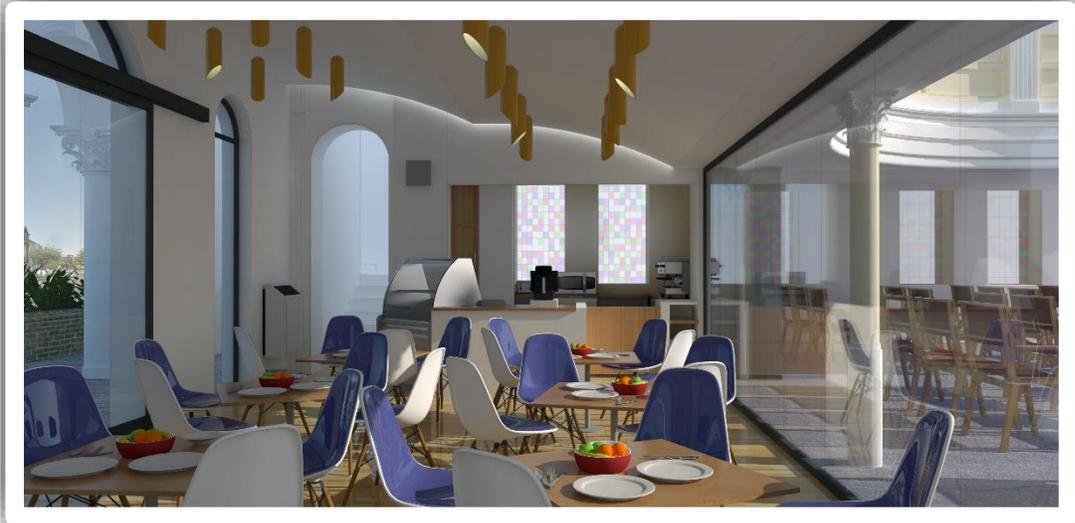


Aylesbury Methodist Church & Centre

Annual Report

2016-2017



Architect's impression of the planned "attractive, accessible meeting place, able to offer a warm welcome, simple refreshment and a listening ear."

Minister: Rev. Helen Kirk

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1. INTRODUCTION

Our Mission Statement, in the 'About' section of our website, speaks of our striving locally, nationally and internationally, to serve God by serving others. The contents of this report seek to show how our worship, activities, financial management and current plans all support this aim.

From The Minister – Rev. Helen Kirk

Once again, we come to the end of another busy year and as I read this report I find myself astonished and grateful for the myriad of volunteers who contribute to the life of Aylesbury Methodist Church and community centre. At AMC we seek to be more than a town centre building (although I am extremely grateful to all those who maintain our property so well) but an inclusive and welcoming community.

- We are concerned that people have the basics of life and so we raise hundreds of pounds for local & national charities
- We long for people to have a sense of belonging and so we have a wide variety of activities that are open to any.
- We hope to recognise and value the gifts of all, whether they be music or mathematics; singing or sewing; painting or praying...
- We realise our young people are of utmost worth and so we invest in their future.
- We know that at the heart of each human being is a longing for love and grace - for God, and so through worship, prayer and fellowship we provide sacred space.
- We understand that we are far from perfect but we offer the best of ourselves to the service of God and others. This report shows something of all that is offered in that way and on behalf of the Methodist Church I can only say 'Thank you!'

2. THE CHURCH & CENTRE

Property Report – Kevin Hardern

As we said in last year's report, the heating changes have bedded in and we turned our attention this year to the second phase of the project, double glazing. After a tender process, this ended up being installed in the downstairs area of the church in January. This then completes this stage of the heating upgrades, partly improving circulation and partly heat conservation in line with our environmental approach to all things. We will see how this goes for a couple of years before doing any more work in this area.

Two of the Property Stewards, Brian Latham and Paul Ingram, are heavily involved in the development of the front welcome area of the church to make it more inviting and open to the local community as well as more flexible for use when the church itself is busy. This is a major project in its own right and is a continuation of our overall strategy of being an inclusive and inviting church central to the local community and its needs. Our thanks to both Brian and Paul for their continued enthusiasm and drive.

Regular maintenance and servicing continues to be undertaken by 15 Property Stewards who cover everything from flower borders to fixing door handles and major works, like fixing broken drains. Kitchens, regular redecoration, security, fire safety, cleaning, recycling, AV equipment, heating, boilers, electrics, Health and Safety all need to have a focus, to name a few more. Without these people willingly giving their time freely we would need to employ at least one full time person, even if we could find a person with such a variety of skills, which is unlikely. We thank them all for their continuing efforts in keeping the premises in good condition to support our clients and our communities.



Church members who volunteer two hours twice a year to clean the church have saved us thousands of pounds. New volunteers are always welcome.

Healthy Churches – Peter Green

The top priority from our 2015 Healthy Churches review was to resource our work with children, young people and families. During the past year, we advertised for and appointed our first Family & Youth Worker. Melvina Brown began work in September on a three-year fulltime contract and we welcome her to our church family. We are grateful for the funding we have received from AMC members, the Methodist Connexion and an external charity.



Mel Brown, our Family & Youth Worker

Doing something with the coffee bar area was another priority and following extensive work and investigations by Brian Latham's action group, a Church Welcome Project brochure was produced. Its contents have since had both church council and circuit meeting approval, the latter group contributing a £20,000 grant towards the £100,000 scheme. The aims of the scheme are:

1. To refurbish our church entrance and vestibule to match the standards of our community centre.
2. To continue to open our volunteer-run coffee bar six mornings per week.
3. To offer a variety of Fairtrade coffees, teas, cakes and other snacks at reasonable prices.
4. To appoint a volunteer part-time Outreach Co-ordinator to identify local needs, especially of the lonely and disadvantaged.
5. To initiate, partner, enable and encourage activities that meet these needs.
6. To encourage the afternoon and evening use of the space by these special interest groups.
7. To recruit, train and promote the service of Listeners, to help people who need a sympathetic ear.

The welcoming and integration of new people continues to be overseen by Peter Farmer's team. Activities have included 'Newcomers teas', and a hugely enjoyable Talent Extravaganza Concert organized by Pauline Latham, which involved people of all ages and length of time with us. A new 'Rough Guide to AMC' has also been prepared for new people.

Nurturing faith has again been supported by Helen's Bible Study sessions and Messy Church. It has been pleasing to see a growing contribution by our young people in worship, including the always well-received youth choir. The Zimbabwe choir has also enriched some of our services.

The seven marks of a healthy church are based on the characteristics of the life of Christ. So, our continuing challenge as a church is to become more Christ-like in all that we do.

Community Centre – Peter Farmer

The Community Centre continues to provide accommodation for all church groups and, on a very regular basis, many non-church organisations most responsible, directly or indirectly, for the health and welfare of residents of the Vale of Aylesbury.

Those providing direct support within the Community Centre include **Sees the Day** which offers support, training and encouragement, five days a week, for over 30 younger people with acute learning difficulties. As part of a national strategy to reduce the cost of falls to the individual participants and to the NHS, weekly **Strength and Stability** classes are provided for 20 - 30 older adults concerned about their balance. The **Aylesbury Blind Club meets** monthly, in a relaxed and friendly environment, to keep in touch with one another and to share news. **Bucks Carers** regularly run a number of welfare programmes including an 8-week course for adopter parents. **Talk Back/Include** brings together professional counsellors with adults and young people needing support. For those requiring transplants and transfusions NHS **Blood and Transplant** welcomes about 80 donors during each of their six-weekly visits. Within the Community Centre a small group produces a **Talking Newspaper** each week, containing a comprehensive local news service for blind and partially - sighted people.

All these are just a sample of the groups that use our premises to enhance the lives and wellbeing of a wide range of local residents.



Sees The Day, providing five days per week support for younger people with learning difficulties

The Website – Peter Green

Given that the website is our 'shop window' where people can see who we are, what we do and why we do it, the aim is to keep it up-to-date. So we have continued with five news items posted each week with a related Tweet and Facebook entry. Thank you to the many contributors during the year and to Chris Edney for her monthly update of the most visited section, the calendar.



*Five news items posted
each week*
www.aylesburymethodists.org.uk

3. YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Sunbeams – Margaret Miskin

The baby and toddler group continue to thrive with between 8 and 12 mums/carers and their children attending each week. At their request, I have extended our opening times by 30 minutes. We have also met occasionally during the school holidays to enable those who have gone to pre-school/school to come back and meet up with old friends. The highlight of our year was going to Zoomania for our Christmas party. A great time was had by all.

Creche and J Team – Viv Kemp

J Team remains healthy, with some growth in our younger groups. We have been extremely grateful to members of the congregation who help out as floaters and provide an extra pair of hands. Our older group has successfully planned and led another church service which was well received by the congregation. My grateful thanks to those leaders who give up their time each week to lead groups.



*The J Team planned and led this
morning service*

Messy Church – Helen Kirk

Messy Church meets monthly on a Saturday afternoon 4-6pm and is for families of all ages. We begin with craft activities – usually four to five things to make or do before going into the church for songs and stories. After that we all come back into the hall for our tea. This year we have been thinking about ‘Stories Jesus told’

We are extremely grateful to all those who offer their time to organise crafts and the ‘catering team’ who provide a meal for all who turn up.

Boys’ Brigade – Steve Kemp

We’ve had another good year in the Boys' Brigade. Numbers are steady although we would welcome some more in the Anchor Section. Once again Sir Henry Aubrey Fletcher, Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, joined us at a Brigades Service to present Queen's Badges; this time to Tom Howells and Robert Sheppard.

Sheila Whitelock has had to stand down as a helper this year and I would like to thank her for the long-term commitment she made to BB. I am very grateful to all the officers and helpers that enable BB to run.



Tom Howells and Robert Sheppard received their Queen's Badge from The Lord Lieutenant

Girls’ Brigade – Sarah Davidge

During the year, numbers have increased so that we currently have a good group of older girls and have started a Brigader section. Next year, we are extending the hours we meet to help the older girls with their badge work.

Also during the last year, Kirsty Young and I have successfully completed our leadership training.

Youth Choir – Andrew Kirk

The youth choir continues to meet weekly for an hour's practice on a Wednesday at 6.30pm. Although not huge in number we are keen to sing and have been glad to contribute to various services including Easter, Church Anniversary and Christmas. We have even been 'on the road' as we helped to lead the circuit open air service at Swanbourne. We would love to see any children & young people who enjoy singing.



The Youth Choir at the 2017 Circuit Songs of Praise service

Youth Exchange – Viv Kemp

In July we opened our homes to seventeen German youngsters from Daun in Germany and enabled them to gain an insight into life in an English family. We welcomed their two new leaders, Petra Schmitz and Maike Stölben, who have now taken over from Petra and Gorden Nickel. Our programme included a trip to Thorpe Park, a barbecue in Wendover Woods, a visit to Brighton Pavilion and, of course, the obligatory fish and chips on the beach and our hilarious Scavenger Hunt around Aylesbury which involved a number of unsuspecting members of the Aylesbury public. Our London day included the Sustainability Experience at the Crystal, a cable car and boat trip and a visit to see Stomp in the West End. The Exchange ended, as always, with a concert produced and compered by our extremely talented youngsters. There were copious tears as the Germans departed at the end of their stay but many friendships have been forged and we look forward to visiting them in July 2018.



The Youth Exchange visiting Thorpe Park

4. CHURCH ACTIVITIES

AMC & Friends Theatre Trips – Pauline Noble

The group welcomes all those who enjoy a visit to a London Theatre with top priced seats at discounted prices. Friends, bring friends – you can board our coach at either Bedgrove or Wendover and proceed to London setting down as near to the theatre as is possible. After the show there is no dash for the last train but instead a comfortable coach ride home.

We ended last year with John Rutter and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in their Christmas Celebration concert at the Royal Albert Hall, a concert that sets the scene for Christmas in a spectacular hall. Our trip to the musical ‘Aladdin’ didn’t go quite according to plan. A late pick up at Bedgrove ended up in huge traffic congestion as we came into central London. However, a member of the group already at the theatre and fantastic support by theatre staff meant they were prepared, and we were quickly seated to enjoy most of the show. A Tchaikovsky concert, again in the Royal Albert Hall, with an amazing display of fireworks from the gallery during the 1812 overture, made this evening another highlight. A full coach to see American in Paris with its five star reviews in October was thoroughly enjoyed by all, and having left Aylesbury slightly earlier to allow for traffic we arrived with time to enjoy a beverage before the show! We now look forward to this year’s Christmas Celebration in the Royal Albert Hall with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Kings Singers in December.



Christmas Celebration at the RAH with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Banner Group – Brenda Horne

The annual Women's World Day of Prayer banner was completed early in the year and is currently doing the rounds of Aylesbury and district churches. The artwork for the 2018 banner has been received and we have made a start on it.



The banner produced for the 2017 Women’s World Day of Prayer

The two children's banners have been taken down and vacuumed. As many of the children named have grown up and in some cases left the church, we have a new list of names to be embroidered. These will be in autumnal colours and will be completed over the winter.

We were asked by David Neville to display as many banners as we could for the Church Anniversary service in September. Hanging from the gallery, they made a splendid colourful sight. We have been asked to make another Action for Children banner to be displayed at Stoke Mandeville church in memory of Phyllis Lane.

Bedgrove House Group – Rosemarie Bucknell

Bedgrove House Group, so named because its members all live in or near this estate, has been meeting for more than twenty years. We gather in member's homes using those of us who have enough space, and we meet ten times a year avoiding September when some of us take that last break away and December which is renowned for being a busy month for us all. We are sixteen in number and plan our programme together at our AGM in November and I co-ordinate everything. This year we had our annual Christmas/New year lunch at the Chiltern Forest Golf Club, a devotional evening, music, a visit to Greatmore Recycle Centre, a ramble round the grounds of Wotton House followed by afternoon tea in Quainton and a members' evening when we explored some of the many famous saints each bringing information on the saint of our own choice and sharing that information with the group. We always have refreshments at our meetings too.



A varied programme included a ramble at Wotton House

Bible Study – Helen Kirk

The Bible Study meets monthly on a Wednesday afternoon 2-3.30pm for lively discussion about faith and the world in which we live. We are currently working our way through the parables of Jesus. There are usually around a dozen in the group, from a wide variety of backgrounds which means the discussions are both challenging and enlightening! All are welcome!

Coffee Bar – Chris Sara

Our volunteer-run coffee bar in the church vestibule opens six mornings a week. It caters for a small, regular clientele who welcome the friendly company and contact. During the year, Rob King stepped into the breach to co-ordinate volunteers and supplies before handing over to Chris Sara. More volunteers are being sought to ensure continuity before the coffee bar is revamped in the new scheme mentioned elsewhere.

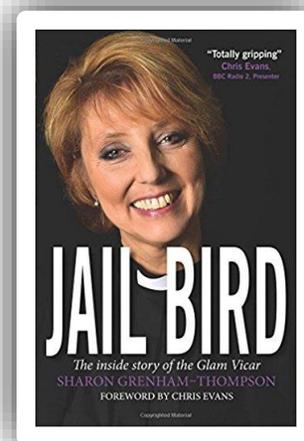
The Good Faith Book Club – Peter Green

We continue to meet on alternate months and aim for a mix of styles and genres about aspects of faith and life today. This year's selection has included a book by Strictly contestant Revd. Richard Coles on his move from pop to pulpit, a book on the growth of Street Angels, including an Aylesbury mention, a joyous book by The Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Radio 2's 'Glam Vicar' on her life and prison ministry. The year ended with a book on the continuing struggle for social justice by the retired, but still active radical Methodist minister, Rev. David Haslam.

In Stitches – Pauline Latham

On Thursday afternoons, during term-time, we have a (currently) small group who meet for an informal get-together where we indulge in our passions involving anything 'stitch-y', be it hand-sewing, patchwork, quilting, embroidery, lace-making, knitting and crochet etc.

We invite the like-minded to join us for a cup of tea (and often cake) from 2 to 4 pm, when you can bring your current project(s). Contact: Pauline Latham 07871 106075



*Rev. Sharon
Grenham-Thompson.
Aka 'The Glam Vicar'*



*Your invitation to be
In Stitches*

Music – Derrick Matthews

The Church Choir introduce worship on most Sunday mornings with a sung introit, they then provide a strong support to the hymn singing. The choir is joined by the Music Group and Youth Choir on other occasions such as the Christmas Carol Service, Easter and Harvest.

The Church Organists prepare and play suitable music for all services. Beforehand, it aims to assist quiet meditation by the congregation as they prepare their minds for worship. There are also reflective voluntaries during the offertory and after the blessing before congregation departure.

The Circuit Choir, on two occasions each year, join with additional singers from the Church, the Circuit and Tring Parish Church. They form the 'Circuit Choir' to present an act of worship for choir and congregation under the baton of Cliff Brown and leadership of the Rev Helen Kirk. The first occasion is usually on Passion Sunday. In 2017 it presented 'Olivet to Calvary', repeating the service at Tring on Palm Sunday. The second occasion is the Circuit annual 'Songs of Praise', a service of hymn singing using a different theme each year. For 2017 the theme was 'Called by Christ to be Disciples' to pay tribute to the service of Revs Byron, Watts and Gorringe, also retiring local preacher, Desmond Ffoulkes. Each of them contributed with a few words and choice of hymns. Plans for both circuit services in 2018 are now well under way.

The Organ Concert, a major event taking place each May, is now in its 32nd year. Highly skilled organists present and perform a virtuoso recital to a large appreciative audience. This year our recitalist was Piers Maxim of Malvern Priory and was of particular local interest as Piers was for many years director of Aylesbury Festival Choir and continues as their President. Piers



The Circuit Choir leading worship



Piers Maxim at the 32nd annual organ concert

introduced and played an enjoyable programme of English and French music. Top rank recitalists have already been booked for 2018 & 2019.

May I express my thanks to all the singers participating in these activities. Others who would like to join in future years will be most welcome. I am also grateful to Roger Kirk for his rehearsal assistance, also my fellow organists Kathy Ffoulkes, William Parker and David Brooker for their considerable work in preparation and playing.

Music Group – Andrew Kirk

Every second Sunday in the month, the Music Group of musicians and singers have led the singing in our morning worship.

Currently we have clarinet, saxophone, keyboard, guitars and drums. New instruments and new voices are always welcome.



The Music Group leading worship

Prayer Group – Ruby Darku

Whilst Heather Murray, who originally led the group, moved to the coast during the year, the group still meets every second Tuesday in the month and new members are always welcome. To increase the opportunity for users of our community centre as well as church members to have somewhere for quiet prayer and reflection, the minister's vestry has now been redecorated and simply furnished to enable this. Any prayer requests for the group can be passed on via the church office.



The Minister's vestry is available for personal prayer and reflection by church and community centre users

SOS – Lynn Bernstone

SOS is an informal fellowship group that meets around once a month, usually in someone's home. Anyone is welcome to come along. Just contact the hosts to let them know you are coming.

As well as serving our well-established Easter Sunday breakfast, our programme has included a Roman evening, a curry house visit, a barbeque, a posh picnic and a Jamaican evening.

Tuesday Afternoon Fellowship – Pearl Riley

Catering for the retired end of the congregation, we meet fortnightly with a programme of visiting speakers. This year's very enjoyable meetings have included slides on the Orkneys by the Bucknells, the Charles Pope Ladies' Choir, devotionals, knowledgeable and often humorous talks on the Bible and 'Tax Care & Toy Boys' – a very interesting talk from a solicitor that was very relevant to our age group! Heather Murray, one of eight members this year who have either moved away or for various other reasons can no longer come and who we miss, gave a first-hand account of becoming a UK citizen. We also visited the Spring Festival at Chalfont Methodist Church and enjoyed two lunches in our church hall.



*The Charles Pope Ladies' Choir
Image: The Bucks. Herald*

5. SUPPORTED CHARITIES

Action for Children – Pauline Noble

From before they are born until they are into their twenties, this Methodist-supported charity helps disadvantaged children across the UK. Help is through intervening early to stop neglect and abuse, through fostering and adoption. Help is by making lives better for children with disabilities, and by striving to influence policy and advocacy for change. This year we have so far raised just over £2,186. Besides two church collections our small support group have organised a stall on Aylesbury Market and a Cake Stall in the Church hall as well as an annual Quiz.

Home collecting boxes are an extremely valuable part of this income bringing in around £563 this year. In addition to the amount raised so far, we have received valuable support from the Women's Fellowship and received several private donations.

Still to come this year are our Christmas stall in Friars Square and our annual Gift and Toy Service. Here we see the generosity of our congregation in bringing presents or money gifts which we take to our local Family Centre for wrapping and distribution to those who would otherwise have little at Christmas. Money gifts last year were turned into a couple of specialist play items needed by Action for Children's local centre for children with special needs.

The Head of Faith Partnerships at Action for Children has written: "Throughout 2017, your prayers and selfless giving have enabled us to be there for over 370,000 children, young people and families. Staff who attended your Action for Children Sunday services were touched by your warmth and kindness. Thank you ever so much."



Action for Children's Madeleine Clarke spoke at our morning service

Cards For Good Causes – Cliff Darlington

The card shop for the Cards For Good Causes group of charities had another successful year in 2016. The total sum raised was £16,600, a slight increase on last year. I very much appreciate the help from members of the church who joined the volunteers from the charities to work in the shop. Also, a big thank you to the team of managers. It would have been an impossible task without their help. They were Bob Bucknell, Steve Marks, John Misikin, Geoff Nicholson, Arthur Sara and Peter Watkins. Finally, a very big thank you for being able to use the church and to all who made purchases in the shop.



£16,600 raised in last year's shop in church

Karibuni Children – Joy Murphy

This has been a very mixed year, both in Kenya and here at home. In February the biennial work party set off minus one worker, but did sterling work, both at Embakasi Academy and at Wesley Empowerment Centre, Njoro. Included in the party were our own Helen Kirk and Paul Ingram who led the two groups very effectively. It was quite a lesson to realise they managed so well without me! Two trustees also visited in February for their normal meetings with the project management committee meetings.

In September I fulfilled one of my aims of recovery and went to Kenya, visiting every project and saw the work the group had accomplished in February. However, you will have read about the political unrest in Kenya, surrounding the election. This all has an effect on the most vulnerable, including our children, their feeding and education. Amazingly we have heard that the final Primary exams have gone well and our children have achieved good marks, meaning more will be eligible for secondary school. This is yet to be confirmed.

Costs generally, but especially of food following the drought in East Africa, have increased dramatically, and during our budget setting meeting last week we agreed a record budget for 2018, reflecting these issues and increasing numbers of young people entering tertiary education..

At home we have been struggling to meet our many commitments using volunteers only, and some trustees, notably John Cotton, are feeling the strain. Therefore, we have taken the step - a huge one for us - of advertising a paid part-time post for a skilled person to take responsibility in the fund-raising office.



Rev. Helen Kirk with some Karibuni friends who go to school in the slums of Kibra, Kenya.



More of Helen's friends

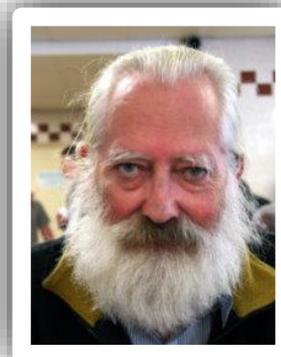
Link to Hope – Margaret Miskin

43,928 boxes full of gifts and love were sent out to Romania, Moldova, Bulgaria and the Ukraine as part of the Link to Hope shoebox appeal. My garage had 149 boxes stacked in it with donations from our local area which included 26 from AMC and 11 from Boys' Brigade. It was another successful year. Many thanks to all who contributed one way or another.

Whitechapel Mission – Peter Watkins

2017 has been another year of supporting the Mission and it has shown how generous the folk at AMC are. This year we organised an extra collection in January having been made aware at the annual thanksgiving service that the Mission would struggle over the winter because of a drastic fall in giving across London. We gave the Aylesbury congregation an opportunity to show their generosity and we were not disappointed. The response in January was overwhelming and we only just managed to pack it all into the car and deliver to London.

The next event was the Easter Sunday breakfast which raised £337 followed in October by the annual Harvest giving where again folk were very generous. Following the collection by Tony Miller a letter of thanks was sent to AMC and in the last paragraph Tony says “Please convey our gratitude to everyone who contributed. May it please them to know that together we really are making a difference to those who are homeless and disadvantaged.”



*Whitechapel –
supporting
London's
homeless*

6. OUR ORGANISATION

Aylesbury Methodist Church & Centre is the largest of the 18 churches in the Vale of Aylesbury Methodist Circuit and the 29 Circuits in the Northampton District. Representatives from the 36 Methodist Districts meet at an annual Conference, along with some who have been elected by the Conference and some ex officio members and representatives of the Youth Assembly. There is a mixture of lay people, ordained presbyters and deacons. The Conference is the body that agrees policy that is set out in The Constitutional Practice & Discipline of the Methodist Church(CPD).

The local decision-making bodies are the church councils, whose members are also their church's trustees. Last year, members of the church council were:

Superintendent Minister: Rev. Helen Kirk; **Team Ministers:** Rev. Irena Byron, Rev. Keith Edwards, Arthur Sara; **Secretary:** Janice Matthews; **Church Stewards:** Elaine Hope, Melanie Dean, Trevor Nord, Gill Marks, Tenby Nuyemba, Doreen Mukombo, Beauty Gurupira, Hannah Rogers, Philip Kolade, Mathilda Phiri; **Church Treasurer:** Roger Kirk; **Leadership Team:** Rev. Helen Kirk, Jennie Torpey, Kevin Hardern, Margaret Miskin, Michele Challenger, Brian Latham, Vic Kemp, Trevor Nord, Melanie Dean, Peter Green, Tim Olufosoye; **Circuit steward:** Keith Wallace; **Representatives appointed by the annual General Church Meeting:** Brian Taylor, John Miskin, Marilyn Storer, Frances Aylen, Pat Starr, Babs Trend, David Neville, Pauline Latham.

Leadership Team – Peter Green

In Aylesbury, the Leadership Team is elected by, reports to and acts as the executive arm of, the Church Council. During the last year, the main priority of the Church Council and Leadership Team has been in following up on the priorities agreed from the Healthy Churches review in 2015-16. These were children and young people, the coffee bar and welcoming and are all covered elsewhere in this report.

Church Stewards – Trevor Nord

During the year the team has seen some changes, with Melanie Dean and Elaine Hope coming to the end of their time of service as Church Stewards having served for over 4 years each. Hannah Rogers, Phillip Kolade and Mathilda Phiri have all joined the team. Trevor Nord will be handing over the reins as senior steward; the role will be split between Doreen Mukombo and Beauty Gurupira for the year starting 1st October 2017. The full team now consists of, Gill Marks, Trevor Nord, Temby Nyemba, Beauty Gurupira, Doreen Mukombo, Hannah Rogers, Phillip Kolade and Mathilda Phiri.

Thanks to a kind gift the Church now has new pew Bibles with a fantastic new lectern bible. After unanimous approval, the new Bibles are the New International Version. Copies of the Good News translation are still available. Some of the better condition "old" Good News Bibles have been distributed to other organisations.

Pastoral – Pauline Noble

For some time, we have been aware of problems in our pastoral approach and the urgent need to encourage new people to join our care system. Over the years, this Church has been very blessed with running a system which looks after its members and adherents, with a team of excellent Pastoral Leaders and Visitors.

However, times have changed. We are fortunate in having a large, diverse congregation, but this can lead to problems as more people, for many reasons, have less time to commit themselves to being Pastoral Visitors. Our call is still to visit the elderly and those who are no longer able to attend church services for many reasons, but there are many who do not need or want a visit. Often what is needed is just a friendly face in church who will look out for certain people, stop for a quick chat, notice when someone on their list is away for a while and is someone that can be contacted if needed. Others may just need an occasional telephone call. So we really a system where there are a team of people who keep in touch with everyone.

After much discussion we came to the decision that the overall title for our new system should be the 'In Touch' Team. This team will be headed by our Minister. Pauline Noble will be the co-ordinator with Janice Matthews continuing to take control of the Church data base. Team Leaders will continue to be Sheilah Carlyle, Ann Prendergast, Pearl Riley, and Vi Swindlehurst, and all who are currently Pastoral Visitors will become a Church Contact Person.

This plan has been supported and approved by the Leadership Team and the Church Council, and we have held a service of Re-affirmation and Recognition for all the team.

For many people there will be no change, the elderly and those unable to attend church will still have a regular visitor. Organisations such as the Choir, SOS, Fellowship etc. will continue to keep contact within their groups, and we have recently welcomed a new group the 'Zimbabwean Fellowship' with Eve Gazana as their Leader and contact person.

We hope that by adjusting the system a little a few people will come forward to join the 'In Touch' team as a Contact Person. This will mean they have a small group of people they are responsible for keeping in touch with.



Knitted angels, distributed last Christmas as a symbol of care

Commentary on the Accounts - 2016/2017

Overall situation: The general fund shows a large deficit of £24,311 for the year, caused largely by the expected cost of the church double glazing, new flooring and the major work done on the organ which together came to £16,708. The balance of the general fund is thus reduced from £52,190 to £27,879 at 31st August 2017. This is some £17,000 short of our reserve policy target defined as 33% of normal gross expenditure. An appeal for increased giving in April 2017 resulted in about a third of members increasing their giving. This increased giving by £3,400 plus Gift Aid of £700, a total of £4,100.

Income: Collection and income tax refund income together are similar to budget but letting charges are less than budget and also last year's actual. Donation income includes £2,000 towards our new bibles, the cost of which is included under 'Church Activities' below. I am very grateful to those people who have increased their giving during the year both as a result of my appeal but particularly to those who increase their giving regularly without being asked. Total income is £133,645, £3,000 less than last year and £5,000 less than budget.

Expenditure: Property - Equipment maintenance is higher than last year due to a new lift cable (£1,042) and the rerouting of central heating pipework to the Church (£2,781). Improvements include the cost of the double glazing (£5,862) and new flooring to the vestry, room 6 and the upstairs kitchen (£2,100). Under the heading of organ and pianos is included £8,745 for the major work done on the organ.

Other expenditure: The Administration heading includes over £900 for repairs to the computer system. The Church Activities heading includes the £1,590 for the new bibles. Total expenditure, at £157,640 is £20,000 more than budget and £27,000 more than last year's expenditure.

Reserves Policy: This recommends we maintain a balance equivalent to 33% of our expenditure. This was £157,000 but deducting exceptional items of about £20,000 a more realistic figure would be £137,000 so our balances should be about £45,000. In fact our balance is £27,800, a shortfall of £17,000 which we need to recover over the next few years.

Restricted Funds: A new fund is now shown for the Welcome Area and shows specific fund-raising income and payments of architect's fees. The fund shows a deficit of £1,934 as at 31st August 2017.

The benevolent fund shows a healthy balance of £1,756, possibly more than adequate for current usage.

AYLESBURY METHODIST CHURCH & CENTRE				
Detailed Accruals-based Accounts for the year ended 31st August 2017				
General (Unrestricted) Funds Income and Expenditure Account				
<i>Note: These are management-style accounts prepared on an informal basis, incorporating adjustments for accruals, etc at the beginning and end of the financial year. They are not the same as the formal Standard Form of Accounts, prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis, which are submitted to the Vale of Aylesbury Methodist Circuit.</i>				
Actual 2015/16	General Fund	Budget 2016/17	Actual 2016/17	
£		£	£	
	Income			
70,291	Collection (note 2)	69,000	66,028.63	
12,547	Income Tax refund	11,500	13,574.91	
45,754	Lettings	50,000	42,299.57	
4,866	Fund raising (note 3)	5,000	6,256.78	
804	Donations and legacies	1,000	2,717.49	
1,106	Weddings and funerals	700	1,195.00	
125	Bank interest	100	65.92	
1,364	Coffee Bar profits	1,300	1,350.60	
21	Other income	100	156.02	
136,878		138,700	133,644.92	
	Expenditure			
	MINISTRY			
78,720	Circuit contribution	83,200	83,187.00	
3,700	Donations and subscriptions (note 4)	3,700	3,800.00	
82,420		86,900	86,987.00	
	PROPERTY			
9,494	Heat, light, water and refuse	9,100	10,524.80	
9,205	Cleaner's wages and supplies	8,500	9,259.94	
764	Building maintenance (note 5)	2,000	1,282.27	
4,649	Equipment maintenance	7,000	6,538.67	
996	Improvements (note 5)	2,000	7,962.91	
360	Organ and pianos	500	9,140.00	
3,034	Insurance	3,100	2,884.12	
28,502		32,200	47,592.71	
	OTHER			
5,154	Administration	4,000	5,996.00	
7,699	Administrator - wages	8,000	7,989.95	
3,505	Telephones	3,000	4,290.63	
1,816	Church Activities	2,000	3,586.19	
593	Publicity	1,000	464.75	
372	Other	1,000	703.14	
19,139		19,000	23,030.66	
130,061	Total expenditure	138,100	157,610.37	
6,817	Net (expenditure) / income	600	(23,965.45)	
(236)	Net transfers between funds		(345.61)	
6,581	Net (expenditure) / income after transfers		(24,311.06)	
45,609	Balance brought forward 1/9/2016		52,190.25	
52,190	Balance carried forward 31/8/2017		27,879.19	

AYLESBURY METHODIST CHURCH & CENTRE**Detailed Accruals-based Accounts for the year ended 31st August 2017****Balance Sheet as at 31st August 2017**

Note: These are management-style accounts prepared on an informal basis, incorporating adjustments for accruals, etc at the beginning and end of the financial year. They are not the same as the formal Standard Form of Accounts, prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis, which are submitted to the Vale of Aylesbury Methodist Circuit.

Funds balances at 31st August 2017	General fund	Restricted funds			Total
		Welcome area	Church orgs.	Benevolent	
	£	£	£	£	£
Per Income & Expenditure summaries	27,879.19	(1,934.00)	7,512.06	1,756.19	35,213.44
Capitalised expenditure	903,730.00				903,730.00
Endowment funds held by The Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes	3,487.10		209.77		3,696.87
Total funds	935,096.29	(1,934.00)	7,721.83	1,756.19	942,640.31
Represented by:					
Assets:					
Fixed tangible assets					
Community centre improvements	903,730.00				903,730.00
Current assets					
Bank balances					
HSBC current	(549.35)				(549.35)
HSBC deposit	2,237.97				2,237.97
Metro current	6,219.89				6,219.89
Central Finance Board	23,508.30	(1,934.00)	167.77	1,756.19	23,498.26
Imprest account	100.00				100.00
Held by church organisations			7,342.64		7,342.64
Endowment funds accounts*					-
Stranks & Staley's bequests	3,487.10				3,487.10
Mead bequest (J Team and choir)			209.77		209.77
Debtors (see note 6)	11,724.00		1.65		11,725.65
Total current assets	46,727.91	(1,934.00)	7,721.83	1,756.19	54,271.93
Current liabilities					
Lettings deposits	1,100.00				1,100.00
Creditors (note 7)	14,261.62				14,261.62
Total liabilities	15,361.62				15,361.62
Net current assets (current assets less liabilities)	31,366.29	(1,934.00)	7,721.83	1,756.19	38,910.31
Net assets (all assets less liabilities)	935,096.29	(1,934.00)	7,721.83	1,756.19	942,640.31
*Held by Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes					

AYLESBURY METHODIST CHURCH & CENTRE
Detailed Accruals-based Accounts for the year ended 31st August 2017
Restricted Funds Income and Expenditure Account

Note: These are management-style accounts prepared on an informal basis, incorporating adjustments for accruals, etc at the beginning and end of the financial year. They are not the same as the formal Standard Form of Accounts, prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis, which are submitted to the Vale of Aylesbury Methodist Circuit.

		Welcome Area Fund	Benevolent Fund	Church Organisations *	Total
		£	£	£	£
Income					
	Tax recovered	-			-
	Fund raising	1,166.00			1,166.00
	Other income		342.88	7,313.00	7,655.88
Total income		1,166.00	342.88	7,313.00	8,821.88
Payments					
	Other expenses	3,100.00	22.75	9,506.58	12,629.33
Total expenditure		3,100.00	22.75	9,506.58	12,629.33
Net income / (expenditure)		(1,934.00)	320.13	(2,193.58)	(3,807.45)
Transfers between funds		-		371.38	371.38
Net income / (expend.) after transf		(1,934.00)	320.13	(1,822.20)	(3,436.07)
Balances brought forward 1/9/2016		-	1,436.06	9,334.26	10,770.32
Net income / (expenditure)		(1,934.00)	320.13	(1,822.20)	(3,436.07)
Balances carried forward 31/8/2017		(1,934.00)	1,756.19	7,512.06	7,334.25
*Excluding Endowment Mead Bequest Fund, which is shown below.					
ie Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes					
		Mead Bequest	Stranks & Staley's Bequests		Totals
		£	£		£
		Restricted	Unrestricted		
Balances brought forward 1/9/2016		209.67	3,525.71		3,735.38
Income		1.37	25.38		26.75
Paid to General Fund		0.11	(24.39)		(24.28)
Paid to J Team and Choir		(1.38)	-		(1.38)
Change in Value of investments		-	(39.60)		(39.60)
Balances carried forward 31/8/2017		209.77	3,487.10		3,696.87

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EDITOR: Peter Green | **ACCOUNTS:** Roger Kirk | **PRODUCTION:** Jennie Torpey | Dec.2017

Notes to the Accounts

1. The accounts are prepared on the accruals basis. This means that income and expenditure is shown in the year to which it relates and the cost of sizeable tangible assets with a life greater than one year will be capitalised and charged to revenue over a suitable period of years. No comprehensive valuation of the church buildings and its contents is shown in the balance sheet as this is considered irrelevant but the recent major improvements to the rear premises were capitalised. The buildings are insured for £2,717,784, the organ for £52,561 and other contents £196,648.
2. The actual of £66,028 for collection income is made up of envelopes £23,875, bank standing orders and annual payments £33,541 and cash £8,612.
3. A separate fund has been created for the Welcome Area project and transactions for that can be seen on the Restricted Funds page. The fund-raising income shown in the general fund goes towards minor improvements, major repairs or general expenditure. The cost of minor building improvements is separately shown under expenditure.
4. Donations and subscriptions includes £1,700 paid to four connexional funds, £1,000 to Methodist Missions, £1,000 to the Aylesbury Town Centre Chaplaincy and £100 for leaving presentations for Ministers. In addition, retiring collections, Church Organisations, the Missions Committee and Sunday coffee bars resulted in some £7,000-£8,000 being given to Missions and other charities.
5. The actual of £7,962 for improvements includes £5,862 for double glazing in the Church and £2,100 for new flooring in the vestry, room 6 and the upstairs kitchen.

6. Debtors include:	£
Tax refund re April to August 2017	4442
Letting fees	6988
Funeral fees	60
AVDC for letting related charges	<u>234</u>
	<u>11724</u>
7. Creditors include:	
Utilities	491
Telephones	394
Cleaning and admin supplies	582
Organ repair	5745
Missions	60
Stone chapel (tax refund)	<u>458</u>
	<u>7730</u>
Money received in advance	
Donation and Gift Aid for Lay Worker	6250
Wedding fees	<u>280</u>
	<u>6530</u>
Total creditors and receipts in advance	<u>14260</u>