

REPORTS FOR AGM - 28 NOVEMBER 2021.

General Council Report and Secretary's Report for AGM - November 2021.

Since the last Annual General Meeting of the congregation held in February 2021 the General Council has met on seven occasions. One of the main topics of the meetings has concerned the gradual re-opening of Chapel in the light of government guidance regarding Covid-19, and from a very cautious beginning in April of this year we have now reached a position of relative normality, including singing hymns during our services and enjoying each others' company for tea and coffee in the schoolroom at the end of our weekly devotions. The national picture with regard to Covid-19 still looks quite varied but so far the government has decided not to issue any further advice/restrictions with regard to those wishing to attend public worship.

Other matters considered by the General Council during the past few months include the presence - or otherwise - of Japanese knotweed on the school field, the upgrading of the security lights outside the Sunday School building, and the removal of the covering over the passage outside the kitchen door.

The General Council's finances are kept in good order under the watchful eye of our Treasurer, David McFarlane. We are just about holding our own in terms of income and expenditure but this balancing act requires occasional financial support from the Trustees. Assistance from the General Assembly's Sustentation Fund, which supports the costs of ministry, has been very much welcomed, as has the Gift Tax rebate from central government. Problem areas for the future include the threatened rise in heating and lighting costs as well as costs relating to maintaining the Chapel's website. Thanks are due to David, to the General Council's Chairman Brian Meller, and to all the Council's officers for their help in keeping the ship afloat over a prolonged period of turbulence.

It would be most remiss of me not to include a mention of our gratitude to our Minister, Rev Shammy Webster, who has nobly

prepared and disseminated services of worship via Facebook and Zoom during the latter stages of the lockdown, and then from the pulpit following our return to weekly worship on Easter Sunday. This has been no easy task and I am sure we are all grateful to Shammy for her thoughtful contributions to our worship experience. Thanks are due too to those who take services in Shammy's absence from the pulpit, including, on occasion, our own members.

Although Chapel members seem to have come through the pandemic in relatively good shape we were all deeply saddened by the loss of Pat Booth earlier this year, in January to be precise. Pat was a hive of industry in her own right supporting Chapel to the hilt in her own inimitable way and her loss to our Chapel community has been immense. Her life was honoured at a funeral service taken by her family at Radcliffe Crematorium on 5 February, and at the end of August we remembered one of our former members, Ellen Harrison, who passed away in Scotland in the early months of the pandemic and whose family provided some interesting memories of her during her memorial service.

Finally, may I end with my own personal expression of thanks to the many people behind the scenes who have kept the Chapel running smoothly and in good working order since our last AGM in February of this year.

Ian Southern
Secretary to the General Council

Lettings Secretary's Report.

The schoolroom was out of use for lettings since the first lockdown in early 2020 but now that we are open for business the lettings are slowly building up and the schoolroom is being used at some point during most weekdays, as follows:

On Monday afternoons there is Chair Exercise (1p.m. – 2p.m.), followed by Manc Art, and in the evenings Yoga classes for mums-to-be.

On Tuesday afternoons there is a Creative Writing Group and Yoga in the evening.

On Wednesdays Slimming World meet in the mornings and early evenings.

On Thursday mornings there is Yoga for mums and babies and in the afternoons Incredible Edibles and Homestart. Incredible Edibles are on the field from 1.00 p.m. and round off the afternoon with a cuppa in the schoolroom. Homestart use the schoolroom during the afternoon for paperwork.

I have tried to keep Fridays free for Chapel use, and also Saturdays.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for help provided to keep the lettings running smoothly.

Joan McFarlane
Lettings Secretary.

Maintenance Report.

We have been through another difficult year but still tried to keep on top of maintenance. The lawns have been regularly mowed all through the summer and the car park hedges have been cut. At the moment it is leaf-clearing time and the gutters will need clearing. The memorial garden has been weeded and tidied up.

New security lights have been installed around the car park and memorial garden. Light bulbs have been replaced in Chapel where needed. The defibrillator has been moved to a better place and is now situated opposite the kitchen door. The two electric water heaters have been thoroughly cleaned after not having been used for many months and they are now up and running.

Walter Whitfield
Maintenance Officer.

Membership Secretary's Report.

Over the last twelve months our total membership has slightly fallen but the total in contributions has increased significantly to £6889.70. In the year 2020 payments to Free Will Offering/Subscriptions were rather unpredictable because of the Covid virus and so comparisons with previous years are not entirely accurate. The Gift Aid tax rebate for this year was £1395.00 which is a welcome addition to the Chapel's funds.

Peter Rose
Membership Secretary.

Trustees Report for AGM, November 2021.

Since the last AGM in February of this year the Trustees have met on three occasions, namely 6 June 2021, 28 June 2021, and 27 September 2021. Ian confirmed that the processes to officially register the Chapel's land with the Land Registry had been completed just after lockdown in April 2020 but really there is not much else to report at the present time from the Trustees' point of view. Our finances seem to be in excellent shape thanks to the oversight of our Treasurer, Brian Meller, who has prepared a separate financial report for consideration by those attending the AGM, and our meetings are kept in good order thanks to our Chairman, Susan Cahal.

Ian Southern
Secretary to the Trustees.

Trustees' Treasurer's Report (as at 30 September 2021).

The year has continued to be adversely affected by the tail end of Brexit and the pandemic, making it difficult to predict future trends. Significant increases in energy prices and labour shortages add to that uncertainty from 2022 onwards.

Nevertheless, the Trustees' finances remain in a satisfactory state.

Our bank balances have shown a decrease from £28,346.00 to £24,175.00, a fall of 4.7%. This is explained by the level of support given to the General Council this year, a sum of £18,000.00. It was also necessary to use £10,000.00 of capital

from our investments. Fortunately, growth in the financial market more than made up for this.

Currently the capital value of our investments stands at just over £366,000.00, compared with £341,000.00 last year. However, income from the investments is lower, at £6,500.00. The performance of our investments depends on the FTSE 100 Index as well as on the skill of our stockbrokers, Brewin Dolphin, who continue to do well for us. For months now the FTSE 100 Index has been floating around the 7000 mark and I see little to expect it to change.

As to the future, we must continue to be careful and maximise income to protect ourselves from inevitable rises in costs. The exterior of the Chapel will need attention and quotes are being obtained.

Brian Meller
Treasurer to the Trustees.

Worship Committee Report.

After a difficult and frustrating year we are at last, hopefully, getting back to some normality in our Sunday worship.

Many thanks to Shammy for leading us in worship on most Sundays. The special services – Easter, Mothering Sunday, Harvest, Women's League, and Chapel Anniversary – were all well received. Sadly, the Mayor of Bury was unable to attend our Chapel Anniversary service owing to a prior engagement. We also had a lovely memorial service for Ellen Harrison at the end of August which was led by Shammy. Many thanks must also go to our organist Ian for filling our Chapel with music each Sunday.

The Friends of Heaton Hall group visited Chapel in September. They were interested in finding out all about our Chapel's history and they thoroughly enjoyed their visit. Many thanks to Pat and to Ian for speaking to them.

Hoping we can carry on enjoying our Sunday worship and looking forward to having Christmas in our Chapel this year.

Barbara Whitfield
Secretary of the Worship Committee.