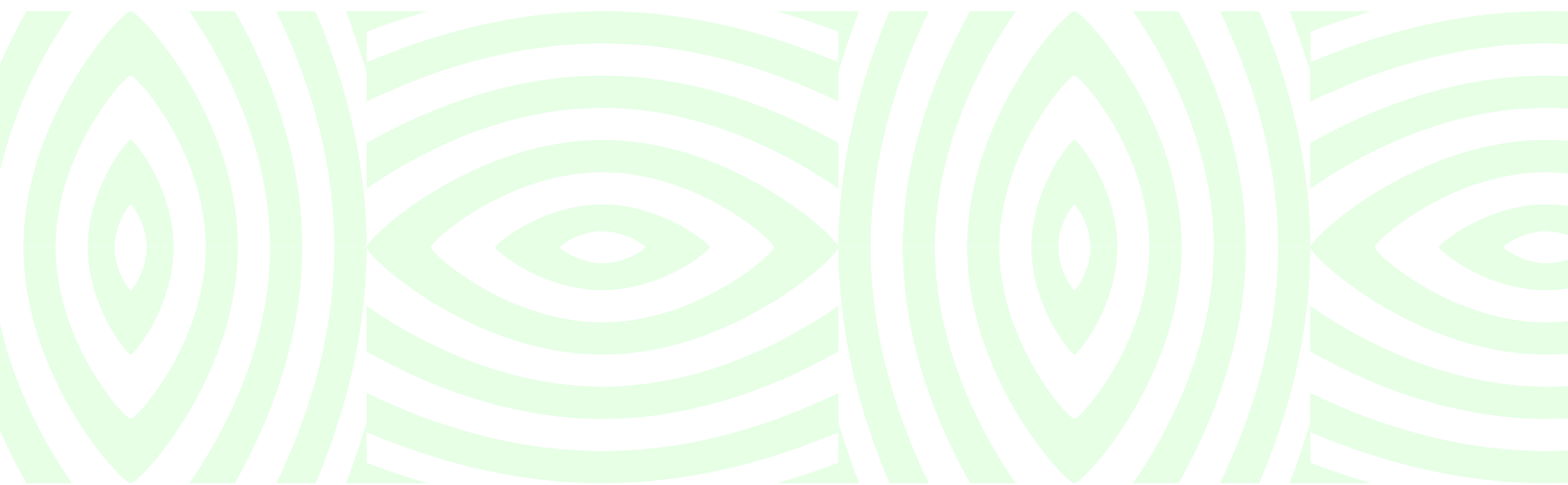
Being President of the GA makes for busy times and inevitably many trips further afield for the length and breadth of the country, and beyond. Here is a snapshot; between September 2023 and January 2024, I have been to Brighton, Bradford, Leicester, Hinckley, York, Sheffield (twice), Leeds, London (twice) and Chorley! Park Lane (thrice), Chowbent (led carol service), Rochdale, Dean Row, Cross Lane, Monton, Walmsley, Bury and Denton, plus Rivington (six times, including leading a carol service) and three Zoom meetings. A total of 31 occasions to wear the President's medal, I hope it doesn't wear out before our Vice President Geoff Levermore is invested.

Amongst these occasions Hinckley and Chorley were district meetings and so around 18 additional congregations were effectively reached. Sadly, at Dean Row I attended the funeral of our dear friend Rev Penny Johnson, I am told they have never seen the chapel so full and the gallery was creaking a bit – so fitting for such an outstanding figure in our faith, our thoughts and prayers are with Ken. At Cross Lane I was there for the 'Advent Anthems' service which was a bravura display of Cross Street's many talents and a true Yuletide adventure, as was the Christmas fair (complete with real reindeer) at Monton Church. At Leicester I attended the induction

of Arek Maleki as minister and how joyous was this occasion, again meeting folk from many more congregations and witnessing a deeply moving inter-faith service where Arek received blessings the City's mayor and from at least five other faiths and the incumbent mayor of Leicester. One of my visits to London and Sheffield and the one to Leeds are where I attended GA Executive meetings which are a fascinating insight into the workings of our faith behind the scenes and though high-powered they still have a very human and thoughtful dynamic.

My other trip to London was different altogether as I attended the National Memorial Service at the Cenotaph in Whitehall. This was another very moving occasion and the interfaith nature was not lost on the other twenty one faith leaders present and who insisted that we all posed for a group photograph. The conversations were all amiable and I was able to chat freely with the Humanist, Baptist, Spiritualist, Zoroastrian, Church of Scotland, Salvationist, and Buddhist leaders.

The most moving part, and I think our other Presidents will agree, is during the two-minute silence, where you could hear a leaf fall. It was as if time stood still, and King



Charles cut a most solitary figure standing alone before the Cenotaph. The solemnity of the occasion was unmistakable and the deep recognition of the sacrifice and fortitude of this Kingdom, in its times of greatest danger, was truly humbling. As you would expect I got some excellent photos which I have posted on Facebook, highlights are the kindly wave from Princess Anne at Horse guards and another of a handsome chap at number 10 Downing Street. I urge you to attend this remembrance service as an onlooker if you can, you won't be disappointed.

This is only a brief account, but I must commend Liz on her 'District Connections' Zoom initiative where it is helpful and informative to both listen and contribute to matters occurring in the districts. You could say that 'Worship Words' being promoted and collated by Lizzie is also very helpful and informative but on a very much more personal level. These are just two of the GA's many activities I would like to recommend to you in the coming year.

God Bless

Vince McCully



Chief Officer's Report



General Assembly Chief Officer
Elizabeth Slade

From what I have seen, most people found themselves in a different 2023 to the one they might have imagined a few years ago, before Covid arrived in our lives. The changes we have experienced – personally and collectively – have opened some doors and closed others. As individuals, we have all been impacted by Covid in different ways, and as communities, the shape of the changes we're experiencing reflects the complexities of our webs of relationships.

We have seen strong and meaningful new developments emerge, and we have seen communities work hard to keep longstanding activities going, and while we celebrate these, it would not be right for us to gloss over the struggles that many of our congregations have experienced.

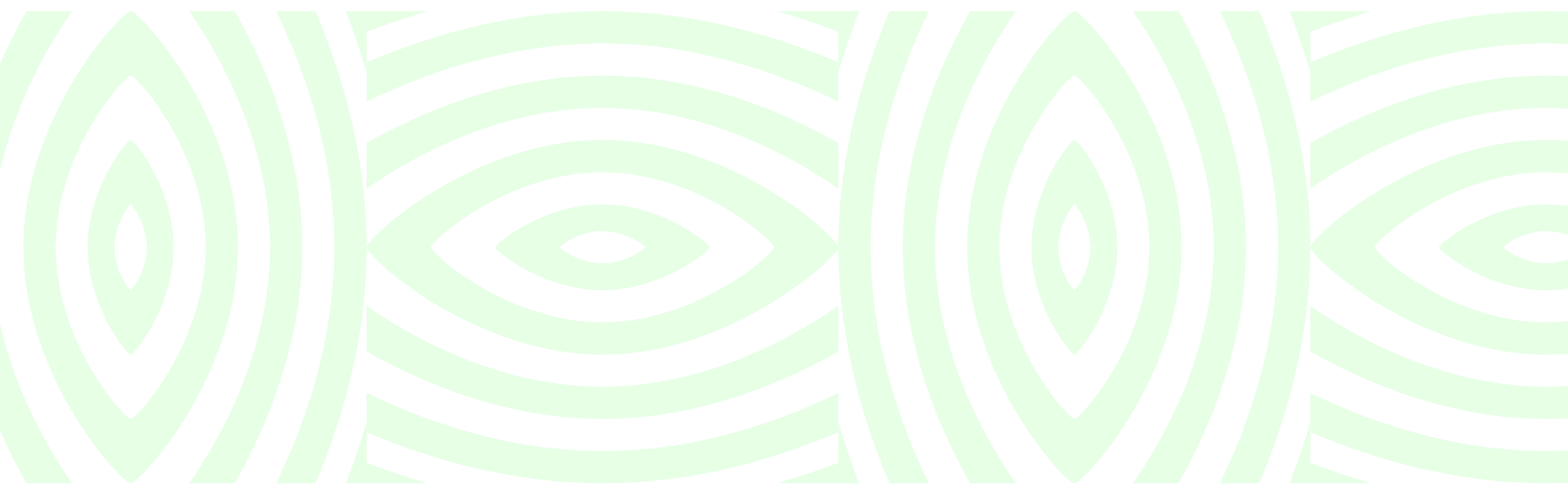
I'll name some of the trends I have seen from my vantage point.

One is that a lot of activity is now happening in our movement outside of the traditionally constituted groups. Unitarian Transformers are now offering weekly online gatherings, as are the Unitarian and Free Christian Bible Studies Group, or Together in Meditation, while others like Hindu Connections gather monthly, and Heart and Soul host multiple

gatherings each week. Although these are led by Unitarians who are members of congregations and affiliated societies, these communities don't currently have an official standing. There are also in-person groups that are gathering in new ways and in new rhythms, whether they are regular events like new fellowship groups, or one-offs like the Western Union's recent intergenerational retreat.

We are also seeing a steady stream of people taking up Unitarian College's Worship Studies Course, and not only going out into our denomination with freshly brushed-up skills, but also being in connection and community with their peers. It's exciting to see this new community forming, whether they are people who have been part of our movement for many years, or new faces looking for a way to deepen their commitment to Unitarianism.

We are also seeing congregations facing up to difficult decisions about their futures. For many smaller congregations, the challenges of the last few years have meant that they are at a point where what was working before is no longer sustainable. For some, the building is a headache – and yet selling it off to a property developer may not be aligned to their values. For others, leadership capacity is



the pinch-point, with too few people with the energy to take on responsibility for doing all the jobs that need to be done now, let alone taking responsibility for the future direction.

We have also seen conflict in congregations; our leaders, whether they are paid or volunteers, have held a lot over the last few years, and it takes a great deal of resilience to continue investing in right relationship with peers and colleagues when times are tricky. We often see conflict emerge where this resilience has been depleted.

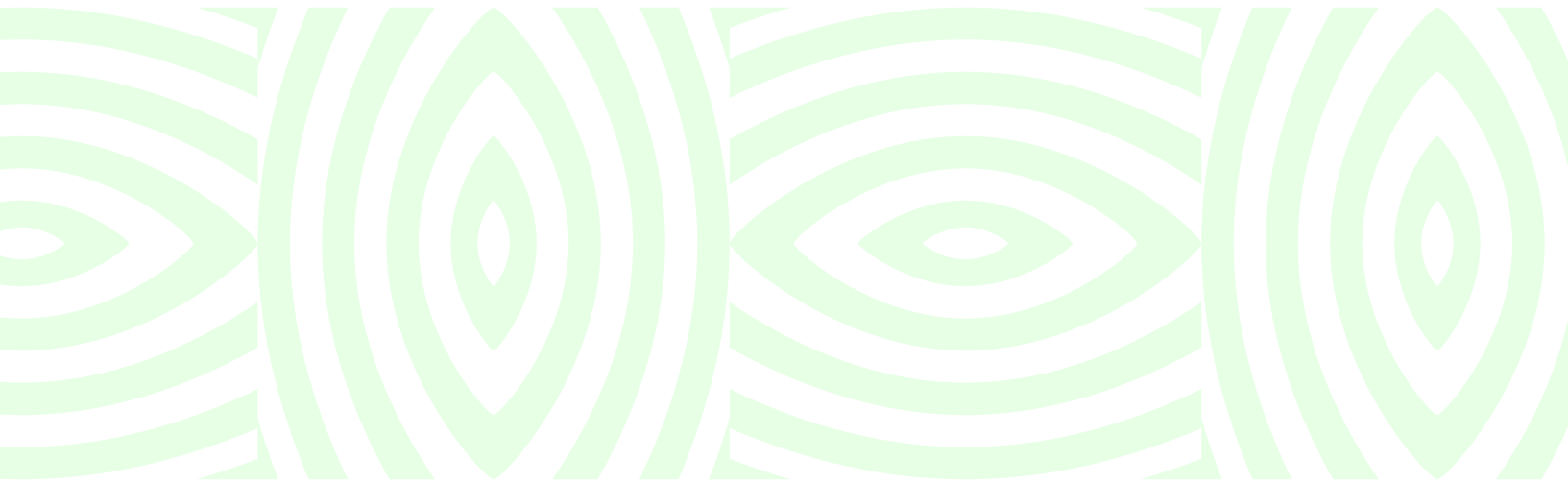
I saw 2023 as the year when more energy seemed to be returning to many of our leaders; if I was to characterise bluntly, 2020 was the acute crisis, 2021 was realising that the acute crisis wasn't going away, 2022 was standing a bit bewildered in the aftermath, and 2023 was gathering ourselves a little. Of course, life didn't pause through any of this, and our leaders' commitment to keeping on going has a cost that we must acknowledge.

This context is why the GA is investing in leadership with a new role for Rev Dr Rory Castle Jones from January 2024, as our Ministry and Leadership Development Officer. He will be looking at how we can create sustainable ways of supporting our leaders, recognising that healthy congregations need healthy leaders. It's also why we're continuing Dr Lizzie Kingston Harrison's

Congregational Connections role (initially trialled as a two-year position from 2021), as we see the need to facilitate the connections between local leaders of all kinds who are finding the practices and projects that bring strength to our community. I often refer to 'Myron's Maxims', simple rules for complex change from social leadership expert Myron Rogers, and the one that chimes most closely with Lizzie's work is 'connect the system to more of itself'. By connecting our points of strength, the whole fabric of our community gets stronger, and more resilient.

Rory and Lizzie work alongside Simon Bland, our Ministry and Congregational Support Officer, who has been working closely with congregations that have had challenges coming to the surface after the difficulties Covid brought. Simon also works to support ministry students from the point of considering applying for training, all through their college training to entering the GA's Roll of Ministers. We are grateful for the commitment of those students, and to Unitarian College and Harris Manchester College for their care and expertise throughout the whole training journey.

Another recent staff change is Ann Howell becoming our Social Action Officer (a five-year position, from October 2022), generously supported by the Bowland Trust. Ann works closely with the Unitarian Social Justice



Network, formerly known as the Penal and Social Affairs Panel, to highlight social action that individuals and congregations can get involved in, and to help keep Unitarians informed of the issues that matter. Ann is also stepping into the Communications Officer role temporarily (from January to September 2024), while we review what the GA's communication function should look like longer-term. The Communications Officer role was a new one when Rory Castle Jones took it up in 2018, and he learnt much that can inform how the GA can support internal communication within our community, and in telling our stories to the wider world.

I encourage you to read all the staff reports to get a sense of the work they are doing in support of the wider movement; some of the GA team's work is confidential because of the sensitive support provided to congregations, some is under the surface of what is visible, and much is made up of the careful steps that are too small to be celebrated, but all add up to a committed network of support for our membership. I'm grateful that I get to work with such a caring, capable and thoughtful group of people, who are deeply committed to their work and the wider Unitarian and Free Christian ethos. It's a privilege to be doing this work with them and with you.

Liz Slade

Our Trustees



Our Trustees



Rev Jo James (Convenor)

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.



John Bates

John is a retired Professor of Strategy and Entrepreneurship at London Business School, with forty years' experience in business and education. He joined Cambridge Unitarians in 1991 and later was a member of Islington Unitarians. John became Chair of New Unity when it was formed in 2015, before stepping down in 2022.



Sarah Benfield

Sarah lives in Berkshire and is a retired solicitor specialising in family law. She is a member of Reading Unitarian fellowship. The daughter of a Unitarian minister, Sarah has been involved in the denomination all of her life, including in Sheffield, Reading, and as Chair of the Send A Child To Hucklow charity which helps children from deprived areas experience the natural world. Sarah enjoys travelling with her family, volunteering in her local park and as a National Trust guide, singing in a choir and dance exercise classes.

Our Trustees



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.



Simon Hall

Simon's decade or so of Unitarianism has led him to Northampton and Leicester (where he is a Vestry member) and he's also a member of the GA Executive Committee, to which he brings creativity, pragmatism and lateral thinking. The journey has also encompassed attending various Lay Worship/Leadership courses, and facilitating services in a number of chapels around the country.

Simon is studying for his BA in Theology, Ministry and Mission at Luther King Centre, along with a number of lovely Unitarian Ministry Students. He is excited to be furthering his mission within the denomination, focussing on the pastoral needs of our communities.



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



Dr Sue Morrison

Sue lives in London and is a former GP, medical educator and life coach. Her health education work has taken her around the world, including to Bangladesh and Kenya. Sue began her Unitarian journey at Monton Unitarians, Lancashire, attending as a child with her grandmother – memories which she cherishes. She is now a leader at New Unity in north London, but remains a proud Northerner. Sue loves being an active grandmother, making patchwork quilts and choral singing.



Rev Wyn Thomas

Wyn is a Unitarian Minister based in Ceredigion and is Chair of Unitarians Wales. He works as a Complex Case Officer and Engagement Project Leader for Tir Dewi, a Welsh rural support charity.



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 Rev Jo James

Members during the year:

Rev Jo James (Convenor from Apr 2023), Marion Baker (Convenor, until Apr 2023), Sarah Benfield (from Oct 2023), Rev Celia Cartwright, Hilda Dumbleton (until Apr 2023), Simon Hall (from Jul 2023), Robert Ince (until Apr 2023), Jenny Jacobs, Sue Morrison (from Oct 2023) 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.

Trustees

The Annual Meetings in 2023 saw the end of Marion Baker's term on the EC and her role as Convenor. Marion's commitment to the General Assembly, and her thoughtful leadership within the EC will bear fruit for many years to come, and we are grateful for all the ways in which she shared the wisdom of her experience. We offer huge thanks also to Hilda Dumbleton and Robert Ince whose terms on the EC also came to an end in 2023, after many years of committed service. Marion, Hilda and Robert all continue to serve our Unitarian and Free Christian movement in many ways.



Retiring EC Members (L-R): Marion Baker, Hild Dumbleton and Robert Ince

Annual Meetings

At the Annual Meetings, the EC hosted a workshop to explore the sustainability of our congregations and membership. Nearly 100 people took part, showing us how important a subject this is to people. In groups, we explored the questions:

1. What is your reaction to our collective falling membership? How does it feel in your congregation when you talk about attendance?
2. Where do you feel stuck? What are the biggest challenges you face? What do we need to let go of?
3. Where does the excitement lie? What feels hopeful? What do we need to hold on to or do more of?

There was richness in the conversation, and we're grateful for the notes that the participants fed back to us, so we could synthesise the feedback from the groups. It felt so valuable to name the feelings around declining membership – sad, anxious, frightened, angry, 'hopping mad', disappointed – and also to name that for many people it is hard to talk about, and easier to avoid the topic. These are not enjoyable feelings to engage with, after all.

The main challenges named were a lack of public awareness of Unitarianism and religious life in general, having too few people to do the work that's needed to support the congregation healthily, and the difficulties in leading change in a community setting. The things identified as needing to be let go of were some of the traditional cultural elements of church life that may not resonate with many people's experience today, or where things are done a certain way 'because that's how we've always done it', rather than because of its inherent value.

The things named as hopeful and exciting were varied – from partnerships with other local faith and community groups, to social activities and events for young people, and in breadth and variety in worship. New ministers, student ministry placements, and joint ministries were also hopeful experiences, as well as connections across the movement, particularly the new opportunities opened up by online meetings.

The incoming EC members, John Bates and Rev Wyn Thomas, attended the workshop as well as the incumbent members and the insight from this well-attended workshop has fed into the EC's work throughout this year.

It drove the development of a new scheme to provide financial support, connection and encouragement to new locally-led medium-term projects that will invest in local leadership. We started sharing this innovation challenge scheme with our membership in late 2023, and by the time you read this we hope you will have heard more about the proposal.

The 2023 Annual Meetings also saw the launch of a new Lindsey Press title, 'Cherishing the Earth – Nourishing the Spirit', edited by Rev Dr Maria Curtis. The book explores the theme of Eco spirituality, and how Unitarian and Free Christian faith can guide us in this time of climate breakdown and polycrisis. Our thanks to Quaker writer and activist Alastair McIntosh for writing a thoughtful foreword for the book, to all those who contributed chapters, prayers, poems and reflections, and to Catherine Robinson, for her expert copyediting and production skills that brought the book into being.



New trustees

Rev Jo James was appointed Convenor at the May 2023 EC meeting. Simon Hall, Dr Sue Morrison, and Sarah Benfield were co-opted to join the EC in September 2023. Our thanks to them for stepping up to fill the vacant positions.

Ministry & Leadership

This year we welcomed Rev Lynda Kane, Rev Arek Malecki and Rev CJ McGregor onto the GA's Roll of Ministers.

We are also working with Unitarian College to develop a new Roll for lay worship leaders, in parallel with the college's development of their Advanced Lay Worship Studies programme.

Throughout the year, the GA Staff team have continued to adapt to our movement's changing circumstances, supporting congregations to find their path forwards.

Finance

The GA continues to provide grants in several areas. Ministry students are eligible for support with their living costs from the Ministry Students Fund. Several congregations received financial support to help pay for their minister's stipend, via the Sustentation Fund. And we were glad to support four young people from Gellionnen's #Blessed young adults' group to attend the International Association for Religious Freedom's conference in Transylvania.

We are grateful to the British & Foreign Unitarian Association (B&FUA) for their continued management of the Ministers' Stipend Augmentation Fund, which provides financial support for ministers in England, and appreciate the B&FUA sharing the anonymised application information from ministers, which allows us to deepen our understanding of ministers' current experience, and inform the support that we can provide.



Trustees' Review

We are grateful to the B&FUA and the Essex Hall Trust for their continued financial support of the GA via their grants to us, and to the Bowland Trust and Wood Green Trust for their financial support to enable younger adults, children, and first-time attendees come to the Annual Meetings at a much reduced rate.

A summary of the Accounts of the Nightingale Centre is included in this report. The full Accounts of the General Assembly will be made available on the GA's website, as well as the Charity Commission website in due course.

The Finance Group of the EC has continued to meet regularly by Zoom, Chaired by Rob Whiteman as Honorary Treasurer, with Jo James, and John Bates as EC members, and with Marion Baker, and Robert Ince providing generous support as former EC members, along with 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.

Our Activities



Communications

"If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people together to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea." - Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Often our work in congregations is dominated by conversations about the everyday tasks required to maintain, sustain and develop our communities. Yet these everyday tasks are not the things that draw people to our churches or to Unitarianism. In our communications, we need always to remember – and inspire others about – the “endless immensity of the sea” – of the bigger picture, the spiritual quest, the journey of faith.

It has been my immense privilege to serve as our denomination's Communications Officer for the past five years, since October 2018. As I prepare to step down from the role to focus on my ministry at Gellionnen Chapel and to embark on new endeavours, it feels like a good time to reflect on communications in our movement.

At national and congregation level, our communications have seen huge changes in the past five years, particularly since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020. When I started in my (newly created) role, our denomination had no Facebook page, a monthly text-only email newsletter, and primarily communicated with our congregations via paper-based mail-outs. Most of our congregations had fairly outdated websites, only a small number engaged seriously with social media, and online worship, Zoom services and livestreaming were – in most places – unheard of. All of this feels like ancient history today.

The pandemic, coupled with a growing acknowledgement of societal changes and church decline, has led to huge improvements in the way we communicate with the world. During the past few years we have worked hard at a national level on new

websites nationally and locally, new leaflets, newsletters, projects and collaborations. Crucially, we went through a re-branding project which (while not perfect) has brought us on leaps and bounds and provides a freer, more open range of options for congregations.

The greatest joy for me in my five years at the helm of our Communications though has not been our central work in Essex Hall, but working with our ministers, leaders and congregations as they explore and experiment in reaching out to their communities. The work being done at local level is inspiring, innovative and bold – and those doing the work don't get praised enough for all they do.

I would like to thank all of you in the denomination for your support, encouragement and collaboration during my five years in the role. It has been a pleasure and a privilege. To close my final Communications Report, I want to implore our leaders and congregations to continue to be bold, fearless and unashamed in shouting from the rooftops about the importance of spiritual community in the 21st century.

As we continue to do the difficult and essential work of running the ship, let's keep our minds fixed on the “endless immensity of the sea” – and our gaze on the sun and the stars above.



Rev Dr Rory Castle Jones

Congregational Connections

It is now over two years since I took on the role of Congregational Connections Lead for the General Assembly. I feel that making connections, sharing ideas and resources, and building relationships is one of the most valuable things we can all do right now – especially when so much feels uncertain and unsettling in the wider world. I've met many inspiring people over the last two years, and I hope that I've played a positive role in building new relationships across the movement. I've learnt that change happens when people doing good things connect with others, to learn from them, to support each other and to help nurture a shared purpose. I try to help this happen and in doing so strengthen the fabric of our community – that's why this job is such a joy.

Part of my vision for this role has been sharing resources and inspiring stories. For example, I have been holding regular **Congregations in the Community** online workshops. These events 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've had a 'Weddings Workshop' with Rev Melda Grantham and Rev Phil Waldron and an update from Rev Claire MacDonald on her work at Harris Manchester College with more planned for later in the year. All the videos in the series are available on the GA YouTube channel.

In the same vein, I have collaborated with Rev Rory Castle Jones on an informal series of daytime gatherings called **Coffee and Comms**, specifically designed to help congregations with their communications.



Coffee and Comms, for sharing communications ideas and resources

Meanwhile, sharing resources and inspiration for worship has also been an essential part of my work this year and I've spent some of my time building up the new Worship Words website, a collaborative space for the whole movement to share worship materials. The collection hosts almost 400 readings, from over 50 authors, includes voices from across the movement and can be easily searched by category, theme, or keyword. Look out for the Sunday Prayer, shared every Sunday across our social media channels with a link back to the website.



The home page for our Worship Words website
www.worshipwords.unitarian.org.uk

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.

Last year I helped start two new online meditation groups 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.

This year, we have identified a need to strengthen the connections between all those who work to provide meditation in our movement, we have hosted a gathering at the Annual meetings and online workshop to build these connections further. It's been an exciting collaboration for me and there is a lot of potential to build further connections.



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



Lizzie Kingston Harrison
Congregational Connections Lead

Congregational Support

The year has been one of support on both governance issues and ministry placements.

A consequence of smaller trustee committees, for several congregations, has been the need to ensure that their governance procedures and processes are correct and robust. It has proved vital in a couple of cases to ensure the survival of chapels within the movement. The recording of minutes and the safe storage of deeds are simple but key tasks.

Even with larger congregations, the issues around moving to Charitable Incorporated Organisation status requires a good level of basic governance to be in place to aid the transition.

Recruitment of ministers and lay employees has been a focus of support as congregations sought to re-establish themselves after the pandemic. The benefits of a proper process mean that not only are legal issues covered but better appointments are made.

The challenge of finding trustees to hold the chapel and congregations for the current and next generation has been trickier. We are currently looking at a targeted programme of support for trustees who are able to look beyond the traditional locality to support others on a short-term basis and are working with similar charitable organizations.

Reviews of the Ministerial Interviews and the General Assembly Roll should help congregations secure good leadership going forward.

Support on a range of issues from payment card readers, funding sources, and archiving has also been a factor in the year.

Confidential support to congregations is always available.

Simon Bland
Ministry & Congregational Support
Officer



Electoral Panel

The Electoral Panel (Gavin Mason, Nicola Temple and David Warhurst) was established under the General Assembly Constitution (Paragraph 7) to be responsible for conducting the election of the Executive Committee. It is accountable to the Annual Meetings.

The Panel was able to conduct its business by email and confirmed it would run a similar process to that in 2021.

There were four vacancies each for a four-year term. It was expected that there would then be a resumption to the previous pattern of four places being filled by election every two years to ensure a managed change of membership.

Anne Hock, of Popularis, was again appointed as Independent Election Supervisor.

Timetable

The timetable agreed was:-

12 December 2022 – Nominations open

23 January 2023 – Nominations close at 5pm

6 February 2023 – Candidate Information Booklet and ballot papers sent out

13 February 2023 – Election starts

20 March 2023 – Election closes

21 March 2023 – Full results to be announced by Popularis

6 April 2023 – New EC takes office at GA Annual Meetings

Congregational secretaries are also to be informed of their responsibilities in the event of an election being called. In the event, only two nominations received and, therefore, they were elected and no election was held.

Anne Hock reported on 24 January 2023 and a public announcement of the result was made on 3 February 2023.

After two occasions when there were insufficient candidates to require an election (2015 & 2017), it was notable that in 2019 and 2021, there were more candidates than places. It was disappointing that for 2023 we reverted to fewer candidates than vacancies.

We would like to thank Anne Hock of Popularis and her staff, and Elizabeth Slade, GA Chief Officer, and staff at Essex Hall for their assistance.

The Electoral Panel reflected on the possible reasons why they were not enough candidates to require an election, and possible ways to encourage people to apply.

Suggestions

The following suggestions were reported to the EC:

- The presentation of the work required of EC Members appeared daunting without a greater emphasis on the benefits of the role.
- There was an ageing and reducing membership, including within congregations, therefore reduced capacity.
- Some were unable to volunteer due to rules around connected family members, such as GA Staff.

- It could be a difficult commitment for lay people in permanent employment.
- People needed to be encouraged to stand. It had been hard to 'talent-spot' during the COVID lockdown and more was needed to encourage good people to stand.
- It was suggested that Districts and Congregations, and GA Honorary Members, could all play a role in encouraging people to stand.
- It was suggested that a send-out be incorporated for September to encourage people to think about this earlier, without being over the Christmas period, and this would give enough time for it to be included on the agenda for District meetings for those who only meet 2-3 times a year.

The Electoral Panel (normally three members) will be reconstituted to conduct the next EC election in 2025 and would welcome views on the election process from Congregations, Unitarian bodies and Associate & Honorary Members of the General Assembly. These should be sent to Elizabeth Slade (eslade@unitarian.org.uk)

Gavin Mason

Result of 2023 Executive Committee Election:

JOHN BATES	New Unity CIO	ELECTED UNOPPOSED
REV WYN THOMAS	Cheltenham & Gloucester Unitarians	ELECTED UNOPPOSED

Hucklow Summer School



Summer School Convenor
Jane Blackall

Mission Statement:

The core activity of Hucklow Summer School (HSS) is religious education. We aim to provide a balanced programme, including small group activities and morning theme talks.

We are committed to providing opportunities for daily spiritual practice with meditation sessions each morning and worship in the chapel each evening. We provide a programme for children and young people.

It is essential that HSS is a safe and caring environment. To this end, we are committed to provision of a named "Minister for the Week" for pastoral care, and to the widespread use of group covenants.

It is our hope that participants will be inspired and challenged by their experience of HSS to develop and promote religious education activities back in their own congregations and communities.

We aim to promote diversity at HSS, representing the breadth within our movement, in terms of our demographics, theologies and varied forms of spiritual practice.

What have we achieved this year?

2023 has been a milestone year for HSS as we trialled a new format, restructured certain elements of the event, and also returned to the Nightingale Centre in Derbyshire for the first time since 2019.

We hosted our annual Summer School week in August and this year we had 44 in-person participants and a further 13 online. Our theme this year was 'Real Life: Telling the Truth of our Lived Experience' and our theme speaker was Louise Baumberg. Louise presented her experiences and reflections on this topic in a series of five engaging talks throughout the course of the week. The other central element of our programme is the engagement group sessions which allow time for deeper exploration of the theme in a small group environment. This year we had four engagement groups for adults and a group for children. Excitingly, we were able to offer a hybrid programme this year, with a number of our participants meeting online via Zoom while others experienced the programme in-person from Hucklow. The talks can be viewed in full on our YouTube channel and on a podcast stream (see www.hucklowsummerschool.co.uk/talks/).



Opening Night at Hucklow Summer School



Online participants at Summer School

2023 was the first year since 2019 that we have been able to offer an in-person element to the event. While we were excited to return to the Nightingale Centre in Hucklow, we also wished to add a new hybrid aspect to the week, that would be more widely accessible for people able to join online. We are committed to making HSS ever-more accessible and inclusive, so that as many people can benefit as possible. Most of the 13 online participants would simply not have been able to attend an in-person event and many of them expressed their heartfelt thanks for the chance to join in with summer school or the first time. We place high value on our online provision, and it is something that we are not only planning to keep, but also potentially to expand in future years.

Looking ahead to 2024 and beyond:

The first task for the panel following each summer school is to review the feedback from the event and use this to inform our planning for the next year. In September, the panel spent time reading and discussing the feedback received from participants and reflecting on how we can continue to evolve and improve the summer school experience.

The HSS panel are committed to continuing to provide a hybrid event with both online and in-person elements. We also wish to continue improving this format so that we can make the experience as smooth and inclusive as possible for all our participants.

For the in-person participants the very nature of living together, sharing meals, and attending optional activities means that there are ample opportunities for social interaction and informal connection. For next year, we wish to find ways to enhance such opportunities for participants who are joining online so that they can also

experience a sense of the wider Summer School community outside of the core worship, theme talk and engagement group sessions.

The HSS panel is also in the process of assessing the longer-term viability of Summer School and exploring how we can be more financially resilient and robust to future challenges. We are exploring various supplementary funding options in the hope that we can reduce the impact of economic fluctuation and increasing running expenditure on our course participation fees. We realise that HSS is an expensive week for participants, and we are looking at how we can keep the fees as low as possible, while still delivering an enriching and valuable experience.

Overall, this year's Summer School was a huge success, made such by our wonderful participants who all contributed to create an amazingly rich and positive week. We are also indebted to the staff and volunteers who were generous with their offerings of engagement groups, worship sessions and optional workshop activities. The panel would like to thank everyone who supported Summer School in 2023, those who have supported us in the past and those who will continue to support us to make Summer School possible into the future. Blessings and thank you to everyone!

Jane Blackall

International Unitarian Collaboration

Through this last year I have remained an active member of the Leadership and Design Team (LDT) that was appointed at the closure of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists. We have now been gathering together online for a couple of years, and are building strong relationships and understanding of each other's contexts.

Our membership includes people from Brazil, the US, Transylvania, South Africa, India, the Philippines and Australia. We heard that some were surprised to learn that seven of the nine LDT members are under 45 years old; apparently some kind of record for Unitarian working groups!

It has been a wonderful community to be part of, as we have learnt our way into a pattern of connecting – via Zoom calls, a WhatsApp group, shared Google documents, and more. We had the opportunity to meet in person in November 2023 thanks to a gathering convened by Unitarian College, the Czech Unitarian Council and the Unitarian Universalist Association's International office. We found on meeting in person just how much our relationships had been strengthened by the pattern of meeting regularly over a long period of time; we were meeting as friends.

The British social change leader, Myron Rogers, has the maxim 'The process you use to get to the future is the future you get', and this is what my experience of the LDT work has been.

At the Prague gathering, we had the chance to share informally the shape of what we can see as a model for future collaboration between parts of the global Unitarian, Unitarian Universalist and Free Christian (U/U) community. We recognise that because our ways of working have been different to those of the leaders who came before us to create the ICUU, what we are envisaging has a different form.



The model that we have envisioned is based on connection and facilitation. There will be no central global agenda of priorities or projects; instead there will be infrastructure to support connection and communication between leaders in local U/U communities, to make it easier for them to come together around the issues that are most important to them. For example, leaders of small fellowships can connect for mutual support and idea-sharing, whether they are in Brazil, Kenya, the UK, or Australia. Ministers from different countries can connect in fellowship, discussion, and study. People can come together around different themes that matter to their communities, whether that's social action, music, leadership development, worship design, community outreach – or just for fun and connection.

Part of the LDT's core remit has been to be aware of power dynamics between different parts of the world; particularly in recognising that in the past there has been dominance over smaller U/U communities from the North American UU community, as the largest and wealthiest part of our global community. Our work is trying consciously to design in ways to avoid that dominance in future.

2024 will see the recruitment of a facilitator who will begin the work of putting together the communications infrastructure that will allow these connections to flourish.

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) continues to hold oversight of Unitarian ministry training, with on-going 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, with a first preliminary meeting arranged for December 2023.

Together with the Interview Panel, work began on the creation of an entry mechanism for the Roll category of Lay Leader, with work on the Worship Leader qualification being the first of a new designation.

Following her training at Unitarian College, Rev Lynda Kane has now been recognised by both the GA and the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland (NSPCI) on their respective Roll of Ministers.

Interview Panel

The Interview Panel called candidates for ministry training to interview at Harris Manchester College, Oxford in January 2023, undertaking interviews over two days.

The Interview Panel recommended that Tina Gandhi, Janine Sim and Kieren Mardle-Moss be offered training with Unitarian College (UC).

Following discussions with both colleges, the Interview Panel took steps to move the candidate interviews for the 2024 intake from the traditional January 2024 timetable to November 2023. This should enable a greater range of academic options to be available especially at HMCO for students and travel is less likely to be impacted by the weather.

9

Ministerial students in training in the academic year to Summer 2023

As always 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, on completion of training, were conducted online again this year, with independent academic input.

Our thanks go to our viva panel members and congratulations to our students, Lynda Kane and Arek Malecki, who joined the GA Roll of Ministers with Newly Qualified Minister status.

During the academic year to the Summer of 2023 nine students were in training:

Unitarian College: Shana Begum, Robert Foreman, Arek Malecki, Jennifer Sanders, Hannah Stephenson, Francis Elliot-Wright, Tina Gandhi, Janine Sim, and Kieren Mardle-Moss

Thanks were given to Rev Patrick Timperley who stepped down from the Interview Panel after many years of valuable support.

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 is still inevitably modest and the circumstances of the 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 the colleges, which are 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**

2

Ministers admitted to the Roll with Newly Qualified Minister status

Publishing

One new book was published under the Lindsey Press imprint in this financial year: 'Cherishing the Earth – Nourishing the Spirit', a collection of essays commissioned by Maria Curtis from a wide range of Unitarian ministers, lay people, and children, "all on a deep and collective journey of green spirituality" (to quote a review posted on www.greenspirit.org.uk). Each chapter concludes with questions for reflection and discussion. "This is a lovely and loving collection of reflections, encouragement, and plans for action. It would make a great study book for any group or individual looking to learn and explore this topic" (from a review in Progressive Voices, the newsletter of the Progressive Christianity Network).

In the first six months since publication, sales of 'Cherishing the Earth' totalled 307 copies. Altogether, 741 copies of Lindsey Press publications were sold in the financial year ending 30 September 2023 (online, from Essex Hall, at the Annual Meetings, and at other events): a welcome increase on the totals for the past two years but still lower than pre-lockdown sales (1,122 in the f/y ending September 2019), partly because only one new title was published this year, whereas two best-sellers were launched in that financial year.

Currently our major work in progress, aiming for a launch at the 2024 Annual Meetings, is 'Soul Journey: Finding Our Spiritual Way' (working title), an eight-session resource for congregational use, created and compiled by Michael Allured and Kate Dean. At the same time we hope also to launch a compilation of contributions to the Hucklow Summer Schools that were held in 2023 and 2022, edited by Jane Blackall. In the longer term, Claire MacDonald is working on a sequel to the best seller "Living With Integrity: Unitarian Values and Beliefs in Practice", aiming for a launch at the Annual Meetings in 2025.



Ideas for future publications include an introduction to Unitarianism for beginners, consisting of a brief account of the history of Unitarianism and contemporary Unitarian values and practice, combined with an annual anthology of recent, original, Unitarian material (prayers, meditations, think-pieces, etc.), to provide an attractive introduction for newcomers and inquirers. Proposals for other future publications would be welcomed by the Panel's Convenor: cmrobinson.oxford@gmail.com.

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 – but we would much rather welcome a new Panel member who has the appropriate expertise. Offers, please, to cmrobinson.oxford@gmail.com.

All our books continue to be available direct from Essex Hall, and on-line 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

Main Activities

1. Penal & Social Affairs Panel (PSAP)
2. Unitarians 4 Climate Justice
3. People So Bold
4. Interfaith Activities
5. Social Action Service
6. Citizens UK
7. Summary

Supporting the Penal & Social Affairs Panel (PSAP)

As I was getting my feet under the table this year, the anchor function for my role was to support the PSAP. This entailed providing a secretarial role for their (then) monthly meetings and helping them organise their presence at the GA Meetings. Given the unusual nature of the role being externally funded, it took some time to find a rhythm of reporting and feedback to the PSAP that was manageable and satisfactory to all relevant parties, but we have now found a comfortable and productive pace and are working together well.

One suggestion that I championed from the beginning was to embrace the historic widening of the scope of the “Penal Affairs Panel” to the “Penal and Social Affairs Panel” and evolve it further to reflect a more purposeful future, starting by changing the name to something broader. This idea was explored at the most recent meeting, and it was decided to vote at the December 2023 meeting to officially change the name to “Social Justice Network”. This may seem like a small change, but it could be very useful in attracting wider interest. This name change also reflects the umbrella nature of the group, so that other topical social interest groups could come under it, such as “Unitarians 4 Climate Justice”.

Unitarians 4 Climate Justice

Unitarians 4 Climate Justice (U4CJ) started as an idea at the beginning of the year to organise a presence at “The Big One” climate

rally in London at the end of April. Initially, the leadership team was Laura Cox, Rob Oulton, Lizzie Kingston and myself, however Lizzie stepped back once momentum had formed and the group had found its feet. We gathered around 30 UK Unitarians for “The Big One”, after which we promoted the corresponding WhatsApp group, which now has 60+ active members.

Since April, we have supported Unitarians around the country to attend climate justice events, with banners, flyers and publicity. We currently meet via Zoom every two months and we are now working on a day-long event planned for the 3rd February 2024 at Kensington Unitarians with speakers and workshops.

People So Bold

The People So Bold (PSB) podcast was an idea born out of conversations at the GA Meetings. I had many interesting conversations with ministers and lay leaders and realised that a podcast would be a great way to extend the audience for these conversations. PSB went “live” in September, and I created an accompanying newsletter. The first few episodes were moderately well-received, but with definite room for improvement in technique and promotion. I have a solid lineup of interviews scheduled in the coming weeks and in 2024, I will plan to publish 1-2 per month along with the monthly newsletter.

Interfaith Activities

I have had the opportunity to engage with several interfaith activities corresponding to social justice issues this year and will continue to look for ways that we can combine forces with larger faith groups to make our voice louder as we respond to important issues. In the Climate Justice arena, “Faith for the Climate” (www.faithfortheclimate.org.uk) has been a good ally and I represented UK Unitarians when they held a prayer vigil at Lloyd’s of London

and handed in a letter denouncing their investment in fossil fuels.



Handing in the letter to Lloyd's of London

Another interfaith group that has been active this year is "Let's End Poverty" (www.letsendpoverty.co.uk), a grass-roots initiative begun by UK Methodists, but now spread widely in interfaith and secular communities. Their intended work is around campaigning for systemic change, rather than addressing the symptoms. I attended their founding event in October and look forward to reporting on their progress and encouraging engagement.

Social Action Service

In September, I started taking services to promote Unitarian Social Action and make connections at congregations. I co-led the first service with Adam Slate, ministerial intern at Rosslyn Hill and he has been helping me fine-tune the service as I continue on my own. To date I have led services at Hampstead, York, Stockton, Newcastle, and shortly Brighton.

Citizens UK

This is an initiative led by Rev Julio Torres that comes out of a very successful partnership at New Unity in Northeast London. Citizens UK is a secular organisation that has involved faith groups to coordinate efforts to campaign

around specific issues, including housing, climate change, and refugee rights. I have had several meetings with liaison officers and have been working with Julio, who aims to have the London District (LDPA) pilot the initiative for 2024. If the LDPA partnership is successful, we would look at potential engagement at the national level.

Summary

My first full year in post was not as straightforward as I would have liked, due to the ill-health and subsequent death of my father. The support from GA Staff during this time was incredibly helpful and because of that support I was able to keep the beating pulse of my initial endeavours going until I was able to pick them up again.

It says a lot about our movement that initiatives like U4CJ sprouted organically and have already found roots in fertile soil. The more I engage with people around the country, the more I am inspired by what even the smallest of congregations are doing to work with people in their communities who are marginalised and in need of support.

With the flame of so many connections, ideas, and projects just ready to be sparked into action, I am confident that next year will be even more fruitful and inspiring for social action work in the wider UK Unitarian world. I very much look forward to the opportunity to serve the movement further.



**Ann Howell,
Social Action
Officer**

Wales

The Unitarians Wales committee continue to meet on Zoom as this is proving to be not only a more cost-effective option, but also allows for greater inclusion as we are able to welcome those of working age who would find it difficult to attend in-person meetings.

Ensuring that the diversity of Unitarians in Wales is represented on the committee and being committed to finding ways for different voices to be heard has been a focus this year. A working group has been formed to review the constitution and will be making their recommendations in due course. The objectives have been considered and are now more in line with those of the EC, with a greater focus on enabling people to act, whether they are actively engaged with the two District Associations or not.

Membership Sustainability remains a concern as does the variable quality of basic governance within the congregations and the districts. Simon Bland, General Assembly Ministry and Congregational Support Officer has attended one of our meetings and underlined the need for urgent

improvement. Safeguarding is the most urgent area that requires improvement with very few of the congregations having signed up for 31:8, the professional body recommended by the GA.

During the last year two congregational ministries in Wales came to an end – the ministry of Rev Lewis Rees at Nottage at the end of September due to financial constraints and that of Stephen Lingwood at Cardiff in the Spring of 2023. It is good to be able to note that the Cardiff congregation continue to fund his Pioneer Ministry within the city. None of the 20 congregations now support a full-time ministry, and only two have a half-time ministry. Of the remaining 18 congregations only 4 fund a very limited part-time ministry. This has led to several discussions around ministry, leadership and the sustainability of congregations.

Last September there was a celebration at Aberdare to note the 60 years that Rev Eric Jones has been a Unitarian Minister. Some of you might have heard his talk for the Historical Society at the 2023 Annual Meetings which highlighted how much the world, and the religious environment in particular, has changed during the last 60



years. In contrast, the Unitarians Wales slot at the 2023 Annual Meetings considered what our legacy might be for future generations, and we were able to hear the voices of the younger members as part of the presentation.

We were very pleased that the Rev Wyn Thomas was elected to the GA Executive Committee and will be able to offer a Welsh perspective to the national movement. There was also an international flavour this year as 60 members of the IARF were welcomed by the South East Wales District to Penrhiw chapel at Saint Fagan for a service in June.

Much of the usual activities continued with many congregations actively supporting various charities and holding community events. The South West Wales District in particular supported and raised a considerable amount of money for the Motor Neurone Disease in memory of the Rev Cen Llwyd. The congregation at Gellionnen are to be congratulated on the numerous awards that they have received for their outstanding work in the community.

The balance of supporting existing congregations whilst keeping the focus on the future is a delicate one, which requires flexibility, patience and being open to change, but there are encouraging signs that this could well be possible in Wales.



Melda Grantham
Welsh Department Secretary

Youth

The last year has seen the GA's youth focus continue to nurture several youth initiatives from across our Unitarian landscape.

In September, Bad Coffee Club, an online Unitarian youth group which came into being at the start of the pandemic, celebrated its 3rd Birthday. 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.'

Most of the group members have now left school and entered a new phase of their lives. Some are in employment, others are starting university, and a few are taking time out to explore their options. They're all finding their way. In response, the space has evolved to help support them to navigate this time as best they can. For some, it is now their only source of continuity.

My role in supporting this group has changed too. With a growth in confidence and capacity they no longer need me to host every meetup. When I do, I'm very much the 'babysitter', with the group members facilitating the space themselves. What I am doing is writing more character references as the skills learnt from creating and maintaining their own space are valued by employers, other charitable organisations, and further education institutions. Basically, the group has given some of them a big 'leg up' in terms of accessing other opportunities. I'm also pleased to report that this year a few of them were able to meet in person for the first time. There's a nice community emerging.

In October, Ruby (15) launched Bold, Beautiful, and Human. In their own words, they describe the group as, 'A group of 11-18-year-old LGBTQ+ people who meet online and explore our own definition of faith, together. We chat, play games and share good news as it comes.' It came about when their minister, Rev Danny Crosby, got in touch to say that they had a young person

in the congregation who'd like to set up their own youth group. So, I met with Ruby, had a conversation and off we went.

It's early days and the group is still finding its way. However, they've identified a clear purpose, they're creating great content and they're learning how to hold space well. So, plenty of reasons to be optimistic. There's a little cross-pollination with Bad Coffee Club too which is great. Rev Robin Hanford is also supporting the growth of the group. At this stage of its development, our role is to offer some light administrative support and, from a safeguarding perspective, take on the role of the babysitter(s).

Also in October, the Western Union held its first retreat specifically for families from across the district. It was a bit of an experiment and came after many months of consultation, exploration, and ponderings into what might be possible.

It took place at The Hilfield Friary in Dorset. Apart from its stunning location, the venue offered a rare opportunity for families to experience life as part of an intentional community. In addition, for one participant, Rhoslyn Millard (15) of the Bath Unitarian Fellowship, the retreat would provide an opportunity to achieve a long-held ambition to high-five a friar.



Rhoslyn receiving a high-five from Brother Hugh on the final day of the first Western Union family retreat at the Hilfield Friary in Dorset

The event was a great success. The theme was, 'Where the wild things are: Our wildness and the wildness out there'. We played games, went on walks, reflected on the theme, made art, and enjoyed mealtimes with the host community. A very nourishing time indeed. And yes, Rhoslyn's wish did come true, and we're booked in again for next year. A big well done and much thanks must go to Rev John Harley, Rev Liz Birtles, Rev Kate Whyman, The Stokes Croft Educational Foundation and, of course, The Western Union for their support.

The General Assembly and Unitarian College have been working together to create a training programme for those wishing to establish or support existing youth provisions may they be residential, congregational, or virtual. There might also be a pioneering strand too for those wishing to do something a little different. All being well, we hope to launch the initiative at the 2024 GA Annual Meetings with the course beginning in the Summer of 2024. If you'd like to know more then please get in touch.

It was wonderful to see four members of Gellionnen's #Blessed participating as part of the 36th Congress of The International Association of Religious Freedom in Cluj/Kolozsvár. The General Assembly provided financial assistance to enable the group to attend. From what I've heard they had a great time and added real value to the event. Many thanks to Robert Ince for helping to make this opportunity possible.



Síân Evans (Left) and Laura Jane Davies (Right) members of Gellionnen's #Blessed with fellow attendees at the International Association for Religious Freedom conference in Cluj/Kolozsvár

I should say that this year some youth initiatives came to an end. We wrapped up the online international meetups as local in-person gatherings returned to something resembling the pre-pandemic norm and interest faded. When it was needed, the group served its purpose well.

So, a good year with existing provisions continuing to grow and new ones emerging. If you, like Ruby and the Western Union, would like to explore the possibility of creating your own provision from scratch then please get in touch. It would be great to hear from you.



Gavin Howell

GA Youth Coordinator

Projects - Torbay

In January 2022 I moved to Torquay to lead an inquiry on behalf of the General Assembly. In a nutshell, we wanted to see what might come from working in a more emergent way. The project term is 5 years.

There's a lot happening, from fresh interfaith initiatives to new partnerships with local community groups, and Schumacher College. However, rather than attempt to cover everything, I thought I'd report on the growth of our first green shoot - the local fellowship - which in the last year has morphed from a small informal social meetup into a larger more formal engagement group centred around spiritual inquiry.

It's important to note that whilst I'm reporting on events chronologically, the group's development has been far from linear. This group has grown out of an emergent approach. Throughout we've tried to go with the flow and nourish whatever naturally unfolds. We feel at ease with this way of things. It works well for us.

The origins of the group can be traced back to when Chris, now one of the group members, sent an email via The Unitarians website, to ask if there was anything happening in the Torbay area. Coincidentally, I was in the process of relocating to The Bay. So, we had a quick chat, via Zoom, before later meeting in a local pub. Over the next few months, we continued to meet and talk everything from religion, current affairs and Netflix binges. Over time, we invited other like-minded folk to join us and slowly a group emerged.

I can't remember how, but at some point the topic of engagement groups came up in conversation. Folk seemed quite interested so I offered to run one. I suggested Chalice Circles as a starting point as, with a few adaptations here and there, it was probably the best fit for the space. The format introduced a focus (theme) and a structure to our gatherings. The response to both was positive and so we continued with it. Later, we adapted things further by introducing a talking stone, rounds of sharing and pause points. The changes have worked well resulting in a more contemplative space.



The local group meeting in October 2023

Early in our Chalice Circle explorations, Nadine brought a candle and offered to light it at the start of the meeting. Up until that point we hadn't included a chalice lighting. This was mainly due to my own health and safety concerns as I didn't think a busy pub, jolly punters, sheets of paper and a naked flame was a sensible mix. However, I managed the risks as best I could and went with it. At the time it felt like a big moment as a group member was conducting a very visible display of religious practice in a secular social setting. I was a bit nervous, but it went ok. On reflection, I'm so glad they did it as it changed the tone of that and future meetings.

Around that time, and with the group's permission, I started to drip-feed theme related reflections / questions in the WhatsApp group. It went down well as it provided regular input to supplement our monthly gatherings. It's also meant that contributions, when we did meet up, were very rich indeed. I think it's a good example of how the virtual and the in-person spaces can complement together. However, I should add that before I started posting material, the group did have a conversation with regards how, if at all, we should respond well to the postings. For instance, should we comment on them publicly? In the end we agreed, that if we had something to share, it would be healthier if we did so in person and not through the chat.

The pub, with its social vibe, worked very well when numbers were small but as they grew the busy atmosphere began to work against us as folk could no longer hear each other. So, together, the group took the decision to look elsewhere. After viewing a few alternative venues, we settled on a hotel a short walk from the pub. Soon after, we said goodbye to our first home, thanked it for what it provided us and moved on.

Our new home is working well for us. We've certainly noticed the benefits of using a venue which is designed with rest and relaxation in mind. It's warm, very comfortable and the coffee is good. As with the pub, those who wish can come straight from work and have food before our gatherings. That's worked well. There's also free parking and it's still within walking distance of the train station.

A bigger venue has also allowed us to experiment with different types of spaces. Not surprisingly, after being in a busy pub, we initially opted for a quiet room away from other people. However, some folk found it too quiet. They missed some kind of background hum. So, after trying a few different areas, we've settled in what we feel (for now) is the Goldilocks spot for our group. It's a table in the lounge with plenty of space around it. Saying that, during the Summer months, we opted to have our meetings outside on the terrace overlooking the sea. I get the feeling that the Goldilocks spot will shift with the seasons.

So quite a lot has changed over the past year, and I sense more is on the way. Let's see what happens over the next 12 months.



Gavin Howell, Torbay Project Lead

Projects - Weddings

Congratulations! Congratulations to everybody who has been involved with Unitarian weddings in this past year – those who organised, officiated, filled in forms, recorded the legalities, provided the music, the flowers, the Welsh cakes (yes, really), took photos, arranged parking spaces, decorated chapels and churches, looked after the horses when required, and did all the other million things that make Unitarian weddings so special.

Congratulations to every individual and congregation who promoted Unitarian weddings through holding Wedding Fairs, attending those organised by others, hosting the amazing Unitarian LGBT+ historical banner display, using social media effectively, taking part in Pride Marches and publicly celebrating our long commitment to same-sex marriage. And massive congratulations to those congregations who applied for or gained a same-sex marriage licence for their buildings this year. If you haven't already got one, then please do get in touch and I can supply all the templates that you need to complete the forms.

Special congratulations to the amazing wedding team at Ullet Road Unitarian Church, Liverpool who were one of the finalists in the prestigious County Brides Wedding Awards 2023. Also huge congratulations to the congregation at Gellionnen Unitarian Chapel in the Swansea valley who made it into several print and on-line newspapers for a special feature to mark 10 years of same-sex marriage in Wales. This is important recognition for the brilliant work carried out by both congregations and helps to give Unitarian weddings such a good reputation.

Congratulations too to all of you who attended one of our Zoom events and/or who contributed to the Unitarians Weddings Facebook page. If you haven't already joined this great group, then follow this link <https://www.facebook.com/groups/3305043196478234> and get

involved. Thanks to everybody who has joined, to all the wonderful people who have been so generous in sharing their experiences and expertise, and to everybody who has been in touch with queries and comments.

Weddings, and the legislation that surrounds them, can be complicated so please do send me an email, a message or just pick up the phone if you need help or advice. I'm always delighted to hear from you and love to help – it's what I'm here for! There can be quite a lot of confusion about what we can or cannot offer. If you are in England or Wales (Scotland have their own rules), here are some things that you need to remember:

- It is the building that is registered, not the person, which means that we cannot conduct a legal marriage ceremony outside of the building. The only people who can do this legally are Superintendent Registrars and their deputies at premises which are registered with the local authority.
- Our buildings are registered to conduct religious marriages according to the rites and ceremonies of the Unitarians, which clearly means that we cannot offer wedding ceremonies that have no religious content.
- You do not have to be a minister to conduct marriage ceremonies, though I would strongly advise that you do attend a specifically Unitarian training course before you do so. Keep an eye on the Unitarian College website or Facebook page to see what's on offer.
- If in doubt – get in touch with me please.

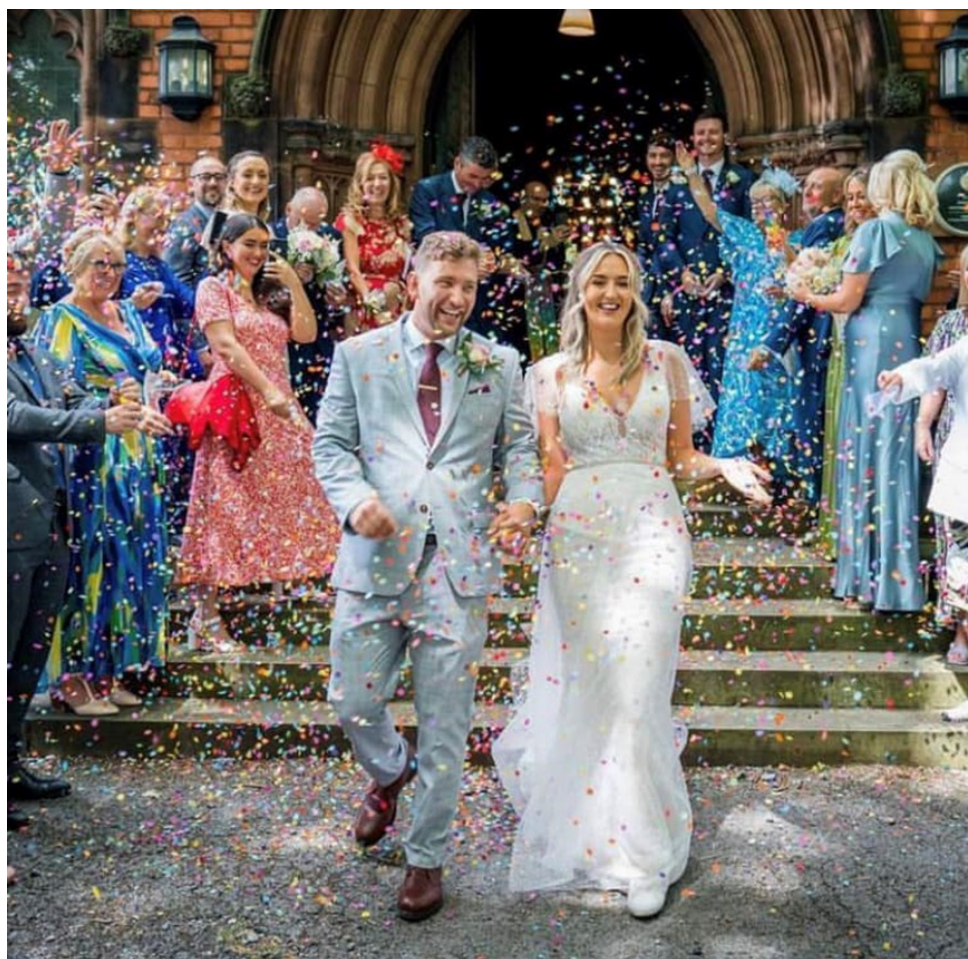
The focus for the coming year will be to find ways of ensuring that weddings can take place in every Unitarian building regardless of location or the capacity of the congregation. By organising ourselves we can make sure that there are no gaps in our provision, so, if you think that you would be able to help with making this a reality, then please get in touch.



So, let's continue to spread the love, to shout out loud about we can offer, and to help couples have the wedding of their dreams.

And finally, if you chose to hold your wedding in a Unitarian chapel or church this year – CONGRATULATIONS!!!!

Rev Melda Grantham
Weddings Lead



Congratulations to Emily & Alex, who were married at Ullet Road

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

Ministry Strategy Group

Members during the year:

Rev Sarah Tinker (Interim Chair), Jane Couper, Helen Mason, Jo James (EC Link)

Staff Support:

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

Hucklow Summer School

Members during the year:

Rev Dr Jane Blackall (Convenor), Rev Michael Allured, Louise Baumberg, Nicola Temple, Rita Woditsch

Interview Panel

Members during the year:

Jane Couper, Rev Patrick Timperley (until Apr 2023), Rev Sarah Tinker (Chair), Rev Wyn Thomas, with College Tutors involved in the January interviews: Rev Dr Claire MacDonald and Rev Ant Howe

Staff Support:

Simon Bland (Ministry & Congregational Support Officer)

Penal & Social Affairs (now the Social Justice Network)

Members during the year:

Bruce Chilton, Tony Cann, Jenny Jacobs, Ian Minter, Jo O'Sullivan, Tony Rees (until Jul 2023), Tony Ward, David Warhurst, Paul Wheeler, Jane Williams

Staff Support:

Ann Howell (Social Action Officer & Secretary)

Lindsey Press

Members during the year:

Catherine Robinson (Convenor), Colleen Burns, Torry Glinwell, Penny Quest (until May 2023)

Staff Support:

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

Welsh Department

Members during the year:

Zac Baker, Peter Davies (until Nov 2022), Hilda Dumpleton (Chair from Apr 2023), Lis Dyson-Jones (Co-opted), Mattie Evans (Co-opted), Rev Eric Jones (life member), Megan Jones Roberts, Heini Thomas (from Jun 2023), Rev Wyn Thomas (Chair until Apr 2023), Alun Watts, Stephen Wilson

Staff Support:

Melda Grantham (Secretary)

The Nightingale Centre



Nightingale Centre - Great Hucklow

The last 12 months have seen a flurry of activity at The Nightingale Centre with some unexpected challenges too! The most significant of these being the mini tornado which whirled its way through Great Hucklow at about 6am on Monday 13 March 2023, causing damage to buildings in the village, including the Centre, and uprooting trees in several places. The Centre suffered extensive damage to several parts of the roof, trees and walls which were crushed by falling trees and floating debris from the greenhouse and sheds which were completely destroyed. Fortunately, there was little internal damage other than leaks from the damage to the roof. It is a testament to the Staff and local volunteers that the Centre was able to re-open only four days later, though with restrictions in using the grounds due to the continuing danger of loose debris falling.

It was some time before all the damage could be repaired and those restrictions lifted. Throughout that time, we were grateful to all the Staff who continued to provide an excellent service, and to our guests who patiently accepted the restrictions with understanding and good humour!



Images of the Centre after the tornado - the large tree in the front garden, the wall which came down at the front, and the same wall subsequently rebuilt

Guest bookings continued to increase with new bookings jostling for availability alongside our regular and popular events such as Christmas weekend in December and the Winter Walking Weekends in January. We were delighted to welcome back the Unitarian Summer School for the first time since before the pandemic and congratulate the organisers for creating a successful and inspiring hybrid programme, enabling those unable to attend in person to join in many of the activities online.



The Summer School in-person group

Of course, no Annual Report would be complete without mention of the Send a Child to Hucklow (SACH) weeks, which again increased in number, giving even more children from inner cities the opportunity to experience our beautiful Centre and the countryside surrounding it for the first time for many, to have fun, eat well and make memories which will be with them forever.

The Centre's stall had good visibility at the General Assembly Meetings. The key benefit of our attendance, as always, was promotion of the Centre and what it can offer for potential guest groups, but, 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.

There have been some changes to our Staff team during the year and, as we approach 01 October, we are looking forward to working with Kathryn Breen, who takes up her post as Centre Manager in October 2023.



New Centre Manager, Kathryn Breen

Our new Chef Manager, Pip Franklin, also takes up her post in October and is committed to continuing to introduce new recipes and menus, using more homegrown produce, and ensuring that all dietary requirements are well met. Our three Ukrainian members of Staff continue to add much to our team, bringing ideas from their own culture with their increasing confidence in speaking English.



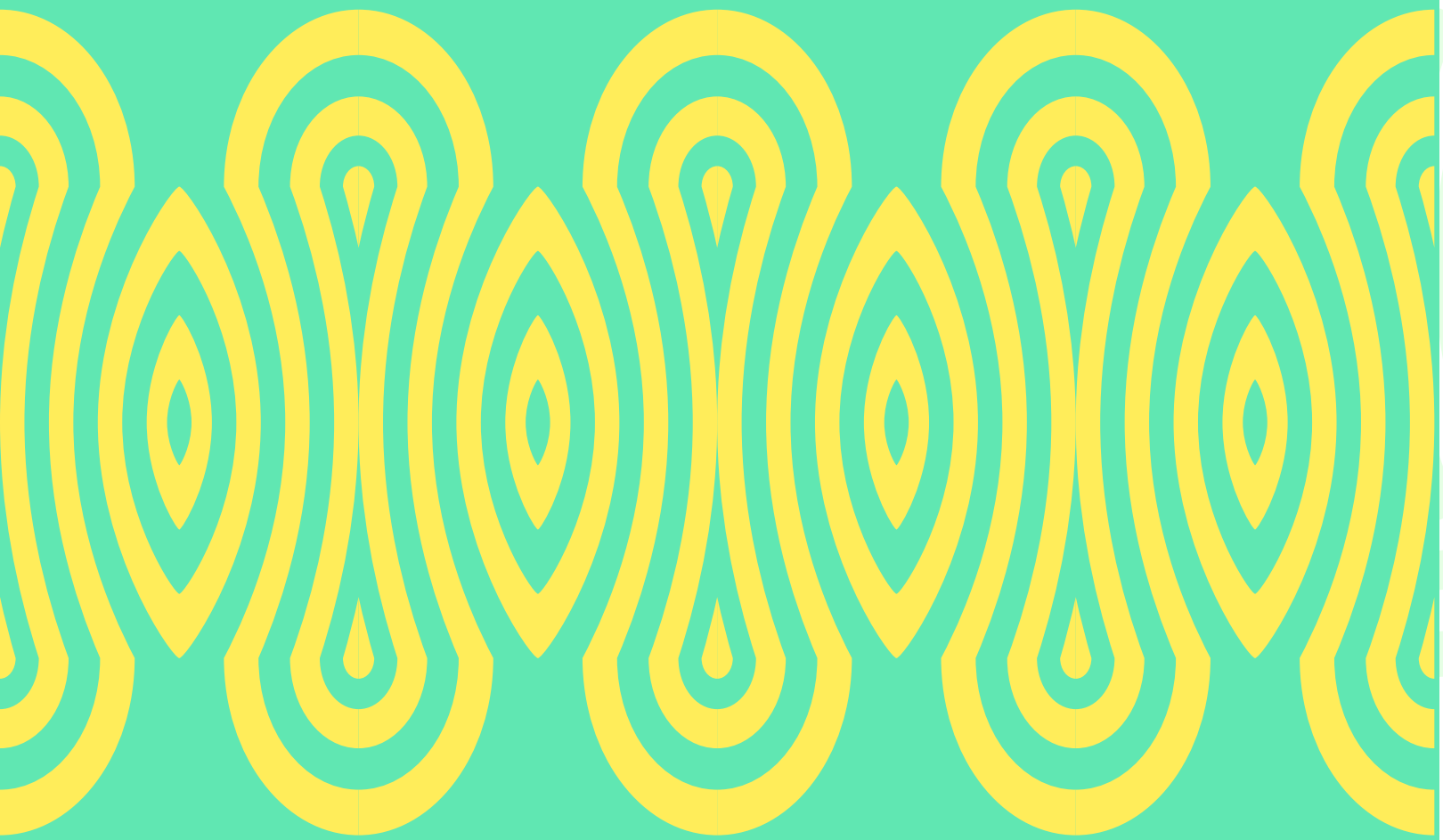
The SACH group

The members of the Management Committee work hard to support the Staff when needed, with their main focus planning forward-looking strategies and managing the buildings to ensure future viability. There are several major projects ongoing or in the pipeline which were interrupted by the pandemic. These include updating our technology (including Wi-Fi access); improvements to our electricity supply infrastructure to accommodate a greener option to the present oil heating system; roof improvement to eliminate the problem valley gutters; and increasing the number of ensuite bedrooms. All these take considerable research and planning to ensure minimum disruption to our guests.

Finally, as we look forward to the year ahead, we are delighted to announce that our gardening team, June and Sam, have successfully applied to be included in the National Garden Scheme Open Gardens Project next year. Our gardens will be open on Saturday 31 August and Sunday 01 September 2024. Accommodation will be available at the usual costs for any guests wishing to stay and enjoy the event. There will be opportunities for volunteering, in the gardens, serving drinks and cakes, etc. Some bookings have already been made! So make a note in your diaries, contact the Centre (info@thenightingalecentre.org.uk) and look forward to a very special weekend.

Mike Tracey

Annual Meetings



Annual Meetings 2023

The Annual Meetings were held at Staverton Park Hotel in Daventry on 4-6th April 2023. There were 319 participants, of whom 144 were voting members. The 2023 Meetings were a valuable time to be together in person – reconnecting with spiritual friends and making new connections for the journey ahead. We gathered for community building, spiritual nourishment, learning, inspiration and togetherness.

The resolutions passed this year included one opposing the UK government's Illegal Migration Bill. You can find full information about the resolutions passed at <https://www.unitarian.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Resolutions-2023.pdf>.

During the meetings, the national Presidency was passed to Vince McCully.

A fascinating keynote talk was given by Jon Alexander, activist, strategist and author of 'Citizens: Why The Key To Fixing Everything Is All Of Us', in the form of a conversation with our Chief Officer, Liz Slade.

There were a wide range of interesting, informative and inspiring workshops and break-out sessions, with highlights including sessions by Oscar Sinclair, the #Blessed young adult group, the book launch for 'Cherishing The Earth: Nourishing The Spirit', an engaging and stimulating Executive Committee session on membership sustainability, and many more.

Throughout the meetings, excellent and moving worship was led by a range of our lay people and ministers. The opening worship was led by Diane Bennett and Rev Ant Howe. Various other worship sessions were led by Richard Bober and Revs John Carter, Jim Corrigan, Daniel Costley, Cody Coyne, Laura Dobson, Mark Hutchinson, Tony McNeile and Julio Torres. The inspiring Anniversary Service was led by Revs Stephanie Bisby and Kate Dean, with Rev Winnie Gordon preaching the sermon.



Top row L-R: Anniversary Service 2023 - Service Leader Rev Kate Dean leading a hymn; Anniversary Preacher Rev Winnie Gordon lighting the chalice; Rev Julio Torres signing the Roll of Minister; The 2023 Anniversary Service Team
Bottom row: Scenes from the main Business Sessions

Our Finances and Organisation



Annual Meetings 2023 Accounts

Summary of Financial Results	2023	2022
	£	£
Income		
Accommodation & Conference Fees	82,602	60,447
Group Registration	4,960	4,242
Donations to Meetings	11,001	16,232
	98,563	80,921
Expenditure		
Postage and Printing	1,151	1,291
Pre-AGM Expenses	139	136
Receptions & Sundries	3,598	2,673
Room Hire and Audio Visual	11,566	13,379
Speakers and Fees	1,797	1,339
AM Travel	516	614
AM Van Hire	1,800	1,756
Venue Account	68,726	58,493
Youth Honoraria & Expenses	1,849	1,216
	91,143	80,897
Balance: Surplus / (Loss)	7,420	24

The Nightingale Centre Financial Summary

Last year our report stated that we are getting back to normal.... or so we thought.

In January we recruited a new Manager for the Centre. That person stayed with us for only a few weeks before resigning. This left us without a Manager for several months as we deliberated over what to do and re-recruited. This in turn has flattered our employment costs for the year.

In March the site was hit by a tornado causing around £35,000 of damage. The costs have been met by our insurance, however there was considerable site disruption for staff and visitors.

Like many organisations we have had to increase our staff wages to remain competitive at retaining and recruiting staff. This in turn, along with increased utility and food costs, has meant that we have had to increase the charges to visitors.



So far the visitor numbers have held up. This is a great reflection on all our staff who have provided terrific service over what has been a challenging time.

We have received over £10,000 in donations this year. Thank you to everyone that has done so.

Looking ahead, we know that given our bookings are looking healthy, in order to cover our operating costs and break even we will need to increase our prices again. The Centre remains viable in part through the investments in property and the stock market.

Ian Hicks, Financial Secretary

Income and Expenditure Report

Where the money comes from	2022-2023	2021-2022
	£	£
Donations	11,874	13,788
Charitable Activities	304,693	264,681
Non-Charitable Activities	33,855	29,410
Investment and Rental Income	31,453	31,905
Government Grants and Furlough Scheme	0	1,845
Total incoming Resources	381,875	341,659
Where we spent the money		
Providing the Services - Charitable	367,245	470,621
Providing the services - non-charitable	40,962	48,613
Governance Costs	1,410	1,305
Total Outgoing Resources	409,617	558,028
Net Incoming resources	(27,742)	(216,369)
Gains/losses on investment assets	43,597	132,349
Net Movement of Funds	15,855	(84,020)

Balance Sheet

Total Assets of The Nightingale Centre as at 30 September 2023

	2023	2023	2022	2022
	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets				
Tangible Assets	1,179,228		1,185,188	
Investments	219,328		209,544	
Investment Property	1,090,457		1,182,943	
		2,489,013		2,577,675
Current Assets				
Stocks	3,321		945	
Debtors	31,550		42,450	
Cash at Bank and in hand	634,009		621,965	
		668,880		665,360
Current Liabilities				
Creditors falling due within one year	(96,480)		(71,178)	
Net Current Assets		572,400		594,182
<u>Total Assets</u>		3,061,413		3,171,857

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	ESlade@unitarian.org.uk
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PROGRAMME STAFF:

Ministry & Congregational Support Officer	Simon Bland	SBland@unitarian.org.uk
Welsh Department Secretary & Weddings Lead	Melda Grantham	MGrantham@unitarian.org.uk
Youth Coordinator, Safeguarding Lead, Torbay Lead	Gavin Howell	GHowell@unitarian.org.uk
Congregational Connections Lead	Lizzie Kingston Harrison	EKingston@unitarian.org.uk
Social Action Officer	Ann Howell (Joined Oct 2022)	AHowell@unitarian.org.uk

SUPPORT STAFF:

Operations Manager	Andrew Mason	AMason@unitarian.org.uk
Administrator (External)	Audrey Longhurst	ALonghurst@unitarian.org.uk
Communications Officer	Rory Castle Jones	RCastleJones@unitarian.org.uk

FINANCE STAFF:

Finance Manager	David Joseph	DJoseph@unitarian.org.uk
Finance Assistant	Cherralyn Davies (until Jun 2023)	
	Natalia Talikova (Joined Jul 2023)	NTalikova@unitarian.org.uk

VOLUNTEER:

Rosemary Ruston	c/o Info@unitarian.org.uk
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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 during the year

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

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 2022-23, 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	Code, Ross	Gaines, Richard	Janes, Jennifer
Allured, Michael	Coldwell, AH	Gienke, Martin	Jeorrett, Adrienne
Ashworth, Joyce	Cook, Joan	Gillman, David	Johnson, Ken
Atkinson, Jennifer	Copley, David	Godfrey, Peter	Johnson, Penelope
Attfield, Robin	Copley, Helen	Greenwood, Craig	(Deceased)
Aylmer, Vivien	Corrigall, Jim		Jones, Aled
	Costley, Daniel	Hague, Gillian	Jones, Anne
Barwick, Sheila	Costley, Janet	Hague, Howard	Jones, Eric
Beck, Robert	Cotterill, Kevin	Hague, Judy	
Benfield, Sarah	Cotterill, Susan	Hanford, Robin	Kay, Hazel
Bennett, Diane	Crompton, Judith	Harris, Lucy	Kenyon, Betty
Birtles, Elizabeth	Cupper, Anthony	Harrison, Marjorie	Kenyon, Neville
Blair, James		Hartley, Lesley	Kerr, Donald
Boyce, Sarah	Dawson, Christine	Hartley, Roger	King, Linda
Boyle, Brendan	Day, Mike	Haughton, Dorothy	Kirk, Margaret
Boyle, Dee	De Silva, Marco	Hewerdine, Claire	
Bradley, Alex	Dyson-Jones, Elisabeth	Hewerdine, Dorothy	Lake, Mavis
Brooks, Beryl		Hewerdine, John	Laycock, Barbara
Brown, Iain		Higgins, Martin	Lingwood, Stephen
Buckle, Dawn	Edwards, Juliet	Hill, Andrew	Lloyd, Gavin
Buckle, Roy	Egloff, Urs	Hill, Margaret	Ludbrook, Babs
(Deceased)	Elder, Raymond	Hird, John	
Buckley, David	Elias, Len	(Deceased)	Mardle-Moss,
Burns, Colleen		Hoskins, Gareth	Benjamin
	Faiers, Elizabeth	Howarth, Jane	Mardle-Moss,
Cann, Tony	Fordham, Ed	Howarth, Miles	Kieren
Carter, John	Foster, Katie	Hughes, Mary	Marks, Brian
Cartwright, Celia	Foster, Megan		Martin, Christine
Chilton, Bruce	Fowler, Angela	Ince, Robert	Mason, Gavin
Chilton, Carol	Francks, Benjamin	Isaac, Adrian	Mason, Helen
Cockroft, Brian			
Cockroft, Lena			

Our Members (ctd)

Masztalerz, Cathie
 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

O'Connor, Feargus
 O'Neil, Sandie
 O'Sullivan, Jo

Oulton, Robert

Partington, Colin
 Partington, Joan
 Paxton, Margaret
 Payne, Beryl
 Peart, Ann
 Pebody, Isabel
 Pennington, Alan
 Percy, Annette
 Perry, Margaret

Quest, Penelope

Ramage, Roderick
 Ratcliffe, Molly
 Rathbone, Betty
 Reed, Clifford
 Reed, Paulette
 Rees, Clare
 Rees, Tony
 Reynolds, Amanda

Richards, John
 Richards, William
 Roberts, Wilna
 Robinson, Jim
 Robinson, Margaret
 Rogers, Jocelyn
 Rogers, Louise
 Rowland, Jennifer
 Ruston, Alan
 Ruston, Jennifer
 Ruston, Mark
 Ruston, Rosemary
 Rycroft, Keith

Sakurai, Shige
 Sampson, Peter
 Sanders, Neil
 Sellman, Jennifer
 Shaw, David
 Shaw, Elizabeth
 Silk, Joyce
 Silk, Philip
 Sinclair, Ann
 Slaven, Sarah
 Smith, Carole
 Smith, Kenneth
 Smith, Matthew
 Soulsby, Peter
 Storey, David
 Sykes, Jenny

Teagle, Jeffrey
 Teagle, Sue
 Thompson, Christine
 Thursfield, Alison
 Tinker, Sarah
 Tombs, Susan
 Tomlin, Jane
 Tucker, Andrew

Usher, Ann
 Usher, Geoffrey

Varley, Lynne
 Varley, Richard
 Voegeli, Iris
 Voegeli, Rodney

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

Congregational Contributions

1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023

England (and Isle of Man)	Quota Members	£
Ainsworth	5	175
Altrincham	36	1,260
Ansdell (Lytham St Annes)	0	0
Ashton in Makerfield	40	1,400
Atherton	41	1,435
Bath	4	225
Belper	8	280
Billingshurst	8	280
Birmingham New Meeting	20	700
Birmingham Hollywood	45	1,575
Blackpool	10	350
Bolton Chorley New Road	9	315
Bolton Egerton	0	0
Boston	0	0
Bradford	17	595
Bridgwater	0	0
Bridport	13	455
Brighton	36	1,260
Bristol Brunswick	10	350
Bristol Frenchay	18	630
Bury	31	1,085
Bury St Edmunds	10	350
Cambridge	34	1,190
Chatham	6	210
Cheltenham and Gloucester	18	630
Chester	5	175
Chesterfield	6	210
Chorley	8	210
Cirencester	10	385
Coseley	0	0

Coventry	4	140
Cradley	6	210
Crewkerne	10	350
Croydon	15	525
Cullompton	6	210
Dean Row	48	1,680
Denton	18	630
Derby	3	105
Ditchling	10	350
Doncaster	17	595
Douglas (Isle of Man)	0	0
Dover	6	210
Dukinfield	22	770
Eccles	39	1,365
Evesham	15	525
Framlingham	10	350
Godalming	33	1,155
Great Hucklow	6	210
Great Yarmouth	0	0
Hale Barns	19	665
Hastings	12	420
Hinckley	30	1,050
Horsham	27	945
Hull	15	525
Hyde Fellowship	2	70
Hyde Flowery Field	0	0
Hyde Gee Cross	0	0
Ipswich	32	1,120
Kendal	39	1,365
Knutsford	46	1,610

Leeds	34	1,190
Leicester	28	980
Lewes	0	0
Lincoln	12	420
Liverpool Gateacre	10	350
Liverpool Sefton Park	20	700
Liverpool Toxteth	10	350
London Brixton	8	280
London Golders Green	34	1,190
London Hampstead	79	2,765
London Kensington	57	1,995
London Lewisham	12	420
London New Unity	117	4,095
London Stratford	5	175
Macclesfield	8	280
Maidstone	5	175
Manchester Chorlton	19	665
Manchester Cross Street	29	1,015
Manchester Gorton	3	105
Mansfield	31	1,085
New Mill	1	50
Newcastle under Lyme	15	525
Newcastle upon Tyne	12	420
Newport (Isle of Wight)	3	105
Northampton	5	175
Norwich	56	1,960
Nottingham	3	105
Oldbury (Black Country)	0	0
Oldham	12	420
Oxford	35	1,225
Padiham	28	980
Plymouth	29	1,015
Portsmouth	29	1,015
Rawtenstall	5	175
Richmond	32	1,120
Rivington	20	700

Rochdale	16	560
Scarborough	4	140
Sevenoaks	30	1,050
Sheffield Fulwood	38	1,330
Sheffield Norfolk St	48	1,680
Sheffield Stannington	15	525
Shelf	9	315
Shrewsbury	18	630
Sidmouth	4	140
Southampton	11	385
Southport	7	245
Stalybridge	5	175
Stockton	13	455
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	14	490
Watford	6	210
Whitby	6	0
Whitefield (Stand)	26	910
Wirral	15	525
Woodhall Spa	0	0
York	42	1,470

Scotland	No.	£
Aberdeen	10	350
Dundee	8	280
Edinburgh	41	1,435
Glasgow	38	1,330

Wales	No.	£
Aberdare	12	420
Alltyblaca *	2	
Bangor	11	385
Cardiff	10	350
Cefn y Coed	12	420
Cellan *	1	
Ciliau Aeron *	0	
Cribyn *	3	
Cwmsychbant *	3	
Cwrtnewydd *	4	
Felinfach *	1	
Lampeter *	9	
Llandysul *	3	
Llanwnnen *	5	
Nottage	4	140
Pontsian *	3	
Prengwyn *	4	
Swansea	9	315
Talgarreg *	6	
Trebanos	24	840
Wick	4	140
South Wales District*	44	968
Total:	2,378	£79,008
Prior Year Adjustments		- £3,505
Adjusted Total		£75,503

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

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