

HIGHBURY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

**Oxford Street
Cheltenham
GL52 6DU**



ANNUAL REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS 2025

Highbury Congregational Church

Our Vision: to connect people with Jesus, with each other and with the wider world,
growing together

Our Values: empathy, learning, including all

Ministry Leadership Team

Minister	Jason Boyd	revdjasoncboyd@gmail.com
Children	Andrea Lacey	
Discipleship	Helen Bloxham	
Pastoral Care	Laura MacLeod Louise Middleton Rachel Jacques	

Diaconate (and Trustees)

Secretary	Mary Buchanan	buchananm37@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Roger Gregory	
Minister	Jason Boyd	revdjasoncboyd@gmail.com
Deacons	Adrian Blazey, Karen Haden, Iain MacLeod, Darryl Mills, Ruth Wyatt	

Others

Highbury News	Sue Cole	
Safeguarding	Nephesha Michael	
Church Office	Admin	highburyoffice@yahoo.co.uk

Website: www.highburychurch.com

The Charitable Objects of Highbury Congregational Church

The principal purpose of the church is the advancement of the Christian Faith according to the principles and usages for the time being of Congregationalism and in accordance with any specific requirements in the foundation trusts. The church may also advance education, relieve need and carry out other charitable purposes in the United Kingdom and other parts of the world.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Governing document, THE DECLARATION OF TRUST, was adopted by Congregational Federation Limited on the 13th day of June 2009 as a recommended governing document for Congregational Churches who are members of the Congregational Federation and for whom Congregational Federation Limited are appointed as holding trustees, the form having been previously agreed between Congregational Federation Limited and the Charity Commission and also having been approved by HM Revenue and Customs.

Highbury Congregational Church began in 1827 and has been part of the Congregational Federation since 1972. The church is also a registered charity 1159085. We have adopted the Congregational Federation's Declaration of Trust of 2009 as our Governing Document, supplemented by our own Working Practices Document (updated September 2022).

Whilst we work closely with other Congregational Churches, all we do is decided and funded by our own Church Members. We have no outside source of funding and we do not have any outside body over us. All who belong are welcomed into church membership on confession of faith in God and Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Quarterly (and as required), Church Members meet for Church Meeting to seek the mind of Christ in shaping the life of the Church and setting the future direction of Church life. The Deacons serve the Church as Managing Trustees and ensure all the Church does is in keeping with its Charitable Objects as a Congregational Church and with reference to finances, safeguarding, health and safety, disability, employment and other legislation.

Our Vision

The Vision of Highbury Congregational Church is consonant with our Charitable Objects (as above):

- To connect people with Jesus, with each other and with the wider world, growing together.

Contents

Minister's Report	p5
Congregational Federation/South West Midlands Association	p6
Worship (includes Flowers)	p7
Discipleship	p8
Pastoral Care	p9
Children and Youth	p10
Mission and Outreach	p14
Secretary's Report (includes administration, Health and Safety)	p18
Maintenance	p19
Safeguarding	p19
Treasurer's Report	p21

Minister's Report

Starting on a personal note, I write my seventh report to you whilst recovering from heart bypass surgery. After a year dominated by health challenges, I am full of gratitude to God for his love, mercy, and grace. God is good. I am thankful to God for the gift of Viviane, Naomi, Sonya, and Jeremy, my parents and siblings; for Highbury, for your prayers, cards, visits, and practical support; for the prayers of previous congregations and friends all over the world.

For the church, this year presented challenges which God has led us through with the discernment of the Holy Spirit. The Vision Day in March led by Yvonne Campbell and Oliver Kinchin generated much to think about. Further discussion within the Leadership Team, and with the congregation, led to a proposed Vision Statement and Values which was put to the Church Meeting in June and adopted:

Our vision is to connect people with Jesus, each other, and the wider world, growing together.

Our values are empathy, learning and including all.

At the same Church Meeting, we agreed that Highbury would register to conduct same-sex marriages. This was the culmination of a discussion evening in January followed by a period of prayer and reflection. The discussion at the Church Meeting was gracious. It is important to acknowledge that three members resigned because of the decision; others voted against the proposal but have continued in fellowship. We need to hold this difference with respect. We are in the process of applying for this registration status which has proved bureaucratically slow.

In June it was a privilege to be a delegate, together with Eilidh MacLeod, to the Council for World Mission Assembly in Durban, South Africa. The highlights were:

1. Meeting Shobana from India, who was brutally assaulted and lost her unborn daughter for the sake of Jesus Christ. Through her tears, she said, 'But thanks be to God, there are now three congregations in the place where my daughter died.' I have often pondered whether I would be true to Jesus if faced with brutality and death.
2. Three young women, passionate activists, who spoke of their work; one worked with young women who are pregnant and excluded from their families and communities, helping to restore relationships as well as offer education and opportunities for employment and business startups; another was a Palestinian born in Bethlehem campaigning for the rights of Palestinians; another was an Indian campaigning to end the caste system.
3. Visiting iCare, a project that works to get boys off the streets of Durban, rehabilitating their relationships with family and community, as well as supporting education and nutrition. The singing of a young lad, 'In the middle of the night when my heart is broken down, rise and pray' was touching and inspiring.
4. The sermon by Lydia Neshangwe during opening worship was rousing. In a nutshell: The Holy Spirit is for everyone!

During my summer break, I sensed a call to joy for Highbury, joy that is rooted in the bedrock of faith; joy that comes from Jesus through good and bad times, in life and in death; joy that is an invitation to delight in what God is doing in our congregation, even in those areas that seem difficult; joy that invites us to experience abundance, instead of focusing on what we lack. It has been a joy during my recovery to participate in worship as a regular punter. The congregation is thriving. What a joy to see people using their gifts for God's glory and to see so many people, young and old, participating in worship over Christmas! God has gifted us with God's abundance.


What is the nature of this abundance? Paul writes:

'For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ... Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our consolation...we were so utterly, unbearably crushed that we despaired of life itself... For in him [Jesus Christ] every one of God's promises is a "Yes". For this reason, it is through him that we say the "Amen" to the glory of God.' (2 Corinthians 1:5, 7, 20).

Abundance is 'overflowing' from Christ in his sufferings and consolation. The joy we have is centred in Jesus Christ who suffered and was raised from the dead. To be connected to Jesus is to be bearers of the cross. To be connected to one another and our world is to share their sufferings. Abundant consolation or comfort comes in knowing that the suffering Christ is the risen Christ and therefore our sufferings are marked by the joy of resurrection.

My plan for the year ahead is to walk with you following Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

Peace

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J.C. Boyd', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jason C. Boyd

Congregational Federation

Report by Jason Boyd

National

The Annual Assembly was held in Colchester on 11th May 2024 on the University of Essex campus. There were a variety of events at Wivenhoe Congregational Church on the 10th and 11th May including a presentation on the use of art in school assemblies and a shared meal. Those attending were encouraged to worship with local Congregational Churches. Jason and Viviane participated in the weekend and worshipped at Tollesbury with CF President, Elisabeth Sweeney, leading worship.

Highbury welcomed Rev'd Oliver Kinchin, 2023/24 CF President, with Yvonne Campbell, General Secretary, to lead our Vision weekend from 2nd-3rd March 2024. Later in the year, on 22nd September, 2024/25 CF President, Elisabeth Sweeney led morning and evening worship for Harvest.

Highbury members Jason Boyd and Eilidh McLeod represented CF ministers and youth at the Council for World Mission Assembly in Durban. The other members of the delegation were Mark Tucker (Operations Manager for CF) and Elisabeth Sweeney (CF President). Yvonne Campbell attended to support the CWM Assembly, particularly the voting process. The theme was Rise to Life: Together in Transformation. Eilidh and Jason gave a brief report to Highbury during morning worship on 23rd June, then at both services on 15th September.

Highbury records gratitude to Yvonne Campbell for her ministry as General Secretary. Her involvement in the Vision weekend and her offer of practical support during Jason's illness and post-operative recovering has been much appreciated.

South West Midlands Area

The Area has consolidated in 2024 as Treasurer, Joanne Oldridge (South Cerney United Church), grappled with accounts after the sudden death of Nicola White. SWMA is indebted to the CF

nationally for assisting us financially until we were able to gain control of the bank account, especially Gary Baker and Yvonne Campbell.

The Spring Assembly was at Sherston Congregational Church on 9th March. The morning was taken up with reports and sharing news of churches. After lunch, a brief history of Congregationalism was presented by Jason Boyd and promotion of the Training Course. A student was recruited following the day with lots of encouragement from Joy Howell. The worship was inspiring.

An Area Gathering was held on 22nd August at South Cerney United Church. Joy Howell organised the day and Yvonne Campbell came to share in it. The weather was not great so we did not do the planned walk. Instead, we spent the time together chatting, eating packed lunches and homemade cakes. We got to know one another and shared what was happening in our churches. We had a wonderful time of worship and hymn/song singing which was spontaneous and encouraging.

The Autumn Assembly was held on 19th October at Stapleton Road, Bristol. The theme was mental health. We were led by Yvonne Campbell in the morning and Catherine Booton (Learning and Development Manager). We had an excellent presentation by Harry Booton in his role as Congregational Federation Youth Representative about young people in the church. The hospitality from Stapleton Road was superb.

Worship Ministry

Report from the Worship Group

At the AGM in March 2024, Maureen Williams completed her term as Worship Ministry Coordinator after six years; a well-deserved retirement since her tenure of the role included a vacancy and a pandemic. In the absence of an obvious successor, the role of worship coordination has devolved to the Worship Group under the leadership of the minister.

This group has developed over the year and now incorporates the previously separate Café Church and Messy Church teams, and by the end of the year included representatives from morning and evening services. This has allowed for a broad exchange of ideas and makes for much improved coordination of themes and activities; it proved particularly effective when Jason was out of action in the autumn. The composition of the group is not fixed and the invitation to attend regular meetings (about five in a year) is open to anyone.

Some key points from Highbury worship in 2024:

- We effectively have four worshipping congregations: weekly Sunday mornings, Sunday evenings, and online Youtube, plus monthly Tuesday Messy Church. There are of course overlaps, but we need to remember them all in our planning.
- We continue to livestream one service a week as far as possible for those who are unable to get to church in person. We know that particularly the reproduction of the music is not great - there are a number of reasons why this is the case - and we are looking at ways to try to improve this if we can.
- Café Church is now well-established on the second Sunday of the month and has covered a variety of topics in a more informal and interactive way. The format appeals to those with different learning styles and has deepened connections as we learn from each other.
- Services continue to offer a variety of music with HySpirit in the morning and Alan Berry as chief organist in the evenings and for special occasions.

Thanks to Angela Pickles and Louise Middleton for the regular preparation of communion and to Jean Gregory and Maureen Williams for providing refreshments before/after our services.

Flowers

Report by Karen Wilkes, flower coordinator

2024 closed following a year of mixed emotions, as we bade farewell to several talented members of our congregation. At least two were very accomplished arrangers, one of whom taught me a great deal.

I have continued to mark the church calendar as requested. If you have any ideas, please let me know, as new ideas and views make flower arranging even more rewarding. We had a wonderful display of orchids for many weeks marking a milestone wedding anniversary. It would be wonderful if more members of Highbury contributed, or just had a go! Bethany Lacey did exactly that, and made a fabulous arrangement.

Please bring flowers to church and arrange them in the vases (to be found in the wardrobe in the Morton Brown Room). Remember you may have to remove the flowers from the church after the Sunday services. If you are keen to use the floral foam, then you have to provide that yourself or you can use chicken wire in receptacles/vases which works well. There may be the opportunity to have a go at arranging as I think Helen is planning for a workshop one Sunday craft afternoon.

Many thanks to all who have contributed this year.

Discipleship Ministry

Report by Helen Bloxham, Discipleship Ministry Coordinator

Aim: To help everyone in the Church to grow and develop in their Christian faith, their prayer life and their discipleship as they explore the Christian faith and seek to put Christ at the centre of their lives.

I had a review with Karen Haden as my link Deacon in August and we came up with these 3 areas for my role as Discipleship Ministry Co-ordinator:

- a. Helping those starting to explore discipleship
- b. Developing/supporting/encouraging existing disciples
- c. Helping to create new disciples

I am going to use these as a focus for the annual report as I review the last year at Highbury:

a/b/c Discipleship is at the heart of all our services at Highbury but I have particularly been involved in the Café Church services which have covered themes such as Love and relationships, Gathering in his name – Congregationalism, Fruit on the frontline, Where are you God? and Peace, actually.

I am now part of the Messy Church and Worship Group teams and this has been particularly supportive as we have looked at planning services together especially in Jason's absence.

a/b/c Thy Kingdom Come – our planning for this started with an ecumenical meeting with some from other Churches/Christian organisations and it was good to then share what we were doing during the 10 days of focussed prayer. We developed our prayer stations and particularly valued the daily prayer journal and Art prints and prompts displayed in the entrance. Thank you to those that helped keep the church open as much as possible and led daily prayers.

a/b Articles in Highbury news – it has been a challenge for me to write regularly for Highbury News! I have focused on prayer this year and often referred to or shared reading I have done so hopefully we are learning together as disciples.

b Highbury Vision/values – Following our Vision weekend in March our Vision statement and core values have now been agreed and give us a focus for developing our discipleship:

To connect people with Jesus, each other and the wider world, growing together.

Empathy; Learning; Including All

a/b/c Church membership – It was good to support a group in the autumn with Mary looking at considering Church membership and Jason will continue this on his return in the spring.

b/c Highbury entrances – Mary and I revamped the noticeboards in the entrances and our welcome leaflet so that there is information about our services and activities. There is now a prayer focus as you come into the Church including a box for prayer requests and locks on the internal doors and it is hoped that the main door to the church can be open to all as much as possible.

Looking forward (please pray for):

The weekly prayer meetings in church/at home.

A new Discipleship theme for Highbury News – suggestions welcome!

Lent materials to be found for study groups/sessions.

Thy Kingdom Come year 3 at Highbury – the 10th anniversary of the prayer initiative.

Worship/Café church/Messy church team – additional volunteers?!

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” 1 Thess. 5:16-18

Pastoral Care Ministry

Report by Laura MacLeod on behalf of the Pastoral Care team (Louise Middleton, Rachel Jacques and Laura)

The pastoral care team is headed up by Jason, as minister, and regular meetings are held throughout the year, as we keep a check on the general welfare of Highbury members, regular adherents and their families. We also know and care for those that we meet through various church groups such as Toddlers, Messy Church, and HyTec.

A weekly prayer email is issued, and cards of support are sent to those we feel are in particular need. In addition, birthday cards and a Christmas gift are sent to anyone known to us who is over 85. Regular visiting is undertaken to those who are unable to get to Highbury services, and others who may be ill or just in need of a chat and friendship.

Although we have a pastoral care ministry team at Highbury, in reality all of our congregation are involved in caring for each other in one way or another and we thank each of you for that. This is illustrated by the events that are supported by, or suggested by others. For example, the teapot buddies, the Connect groups, Highbury café, various social events and just generally keeping an eye out for each other. This is what makes Highbury a real family community.

Louise is stepping down from the pastoral care team on a formal capacity, having served for many years. A very big thank you to Louise for her thoughtful and encouraging weekly prayers, regular visits to many and for practical advice and wise words.

Children and Youth Ministry

Report by Andrea Lacey, Children and Families Worker

Aim of ministry or group: To help children share Christian Friendship, explore Christian faith and enter into Christian Mission as a full part of the Church family. To help the Church to be fully supportive of children, as a child friendly Church, with Christ at the centre and open to all. Build on and develop children's work, build on relationships with other appropriate local links, such as uniformed organisations.

Report of activity for 2024

2024 continued building on established activities for the period April 2024 to February 2025

Messy Church

Messy Church continued with a wonderful congregation of families who attend regularly. There is a real sense of fellowship and sometimes parents bring other children along as well. Relationships within this group are strong and all who attend are comfortable to share prayer concerns during the celebration part of the service. The BRF Get Messy magazine is used to plan monthly meetings, breaking only during the August summer holiday. I am thankful for the dedicated team who continue to meet, plan and help run this - without them it would not be possible.

Messy Church sessions over the year included:

- looking at three ships (worship, fellowship, stewardship) and the need to look after God's creation and pass on his word through worship and fellowship;
- Jesus' anger at the money changers;
- a (wet) 'Experience Easter Outside', finishing with hot cross buns and making crosses;
- planting broad beans and watching them grow in God's grace, as a reminder that He is always present throughout our lives;
- exploring the meaning of Pentecost;
- looking at the persecuted church and the work of Open Doors (hiding Bibles in Jason's car for the children to search for); this session in particular saw wonderful conversations around the table with few activities undertaken because of the conversations being held.
- We have explored what God is like through hearts, clay pots, and creativity, and continued to think about Jesus in terms of Love and Light. Joy Howell very kindly stepped up to help with January 2025 Messy Church in Jason's absence.

Reflecting on past sessions, we reviewed the space we use for the celebration and sectioned off an area of the dais to minimise distraction and bring everyone together. In January a last-minute change moved us into the Morton Brown Room, which was a blessing as it was wheelchair friendly; we plan to use this for future regular celebrations and the church space for occasions such as Easter and Christmas.

Baby & Toddler group

A lovely group of parents and grandparents meet on Tuesday mornings for the baby and toddler group. There is currently a small regular group, with others joining on a less regular basis. This could be due in part to a decline in numbers after covid-19 but also the increase in funded childcare places. The conversations are supportive and often lead to attending Messy Church.

Family Film afternoons

Family film afternoons have continued to run bi-monthly, to serve the community and act as an outreach event. Films shown:

- "Wonka" - a story about having large hopes and dreams. Faith in Jesus offers hope in the face of defeat. Throughout his struggles, Wonka continues to take a positive outlook on every situation he faces. As Christians, we are called to trust God in every situation.
- "Paddington" – a reminder of the Good Samaritan story as Paddington is taken in by a family in his time of need.
- "The Wild Robot" – a reminder of the story of Noah's Ark, when all animals came together to survive the winter, but had to agree not to eat each other. The theme of love throughout brings the realisation that life is valuable and worth living. Roz the robot learns to find peace and urges the other animals to "be more than their programming." Finally, Roz is prepared to sacrifice herself for her friends. (John 15:13.)

Christmas

The nativity scene photo board went up again during December.

Toddler group finished 2024 with party food and a short retelling of the Christmas story in front of the crib in church. The children and parents were excited to take a look inside the church, see the Christmas tree and other decorations.

The Christingle service saw Messy Church families past and present, HyTec-ers, Toddler group families as well as families from Pittville School supporting the choir. Joy Howell from the Congregational Federation came to lead the service. The church was full and 60+ oranges were shared as they were lit in a circle around the worship space.

The scratch nativity was well supported by the congregation with plenty of interaction from all who attended. This used material from the Bible Society called the Shiny Bright Sparkling Light, with a booklet giveaway (with support of the Bennington Hall Trust Fund).

Sunday worship

Children continue to be present during Sunday services and have built beautiful nurturing friendship between them. Activities at the table or in the side room focus on the theme of the service. Of different ages, they genuinely look forward to seeing each other and offer words of support.

Other Outreach

Know Your Worth

In October, I ran a course (eight weekly sessions) called 'Know Your Worth'. This was a free pilot course, from a charity run by a Christian lady, to help teenage girls grow self-esteem, recognise strengths, build resilience and develop a healthy self-image - empowering them to make good decisions. The girls started off very quiet but grew together as a group and very much looked forward to the weekly sessions. They received a weekly goodie bag containing small things like body sprays, face packs, crocheted hearts, home-made lavender bags. Five girls took part and with a free license to run the course for a year, we can run this again for other girls.

Light in the Porch

In place of Halloween, we staged our own take on trick or treating, celebrating Light in the Darkness, by lighting up the porch and welcoming all passers-by with hot chocolate, sweets, and cake. Copies of the Scripture Union booklet "Jesus is Light" were available to take away (thanks again to the Bennington Hall Trust Fund). This was so successful we plan to run this again.

Saltmine Pantomime

We hosted the Saltmine Theatre Company in January to kick start 2025. We had expected Jack and the Beanstalk, but a last-minute change of plan due to illness saw the Little Red Riding team adding one last show to their season instead. This was a really fun way to start 2025, and brought in many new faces and some families we know through other activities such as Toddlers and Messy Church. It was so well received we are planning to do the same again next year.

Planned activities for 2025

- Continue to build on strengthening relationships with new and established contacts through Messy Church, toddler group and or other activities such as family films, St John's School, Angel Day Nursery etc.
- Build on outreach for Café Church.
- Continue with the Family Film afternoons during the winter (September to March).
- Run at least one more Know Your Worth course.

I am grateful to Jason for his ministry, guidance and support for my work, and have realised this more during his period of absence. Thank you also to Mary B as my line manager and her continued commitment and support. Thank you also to the commitment of the Messy Church team (Jean and Roger, Laura M, Helen B, Marguerite and Louise) and others who step in and help as required.

HyTec (Highbury Youth – The Eternity Club)

Report by: Mary Buchanan, HyTec Leader

Aim of group: To provide safe space for teenagers/young adults to develop their potential and explore Christian faith.

Activity in 2024:

HyTec for secondary school age (years 7-13) meets on a Sunday evening. We have 10 on our books, with about 6-7 attending each week. Favourite activities continue to be eating, playing mafia, UNO, hide-and-seek, as well as table tennis and badminton. We always include times of prayer together and aim to be supportive through what can be difficult years for young people. The themes for 2024 were:

Hide and Seek (winter term) - included an 'treasure hunt' looking for interesting designs on buildings in Cheltenham and of course, a walk in the dark, a pancake fest and an Easter egg hunt! Cheltenham Parks (summer term) – we spent most of the time outside, 'rating' some of the local parks and sent our findings to the Borough Council.

Brave Faith (autumn term) – using materials from Open Door and the persecuted church, we considered some of the implications of living 'bravely' as Christians, as well as enjoying the usual raft of favourite games.

Connect/Discipleship Group for over-18s. Up to seven of us continued to meet on line and across national boundaries (with occasional in person in Cheltenham when everyone is home). This has been less regular than in previous years, largely because of the changing circumstances of individuals, but there is a strong network of support for each other.

Thanks to

- HyTec team: Ruth Wyatt, Adrian Blazey, Jason Boyd, Heather Rendell - and Carolina Schubert until the summer before she left us for college after at least 10 years of HyTec!
- Everyone who has prayed for us, encouraged us, helped out on an evening
- Parents who have helped out and supported us
- All the young people themselves for their engagement, enthusiasm and encouragement.

11th Cheltenham (Highbury) Guides – 2024

Report by Tania Ashdown, Guider

During the spring term we travelled around the world doing activities from the Girlguiding South West Region World Thinking Day challenge, learning about, and trying activities from countries on the same lines of latitude and longitude as the Region HQ in Salisbury. Jason came to a meeting to tell us about Canada, we played football games from the Ivory Coast, we made juggling balls (for France) and made hobby horses to try Mongolian horse-riding activities. The guides also found out about guides and girl scouts in those countries and we shared food from them as well (always a popular activity!). During the spring term we also learnt how to make Macramé plant-pot holders as Mothering Sunday gifts and ended the term with a bowling evening at Hollywood Bowl.

In the Summer term the Guides worked on 2 Skills Builder activities (Network and Reflect) and we held a Beetle Drive to raise funds for the unit. All of the guides made cakes or biscuits to sell and we had a fun evening. In May most of the unit took part in the County "Bubbs Hill Bash", working in patrols to complete various challenges around the County headquarters. Everyone had a fun but exhausting day. Each patrol had to decorate a mallet as a mascot, and this year one of our patrols was awarded second prize for their design. In June we met outside at Cowley for a patrol cooking evening and for an evening using the Low Ropes course. We finished the term with an Olympic Games themed evening.

In the Autumn term the guides completed their Upcycling interest badge – creating bags from old t-shirts, decorating plastic milk containers to make plant pots (which we then planted with bulbs) and making games from the contents of the leaders' recycling bins. We also had patrol cooking evenings and a "Newspaper Island" challenge. We finished the term with a Christmas themed meeting.

In November we joined with Cornerstone guides for an Indoor Holiday weekend at Cowley with "Travels in time and space" as our theme. We had an enjoyable weekend and it stopped raining long enough for us to enjoy a treasure hunt outdoors.

During the year the guides have worked hard, earning 12 interest badges, 22 Skill Builder badges, 5 Theme badges and 1 Bronze and 1 Silver Award between them.

I would like to thank all the Highbury Guide Leaders for all they have done this year again and we would like to thank everyone at the church for their continuing support. We look forward to trying new challenges as well as returning to old favourites in the year ahead.

We are happy to welcome any girls between the ages of 10 and 14 to Guides to join our activities this coming year and any adults interested in volunteering. Please get in touch if you are interested in finding out more about the unit.

Contact us at **11cheltenhamguides@gmail.com**

1st Cheltenham Cub Pack

Report by Doug Keay, Cub Scout Lead Volunteer, 1st Cheltenham Scouts

We are delighted to report another successful year for the Cub Pack, maintaining a healthy and vibrant group with 28 Cubs, supported by two enthusiastic Young Leaders, three dedicated Leaders, and two occasional helpers.

2024 saw our Cubs achieve an impressive 304 badges, demonstrating their diverse range of skills and interests, from bushcraft to helping at home. We were particularly proud to award the Chief Scout's Silver Award, our highest Cub Scout honour, to six deserving Cubs. This is a fantastic achievement and a testament to their hard work and commitment.

It has been a busy year filled with exciting activities and adventures. Our Cubs enjoyed three memorable camps: the joint Cub Scout camp in Bristol in February, the County event 'Evolution' in July, and a skills weekend in September. Our weekly program has also been packed with fun and learning, including navigation skills, tubing at Gloucester Ski Slope, and an interesting tour of the church and its former buildings led by Jason.

Looking ahead to 2025, we have another exciting year planned with plenty of camping, skill-building activities, and of course our cubs favourite thing, lots of food and games!

1st Cheltenham Scout Group Beavers

Report by: 1st Cheltenham Scout Group Beaver Leadership team (Steve, Becky, Tim, Tom, Alex, Meg, Claire, Florence and Lauren)

Our Beaver Colony at 1st Cheltenham Scout Group has had a fun-filled year! We are pleased to report that we have a full Colony of 24 Beaver Scouts, both boys and girls. We have a wonderful team of regular adult volunteers to plan and deliver the Beaver Scout programme, alongside one Young Leader.

In 2024, we held our two annual sleepovers, one summer sleeper at Murray Hall in Gloucester where the Beavers had the chance to sleep outside in tents, and the other inside for our Winter Sleepover, held in the church hall.

Our programme has been varied, taking place both inside at Highbury Church Hall and also out in the community. We have been on hikes and explorations, were visited by Hannah from Cheltenham Borough Council to run a session on air quality, completed the Builder Badge, watched 'Shrek - The Musical' at The Everyman and had a behind the scenes tour, did some gardening, helped in the community (making cards for those in a local care home), completed lots of badges, and much more! As a Group with the Squirrels, Cubs and Scouts, the Beavers also attended the 2024 pantomime at The Everyman Theatre.

We would like to thank the Church team for their support this year and we look forward to continuing to work with you in 2025.

Mission and Outreach Ministry

Community Cafe

Report by Angela Pickles, Coordinator

Community Cafe is held in the dining room on Thursday mornings throughout the year and continues to provide a regular opportunity for church members and friends, as well as people from the community, to meet informally. Hot drinks and homemade cakes are enjoyed and there is a buzz of conversation.

Everyone is welcome, so why not come along, whether for a quick drink as you are passing or for the whole morning. Some people come every week and others just occasionally.

Once again, a big thank you goes to the small team of volunteers who make Community Cafe possible.

Highbury News

Report by Susan Cole, Editor

Aim: Dissemination of news and reports to Church and other interested parties. Also to inform, notify and encourage.

2024: Eleven editions produced. Distributed to most recipients by email. Hard copies also made available for delivery by hand, by post or picked up at church.

2025: Plans to continue to produce monthly editions (except August).

Thanks to contributors, to Mary Buchanan for in-office printing, and to those who arrange subsequent distribution.

Open the Book

Report by Jean Gregory, on behalf of the team – Sue Cole, Mary Michael, Elaine Schonbeck, Karen Haden and Brian Wood (from Prestbury St Mary's)

The team goes into Oakwood school every Thursday morning in term time to share a Bible story during school assembly. Each story has a simple message for the children to take away with them, for example being kind, saying sorry, asking for help etc. Open the Book (OtB) fulfils both OFSTED and church schools' inspections for collective worship – Oakwood is a multi-faith school and we are enthusiastically welcomed by staff and pupils alike. We all think that our Thursdays begin well by doing OtB together. Recently we met with three other local OtB teams for a morning of training together, followed by lunch, which we all found helpful and fun. During last autumn Karen Haden very reluctantly had to leave the team for health reasons and she is much missed. As I write we are just welcoming Louise Middleton. We are always happy to increase the size of our team, so if this might be something for you, please let me know and come and see what we do.

Christian Aid

Report by Louise Middleton

Having implemented the changes outlined in last year's report, Cheltenham Christian Aid has continued to support Christian Aid with fund-raising and awareness-raising activities. The supporters' group continues to meet about four times a year and everyone is welcome.

Changes. The Cheltenham Christian Aid website has been discontinued as it was not felt to be cost effective. Laura MacLeod is standing down as Highbury's Christian Aid rep. This will now be taken up by Louise Middleton. Huge thanks to Laura for many years of service as our CA representative.

Activities 2024/25

Fellowship Walks. Two walks were undertaken: the first on 15 June around Guiting Power led by Louise from Highbury; the second on 19 October led by Heather from St Phillip and St James, Hatherley. This walk was in memory of Enid Sutcliffe. Both were supported by several churches although numbers were small. It is hoped more people will take up this opportunity to "walk and

talk" in the beautiful Cotswolds, as the walks become an established feature in the Christian Aid calendar.

Picnic in the Park. This is now firmly established as a regular event and is always held the Saturday before August bank holiday weekend. It was well attended in 2024 with over thirty participants from different churches. The date for this year is Saturday 16 August.

Christian Aid Week. Envelopes continue to be delivered to households around Cheltenham but are no longer collected, so we now have no way of knowing how much is donated to Christian Aid from Cheltenham. However, the delivering of the envelopes serves as a reminder that Christian Aid is serving the poorest and most disadvantaged people in the world, and we hope that it nudges people into giving in whatever way they prefer. To maximise donations, Christian Aid Cheltenham aims to increase the number of envelopes delivered this year, and for this to happen more volunteers are needed. I hope that Highbury members will rise to the challenge, particularly as so many of our regular posters are either no longer with us or are too frail to undertake this task.

Christian Aid Fair. The Christian Aid Fair was held on 9 November 2024. The unwanted gift stall manned by Highbury took more than £120.00 in cash and more by card. The total raised was £1431.50. To compare, £1041.48 was raised in 2023.

Carol Singing. All church carol singing took place at Waitrose on Saturday 14 December, when Highbury had a slot together with St Luke's and St Nicolas' churches. We were fortunate to have music provided by Phill Bird as Adrian was unable to join us. The total raised on the day was over £1059.89 so well worth it and very enjoyable too. Ecumenical carol singing took place outside John Lewis on Thursday 19 December and was reasonably well attended. The total raised was £165.30.

AGM. We are now a supporters' group of Christian Aid, so we no longer have an official AGM as there are no accounts to deliver. However, we continue to have regular meetings throughout the year.

Finally, thank you to everyone at Highbury who supports Christian Aid in whatever way. The charity is at the very heart of the meaning of Christianity, a global movement of people, churches and local organisations working together for dignity, equality and justice to enable people to live a full life free from poverty. Please visit the website to find out more: www.christianaid.org.uk/our-work/about-us.

World Day of Prayer

Report by Rachel Jacques, Branch Secretary

The World Day of Prayer was celebrated at Highbury on 1st March 2024. The service had been written by the WDP committee of Palestine and the troubles in Palestine, Gaza and surrounding areas had been very much in the news since October of 2023.

We welcomed about 60 people to Highbury at the new time of 2.30pm. People seemed very much more comfortable with an afternoon service. People came from numerous churches and denominations around the Cheltenham area as we are the only church to continue with the World Day of Prayer tradition in our area.

The service was led by leaders from Highbury and representatives from other local churches, based on Ephesians 4:1-6 'I beg you, bear with one another in love'. My grateful thanks to them for stepping in at the last minute due to my hospital admission.

January 2025 we hosted a WDP zoom session in preparation for this year's service from the Cook Islands.

If you have not attended before it's always the first Friday in March. Please come along and support the valuable work of this worldwide organization or check out www.wwdp.org.uk

Room Hire

Report by Mary Buchanan, on behalf of the team (Adrian Blazey, Viviane Boyd)

Aim: To serve the community through the letting of Highbury's building

2024 has been a particularly busy year and we are close to full capacity for regular groups. It is great to see so many different people of all ages enjoying the space and considering Highbury as their 'home' (see list below). It is a particular pleasure to be able to provide extra space for St John's Primary School when they have whole school gatherings or need more room to accommodate SATs, and to host community talks, such as the recent one on Alzheimer's Disease, in conjunction with our local councillor, Barbara Clarke. We continue to be a popular venue for birthday parties and as a polling station. In the autumn, we co-hosted a drama production 'If Prison Walls Could Speak', in conjunction with Release International and opened our doors during Interfaith Week in November.

Highbury may not be the most prominent church building in Cheltenham, but it is without doubt a much appreciated one within our local community and gives us opportunity to connect with many who may not choose to come on a Sunday. From one of the Narcotics Anonymous groups: "I have been attending meetings at Highbury Church since the first meeting 20 years ago and see a great many people get well. We are so grateful to have a venue and host such as Highbury Church."

Regular and occasional users during the year

Angel Day Nursery
Art Workshops
Cheltenham Bach Choir
Cheltenham Fostering Support Group
Cheltenham Horticultural Society
Curious Choir
Dramatots
Exercise classes (Heart 2 Heart, Balance class, Shibashiqigong, NIA Sensory movement and dance)
First Aid Training
Gloucestershire Eye Therapy Trust
Hearing Aid Clinic
Narcotics Anonymous (two groups), Gamblers Anonymous
NHS Retirement Fellowship
Patricia Newman Dance School
Pittville Townswomen's Guild
Scouts, Cubs, Beavers, Squirrels; Guides, Brownies
Song Club
St John's School
Street Pastors' Prayer meeting
U3A Groups (Bridge (x 2), Economics, Art, Modern History, Shakespeare, Ukuleles, Square Dancing, Folk Music)
Upholstery Classes
Zion Church

Secretary's Report

Purpose of role - to enable the whole ministry of Highbury Congregational Church, by supporting the church leadership team and coordinating a variety of other roles and activities.

Report by Mary Buchanan, Church Secretary

Membership

New members: 0

Resignations: 3

Deaths: 6

Membership at the end of 2024: 86 (around 64 'active')

Regular adherents: around 30 (including Messy Church)

Highbury Leadership Team

At the AGM in March 2024 Sue Cole completed her term as Deacon. Thanks to Sue for her contribution to church life in this way. Karen Haden was elected to the Diaconate for the first time, although she had previously served as a Ministry Leader.

Maureen Williams completed her term of service as Worship Ministry Coordinator and we are grateful to her for her service over six years. As there was no obvious successor to Maureen, the role of Worship Ministry Coordinator reverted to Jason and has been exercised in conjunction with the Worship Group (see report above).

At the end of 2024 the Highbury Leadership Team consisted of:

Minister (ex-officio member of Diaconate and trustee): Jason Boyd

Secretary (ex-officio member of Diaconate and trustee): Mary Buchanan

Treasurer (ex-officio member of Diaconate and trustee): Roger Gregory

Elected Deacons (and trustees): Adrian Blazey, Karen Haden, Iain Macleod, Darryl Mills, Ruth Wyatt

Children and Youth Ministry Coordinator: Andrea Lacey

Discipleship Ministry Coordinator: Helen Bloxham

Pastoral Care Ministry Coordinator: Laura MacLeod (Rachel Jacques, Louise Middleton)

Administration (including publicity)

Keeping the church office tidy and the noticeboards up to date, managing the accumulation of clutter around the building, keeping our waste and recycling tidy, and monitoring cars in the car park is an unending task and a big thank you to Rachel Jacques for her contribution to this. Thanks too to Helen Bloxham who has assisted with printing and keeping the external (now refurbished!) noticeboard up to date.

We continue to have a presence online via our website, YouTube, and Facebook. The aim is to develop a small team who can keep these dynamic and up to date.

Health and Safety

Peter Harrison continues to oversee our fire safety equipment and arrange for regular inspection, testing and maintenance; Rachel Jacques is overall responsible for our First Aid equipment (including the defibrillator inside the building; the external one is the responsibility of the Secretary). Kitchen hygiene and general cleaning is overseen by Jean Gregory and team, including our excellent cleaner Helen Roberts.

We are grateful to all those above, plus those involved in Maintenance and Safeguarding (see below), for doing largely unseen but crucial jobs.

Maintenance

Report from Ian White & John Pickles

The main project work completed in 2024 was centred around the hall. Work was undertaken to clad the lower sections of the walls in timber to provide a more resistant finish better able to take the knocks and bangs of regular use. The work proved to be more involved than originally anticipated resulting in delay. However, the work was completed to a high standard.

Work was also undertaken on the hall floor to sand back and re-coat with a natural oil product. The sanding revealed a very patchy appearance to the base timber and a stained product was used to help disguise this. This has not worked as planned which is due in part to excess product being applied by the contractor (in an attempt to mask the underlying patchy appearance) and the darker finish resulting in any scuffs and scratches being significantly more visible.

Consultation has been ongoing with the contractor and manufacturer of the product and a plan has been developed which will remove the excess product and then reapply a thinner layer of either clear or lighter stain. Due to the underlying patchy appearance of the base timber a compromise will be required between uniformity of appearance and achieving a finish that can be easily and economically maintained.

Similar work was undertaken on the ground floor of the Manse; however, the floor was in a much better condition allowing a clear product to be applied.

Work started in 2023 and continued in 2024 to obtain quotes to repair the damaged leaded windows. The existing contractor has ceased to trade, and the specialist nature of the work has made it challenging to obtain quotes. A new contractor visited the site at the end of the year and a quote is awaited. Due to the limited budget available the focus will be on the worst damage.

Investigations took place during 2023 and 2024 to look at ways of improving the thermal comfort in the main Church building. Plans have been developed for adding insulation to the roof and sealing the gaps around the opening leaded windows. However, the costs are significant, and funds do not currently allow these projects to be progressed.

The buildings are used extensively by church and community groups during the week and this results in a number of minor repairs being necessary to maintain the facilities.

2025 is likely to focus on essential maintenance activities due to the limited funds currently available.

Safeguarding

Report by Nephesha Mary Michael, Safeguarding Officer

Our Safeguarding Policy has been slightly amended to include our Vision Statement and to update the names of groups who are using Highbury. All church members and users of our premises agree to abide by it. It is therefore important that you read it please. A hard copy is kept on the kitchen windowsill for anyone who finds that easier than accessing it online. Most importantly we must all play our part in keeping Highbury a safe place for everyone. If you have any cause for concern please talk to me, our Minister or one of the Deacons.

We use Thirtyone:Eight for online training and they are available for any support that we may need.

All our Leadership team have either a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) certificate or have completed a Local Workers Form. They have also signed the Code of Conduct. I continue to update the DBS certificates when they become due and those include the Open the Book team.

Last year I mentioned that I would like to pass the role of Safeguarding Officer on to someone else whilst I am still able to support them as they take over. No one has yet shown interest.

Highbury Congregational Church

Accounts to Year ended 31st December 2024

Financial Summary

This year has suffered from a reduced level of members standing order receipts. This has occurred from a loss of a major giver (through transfer) in March and other members who died in subsequent months in the year, without new members replacing them.

Some existing members increased their giving to support this shortfall – thank you - but the year still ended considerably down on standing order receipts.

This highlights the fact that the church relies heavily on a small number of generous givers and the loss of any one of those has a material effect on the finances. The church needs to encourage those members who have yet to join the giving scheme to do so, encourage regular church goers into membership and for others to review their giving in line with the proportionate giving guidelines in TRIO – “The responsibility is ours”

Better news was the increase in room receipts from more hirers being encouraged to use the facilities. Room booking receipts are a material part of overall receipts which is good for finances; but we are very reliant on this to balance the books.

Several expense areas were more than expected putting further pressure on the finances,

However, the church has responded by inviting members to recommit to their membership promises, and planning a Giving campaign in the new year. These promises include giving of our time, talents, and money as we are able.

The church was able to refurbish the church hall walls and floor to make the room much more serviceable for church and hirers use.

Review of the accounts - Income & Expenditure, All Funds

Below is a summary of overall financial performance:

	Year 2024	Year 2023
	£	£
Incoming Resources:		
Offerings	56,525	61,036
Legacies	2,513	15,000
Gifts	1,000	1,300
Room letting	21,157	18,498
Investments and other income	10,132	8,010
Total Income	91,327	103,844
Resources used:		
Charitable objectives	-55,898	-51,133
Support costs:		
Maintenance	-22,348	-10,531
Other support costs	-24,847	-21,218
Total Expenditure	-103,093	82,882

Excess of Incoming Resources over Resources used Net movement		
	-£11,762	£20,962

Total net movements in the year of £11,762 deficiency include;

General Fund (day to day) £7,210 surplus

Fabric Fund £20,969 deficiency –largely from hall refurbishment

Gift and Legacy Fund £2,263 surplus

Organ and Visuals Fund £270 deficiency

Early in the year we produced a budget for the **General Fund**, day to day, income and expenditure excluding maintenance and legacies and gifts; to reflect our best estimates of how the year may turn out.

There were many swings and roundabouts, but I am able to report a surplus of £7,210 which will be used to part fund our future 5-year maintenance plan requirements Thank you for your support in making this possible.

However, this falls short of the planned transfer to the maintenance fund and will limit our future maintenance plans, and is not sustainable on an ongoing basis.

Movements in funds

A) General Fund (day to day)

Total year produced a surplus of £7,210 which was however £3,734 less than our budget.

Variances from budget include;

Income - £1,496 less includes;

- Standing orders/tax refund down by £4,594, as explained in the Financial Summary.
- Gift of £1,000 from George Cullis in memory of Barbara
- Grants received better by £291 from increased claims made to Bennington Hall Trust
- Miscellaneous income down by £148 – includes a late transfer to Standing orders.
- Room Hire considerably better by £2,659 from increased activities and new clients.
- Highbury News income £95 down on budget
- Outreach income £605 down on budget – this includes receipts from Café, Cards, Film Club, Messy Church, and other events like the Vision week-end which made a loss.

Expenditure - £2,238 more includes;

- Preaching costs £128 more from travel expenses in June
- Organist fees £105 more, includes more playing over Christmas
- Minister in-service training/travel £538 more but car mileage £81 less
- Gas and electricity costs £413 more from increased usage. We have enjoyed the benefit of very low fixed prices for the last 3 years, but these have been renewed at 15th December 2024 at much higher rates
- Insurance costs £251 more from premium increases
- Junior Church £102 more

- Miscellaneous expenditure £184 less and Outreach expenditure £243 less (in line with above reduced Outreach income.
- Manse water rates £222 more from increased standing order charges (previous charges were too low!)
- Worship resources £428 more – this includes membership classes documentation, Bible Society Christmas booklets and licence costs for registering the church for same sex marriages
- Other affiliations £303 more which includes church donation to Open Doors
- Savings of £148 on SWMA subscriptions from reduced membership numbers.
- Cleaning materials £128 reflecting increased activity in room bookings and a small expense for Cleaning day
- Cleaners Gross Pay £238 more from sickness cover for the main cleaner Helen
- Photocopy charges £62 from increased usage, particularly higher cost colour copying.

B) Fabric Fund

Expenditure of £22,348 included;

- Manse floors - £1,380, covered by 100% grant
- Void Projects church ceilings and windows, main hall, Manse floor and en-suite - £2,937
- Hall; joinery, electrical and decoration - £14,013
- A & E annual inspection and call-out - £532
- Stallard & Co office lighting, and church up-lighting – £835
- David Mason plumbing - £462
- Church/Manse boiler services - £302
- Decoration of hallway ceiling tower - £1630
- Other miscellaneous expenditure - £257

It is recommended that we transfer in £7,200 from the General Fund surplus to part meet the 5-year maintenance plan requirements for 2024 – thank you for making this possible!

Future work could include making the church more environmentally friendly by extensive insulation – in an old building like ours this would be very expensive, requiring extensive funds both by external grants and internal funds.

C) Organ and Visuals Fund

- Expenditure of £270 on piano tuning
- Mary Clifford's estate left a legacy of £1,000 for Organ and piano maintenance.
- Balance of £7,230 is to cover likely costs of organ refurbishment

D) Gift and Legacy Fund

- This is designated for Outreach Projects, and has grown considerably over time with little expenditure
- Expenditure this year was £250 by way of deposit for the Saltmine panto. The church has agreed to underwrite this, and there are further costs of £1,105 in 2025. However, we have yet to count the money on the door which will help to defray the costs.

E) 1st look Budget for 2025

- 1st look Budget for 2025 is likely to be a break-even situation on the General, day to day, Fund precluding transfers to top up the necessary transfer to the Fabric Fund.
- This break-even situation reflects the current shortfall in standing orders and the extra expenditure in 2025 for salary reviews, big increase in utility costs and general increases across the board.

- Finance Group and Diaconate recommended the following accounting treatment for the year 2025;
"That we charge routine maintenance to the General Fund and charge Project/Capital maintenance to the Legacy Fund. This would be done after we deplete the existing Fabric Fund" – subject to Church Meeting (CM) approval
- All Capital maintenance projects would need CM approval as we would be using up reserves rather than the existing Fabric Fund

Giving to Others

Giving to others in the year amounted to £6,609 which included;

- £560 to the CF Mission and Society Fund
- £1,400 to CF South West Midlands Area
- £3,732 to local monthly charities
- CWM Papua New Guinea appeal - £178
- Release International Prison Walls- £181

Other giving/collections;

- Listening post - £100
- World Day of Prayer - £402
- CCP - £56

This giving is 7.4 % of our income

Unrestricted Funds

All the church funds are unrestricted.

The trustee policy is to retain at least 3 months' expenditure as "free" reserves within the General Fund to meet future shortfalls in income, or unexpected expenditure for 2025. The balance, after recommended year end transfers at 31st December, represents 6 month's current day to day General Fund expenditure.

Highbury Church

Income & Expenditure Account - all Funds

12 months to 31st December 2024

INCOME Header	A/C code	TOTAL THIS YEAR	TOTAL LAST YEAR
		£	£
Offerings, Legacies and similar incoming resources			
Envelopes & loose change	1101	605	647
STO & single cash/cheque	1102	45,592	49,224
Tax refund	1103	10,328	11,163
Gifts - Other	"	1,000	1,300
Legacies	1122	2,513	15,000
Grants received	1200	2,403	366
Miscellaneous income	6110	392	613
Total - Incoming resources		62,833	78,313
Activities in furtherance of the charity's objectives			
Other room hire	1141	19,857	16,953
Church users room hire	1143	1,300	1,470
Weddings & Funerals	2801	1,006	1,069
Highbury News income	3402	0	95
Highbury News advertisers	3403	250	180
Scouts insurance	6105	142	134
Outreach Income	6700	2,239	2,845
Total - Incoming activities		24,794	22,746
Activities for generating Funds			
Fund raising	1131	0	
Investment Income			
Dividends & Interest	1151	3,700	2,785
Total Income		91,327	103,844
6			
EXPENDITURE Header	A/C code	TOTAL THIS YEAR	TOTAL LAST YEAR
		£	£
Activities in furtherance of the charity's objectives			

<u>Ministry salary etc:</u>			
Minister's gross salary	5101	32,044	29,692
Minister's employers NI	5102	0	
Minister's pension EE and ER	5103	3,596	3,334
Car mileage allowance	5401	188	270
Children's Worker gross salary	5801	12,806	11,535
Children's Worker employers NI	5802	0	
<u>Other expenses:</u>			
Preaching	2101	578	315
Junior Church/Sunday Special	2302	166	64
Video licence	2304	599	559
Organist	2501	605	425
Music	2502	0	
Piano/Organ Maintenance	2503	270	270
Pastoral	3201	0	
Pastoral gifts	3202	128	88
Ministry Leaders exps Joint	3216	0	
Publicity/advertising	3404	0	
Neighbourhood cards	3405	0	
CF affiliations/SW Midlands area	3501	2,260	2,408
Other affiliations	3502	473	195
CF Ministry and Mission	3504	560	608
Worship resources	5115	692	260
Church equipment/furnishings	6109	0	
Miscellaneous expenditure	6801	74	258
Outreach expenditure	6800	859	853
Total - Outgoing activities		55,898	51,134

7

EXPENDITURE		TOTAL	TOTAL
Header	A/C code	THIS YEAR	LAST YEAR
		£	£
Support costs			
<u>Ministry expenses:</u>			
Travel, excluding Car	5116	0	71
In -service training/retreat	5117	609	
Subsistence	5118	0	
<u>Manse expenses:</u>			
Manse insurance	5301	336	301
Manse - water	5304	366	263
Manse - community charge	5305	3,086	2,947
Manse - maintenance	5307	1,671	252
<u>Other expenses:</u>			
Project	6100	0	
Church - Maintenance	6101	20,677	10,278
Gas	6102	3,560	3,338
Electricity	6103	2,417	2,226
Insurance	6104	3,047	2,668
Trade disposal	6106	509	475
Housekeeping	6301	180	187
Cleaning materials	6302	1,040	873

Green Waste Disposal	6303	180	
Cleaners gross pay	6501	6,435	4,912
Stationery/directory	6601	15	17
Postage	6602	16	25
Telephone	6603	780	779
Office equipment	6604	255	247
Payroll costs	6606	288	288
Photocopy hire/copy charge	6611	1,400	1,340
Photocopy paper	6612	109	58
Bank charges	6701	219	203
Legal costs	6702	0	
Recruitment costs	6703	0	
Professional fund raising	6705	0	
Total - Support costs		47,195	31,748
Total Expenditure		103,093	82,882
	8		

Income & Expenditure Account - all Funds

Income/Expenditure Header		TOTAL THIS YEAR	TOTAL LAST YEAR
		£	£
Income			
Incoming resources		62,833	78,313
Incoming activities		24,794	22,746
Fund raising		0	0
Dividends & interest		3,700	2,785
Total Income		91,327	103,844
Expenditure			
Outgoing activities		55,898	51,134
Support costs		47,195	31,748
Total Expenditure		103,093	82,882
All Funds surplus/(deficiency)		-11,766	20,962
Less transfers to other funds:			
Fabric		20,968	-3,114
Gifts and Legacy		-2,263	-14,000
Organ and Visuals		270	-3,500
Year end transfers 2023		0	16,144
Gen. Funds surplus/(deficiency)		7,209	16,492

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Highbury Congregational Church

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and the Examiner

As Trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Accounting Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2005) issued in March 2005, UK Accounting Standards and the Charities Act 2011. As Trustees, you consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to; ☐

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of this report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. The examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Trustees and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent Examiner's statement

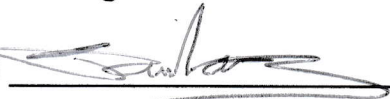
In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act and the Regulations have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed



Date

13/02/25