# **Highbury Annual Reports for 2019**

# The Charitable Objects for 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, and it shall henceforth be known as. and referred to as, the **APPROVED GOVERNING DOCUMENT.** 

# **Report of the Deacons (the Managing Trustees)**

## Our history and governance

Highbury Congregational Church began in 1827 and is an independent Church that is part of the Congregational Federation. Whilst we work closely with other Congregational Churches, all we do is decided and funded by our own Church Members. We do not have any 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. We are part of the Congregational Federation and are registered as a charity 1159085. We have adopted the Congregational Federation's Declaration of Trust as our Governing Document together with our own Working Practices Document (April 2015).

# 2019 The appointment of a Minister

The pastoral search group interviewed candidates, each of whom preached to the congregation. A recommendation was made to the Church Meeting and, on the 10 February 2019, a call was extended to and accepted by Revd. Dr. Jason C. Boyd, minister of Witney Congregational Church. It was agreed that Jason would commence his ministry on 1 September 2019, to be inducted on 21 September, preaching his first services on the 22 September. The Church has continued under the management of the Diaconate: Darryl Mills (retired September 2019), Kate Blazey, Janet Partington, Nephesha Mary Michael and Susan Cole. Ted Horsfield was co-opted by the diaconate to assist in the process of ministerial appointment and stood down from this role in September 2019 after the final meeting of the ministry vacancy group with the diaconate. The Diaconate is served by the following office bearers: Jason C. Boyd, Minister; the secretary, Iain MacLeod; and the treasurer, Roger Gregory. The Ministry Leadership Team has consisted of Andrea Lacey, Children and Family's Work leader, Mary Buchanan as Youth Leader, Lorraine Gasside, Louise Middleton and Rachel Jacques as Pastoral Care Leaders, Jean Gregory as Mission and Outreach Leader, Judi Marsh (who resigned November 2019) and Karen Waldock as Discipleship Leaders, and Maureen Williams as Worship Leader.

#### **Our Mission**

Our Mission is consonant with our Charitable Objects (as above): Highbury Congregational Church is a community connecting in friendship, faith, and mission with Christ at the centre and open to all.

## **Our Vision and Aims for 2020**

- Review and consolidate governance to ensure best practice and that our Working Practices Document is reviewed in accordance with the Model Trust Deed.
- To appoint new deacons with appropriate skill sets. A skills audit will be undertaken.
- The diaconate will advertise, interview and appoint a new ministry team for Mission and Outreach and to enhance the ministry team for Discipleship.
- To address urgent maintenance of the Church Hall roof. A survey will be commissioned, a course of action agreed, and quotations together with a strategy for funding will be put in place. This is to ensure that we are able to meet our Charitable Objects for continuing to Advance the Christian Faith and provide our building assets as a benefit to the congregation and wider community.
- The diaconate and ministry leaders will continue to prayerfully explore with the Church Meeting engagement with *Holy Habits*, a holistic approach to enhance the life of the congregation (e.g. discipleship, Bible study, prayer, giving, hospitality etc.)

Minister's Report (September 2019 - December 2019)

This is my first report to the Annual General Meeting. It covers the first four months of ministry at Highbury Congregational Church. I express my heartfelt thanks for the warmth and generosity of your welcome both to me and to my family.

In the weeks leading up to the induction (21.09.2019) I participated in a variety of meetings and events to get a feel for what Highbury Church is like. Since the induction I have been engaged in the following ways:

- Preaching and leading worship
  - o Ordinary worship services both morning and evening
  - Sunday special
  - Explore
  - Parade Service
  - Messy Church
  - Christmas services including Lessons and Carols by candlelight, Nativity service, Christmas Eve Vigil, and Christmas Day service.
  - Christmas Day Service for BBC Radio Gloucestershire recorded on the 6
     December and broadcast on Christmas Day, 7:30 am.
- HyTec involvement and the change of evening service time to 6pm to enable me to be involved. HyTec is flourishing!
- Parent and toddler group on Tuesdays.
- Thursday Community Café.
- Monthly Lunch Club (attend occasionally).
- Visits to the various Scout and Guide groups.
- Pastoral work including a funeral.
- Dropping in on the many organisations that meet on the premises.
- Participation in Deacons' and Ministry Leaders' Meetings; Messy Church and Junior Church Planning Meetings; Finance Committee; written contribution to the Maintenance Committee; musician's meeting; flower committee; HySpeed.
- 1 meeting with Iain MacLeod as Church Secretary; 2 meetings with Nephesha Michael as line manager.
- Visit to Oakwood Primary School to see Open the Book in action.
- First steps in getting the website renewed.
- Preparing and distributing Harvest invitations, Christmas Cards etc.
- Making links with St. John's Primary and Pittville School. I attended the St. John's nativity plays and offered the welcome. I participated in the Pittville School Christmas Service.

The most significant change in practice is to have the Diaconate and Ministry meet together with agenda alternating between the two groups.

HySpirit will be relocated to the organ side of the church with the vision of creating a prayer space/chapel in the vacated space. There will be a re-siting of the computer with the sound desk to enable better communication.

In 2020, I would like the Church Meeting to consider a different way of 'doing' Church Meeting. I would like Church Meetings to happen more frequently, on Sunday after worship, over food and around tables. I would like to encourage wider participation and

deepening of fellowship. We will begin by having meals together and see how we develop.

I will work through *Holy Habits* with the Ministry Leaders and Deacons about how to engage with deepening our discipleship. It is becoming clear that this will take some months to prepare and, in view of consolidating our governance, we may not implement *Holy Habits* until 2021. As a first step, we have agreed that prayer is the place to begin and we have a day devoted to prayer planned for 29 February 2020. On other fronts...

- I have had a meeting with Patrick, Parish Priest from St. Luke's. He has been welcoming and introduced me to St. John's school with the aim of participating in the delivery of RE assemblies.
- As Chair of the South West Midland Area, CF, I have been involved in leading the work of the Area through Steering Group, an Executive Meeting held at Highbury and supporting the work of reopening the church at Ruscombe.
- Getting a Youth Weekend happening with Area Worker, Joy Howells and our youth and children's team at Highbury on 15 & 16 February 2020.
- I delivered a paper at a Conference in Manchester at Luther King House.
- I continue to teach for the CF Congregational Institute of Practical Theology.
- I teach for the Nazarene Theological College for the modules: *Models of Theological Reflection, Preaching.* Also, I am a co-supervisor for a PhD researcher.
- I will be arranging for a silent retreat in 2020. I hope this will be an 8-day retreat and an opportunity for renewal and refreshment in my faith so that I am nourished to lead you.

Once again, thank you for your support in these early days. I would ask you to pray with me for the renewal of the Spirit in our lives so that we can share the Good News of Jesus. Good News is not meant to be kept a secret. Let's invite our friends and neighbours to join in discovering the love of God in Jesus Christ.

Yours

# **Secretary's Report**

The particular focus of 2019 was seeking God's will and guidance for the appointment of our new minister and refurbishing the manse in readiness. We followed due process as laid out in the guidelines of the Congregational Federation. On the 10th February a special Church Meeting was held following an act of worship and the Deacons' recommendation of extending an invitation to Rev Dr Jason Boyd to be our minister was

passed unanimously. He accepted the call and was inducted on 21st September having joined us on 1st. He and his wife Viviane were welcomed into membership on 8th September. The whole Boyd family have already become a welcome part of the church life.

The manse refurbishment incurred the significant costs which can been seen in detail in the Treasurers report. Many members across the whole age range helped with the work as far as they were able. We are particularly indebted to Darryl Mills for all his hard work and deep commitment to the project.

Highbury's commitment to being a significant part of the community continues to grow. Increased room booking helps with our income but also those groups who use our premises have often said how much they appreciate the warmth of the welcome they receive. Some have been drawn to attend other Highbury events as a result. The Community Café on Thursday mornings and the monthly lunches have both enjoyed significantly increased attendance. Not all who come to these are church members nor do they necessarily attend services. Refresh services on occasional Saturday evenings and Board Games afternoons give us the opportunity of being available to a wide range of people - the latter offering a specific welcome to members of the LBGBT+ community and everyone else who wants to be part of an inclusive afternoon of sociability.

e have been blessed and supported by the wide variety of people who have led services during 2019. They have given us teaching and encouragement and we are grateful to them and to Maureen Williams for her planning and organisation.

The Pastoral Care team have continued to give an extraordinarily high level of support to all members and friends of Highbury. Their work is at the very heart of heart of how we seek to be a Christian community at Highbury Church. Their care demonstrates that Highbury Church's concern and commitment is not confined to those who are able to be at Sunday services. We are especially grateful to Lorraine Gasside who heads the team. The prayer chain which she writes each week is a support and comfort to many.

As we look ahead we anticipate reviewing how Highbury Church functions and will be seeking God's guidance on how we move towards adopting Holy Habits as our way of being Church in our community. Financially, we are facing challenges especially since the church roof will need significant costly repair.

In all we do we will continue "in friendship, faith and mission with Christ at the centre and open to all".

- Iain MacLeod

Treasurer's Report
Accounts to Year ended 31st December 2019

#### **Background/Overview to year**

Welcome to another year of change!

This has been another year of change, challenges and opportunities.

We finished the refurbishment of the Manse ready for a new minister to start on  $1^{\rm st}$  September.

The financial year produced a deficiency of £5,000, largely from spending more on the Manse in 2019, than we saved on the interregnum minister's salary for the first 8 months of the year.

There were many other financial changes in the year, and they included;

- Main core income of standing orders and envelopes and loose change improved in the latter part of the year to be in line with the year 2018
- Gift Day income was improved on 2018
- Grants received included monies from Cleeve Hill Charities to help fund the Manse refurbishment
- Room Hire receipts were again higher than last year
- Extra pulpit supplies and visiting minister travelling costs reflecting the 8-month interregnum
- Extra costs in employing a part-time Administrator for the whole year to pick up the shortfall in the interregnum and beyond
- New in-house photocopying/printing facility saved a considerable amount of money
- Church utility costs were much higher reflecting increases of 20% in the gas and 35% in the electricity supplies
- We funded Sharon Wallington in her further Cong Fed training

# Financial Overview — General Day to Day Fund Variances from the year 2018 included;

Envelopes and loose change were less, reflecting the time of the interregnum, but the standing orders increased at the end of the year and compensated for the shortfall in the envelopes and loose change reductions.

Gift Day was higher than last year and this helps fund our Children's Worker salary, but Harvest receipts were less.

Room Hire continues to make a very valuable contribution to the church's finances and is higher than last year.

We received £500 compensation from Standard Life in recognition of their poor performing investments that we held until October 2018.

Preaching costs were higher in the interregnum and this included travelling costs where we needed to invite ministers from further afield to ensure a variety of preaching.

The new in-house printing facility is saving money, but the downside is that the editor has to be in attendance for several hours to oversee the magazine printing – she has got through several books!

As reported above, the church utility costs are considerably higher, but we are on a 3year fixed year contract.

Other income and expenditure, apart from the changes in the Ministry and Manse and Administrator, are in line with the previous year.

Total all Funds; General, Fabric and Gift &Legacy show a reduction of £5,123 in the year largely reflecting maintenance expenditure on the Manse greater than savings on minister's salary during the interregnum. Individual Funds income & expenditure is explained in the main financial report.

## **Giving to Others**

Giving to others in the year amounted to £8,339, which included £1,600 mission contributions to the Congregational Federation, with all other monies given by church members using the church as a posting box; CWM boxes and birthday, our usual Harvest appeal to Embrace the Middle East, Christmas appeal to CHIKS, and a variety of monthly communion offerings.

This giving is 9% of our total income.

#### Forecast for 2020

We have provided a forecast for the year 2020. This is based on the actuals for 2019 with a full year ministry, inflation and allowance for exceptional income/expense. It has allowed for routine maintenance expenditure on the Church and Manse.

The result is a deficiency in the order of £3,000/£4,000.

This will be a big challenge for the year ahead as it does not allow for new ministry initiatives like "Holy Habits" or for exceptional Church maintenance.

Jason is due to launch a "Giving for Growth" initiative in the autumn in anticipation of the need to sustain/grow the church.

Is now the time to review the time talents and money that we commit to the church?

- Roger Gregory

## **Maintenance**

A number of people helped with the Manse refurbishment during the summer and we met our deadline, but only just!

The autumn rains have exposed leaks in the flat roof over the church hall which now urgently need fixing. The hall floor renovation was postponed last year but we hope to complete it in 2020.

The church premises are well used throughout the week and there is always something needing attention. If you would like to help, please let me know.

# **Safeguarding**

I'm glad to be able to report that by the time you read this Mary Buchanan and Andrea Lacey will have completed their safeguarding training course. This means that we are now more of Safeguarding team.

The policy\* has been re-written and I ask you all to read it before the Church AGM when we will be asking you to accept and adhere to it. If you have any questions or concerns please ask any of us at any time.

- Nephesha Mary Michael

\*Copy of revised policy at end of reports.

# Worship

When I look back over the time of the interregnum, I can hardly believe the number of people who were so willing to take our services, and not just from our own Congregational family but from United Reformed, Baptist, Methodist and Anglican traditions also. They say the time of the interregnum can be when a Church pulls together and grows in faith and I really believe that was the case at Highbury. So, thank you to all those ministers and lay people alike who kept the light burning at Highbury, and thank you to all our congregation who so loyally supported them over that fourteen months.

On September 21st 2019 our new minister Revd. Dr. Jason C. Boyd was inducted to the ministry of our church here in Cheltenham. It was a unanimous decision by the Church Meeting and very much a feeling that God's hand was on that decision. It was with great joy and delight that we welcomed Jason, his wife Viviane, and their children Naomi, Sonya, and Jeremy into our Church family from Witney.

We continue with our morning family service at 10.30am but it was decided to move the evening service to 6pm, mainly so that our minister was free to join the young people who meet at 7.00pm for their own act of worship and discussion. For those of our congregation who have not ventured out in an evening, may I commend to you the evening service which is very similar to the morning.

On occasional Saturday evenings at 7pm, an alternative service has been planned by the younger members of our Church called 'Refresh' to which all are warmly invited. On Sunday, January 26th we welcomed the President of the Congregational Federation, Revd. Dr Janet Wootton, who took both our services on that day. She is a good friend to Highbury, having preached also during the interregnum. On Saturday May 9<sup>th</sup>, we hope to fill a coach and go to the National Assembly in Solihull. Do join us for this day of celebration, meeting old friends and making new acquaintances, and supporting the Congregational Federation to which we all belong.

So now we are in God's hands with Jason leading us. There are exciting times planned for our Church community. We all need to get to know one another better. Maybe those who only ever come to a morning service could come to an evening service occasionally and vice versa. Hopefully members and friends in the Congregation will have filled in the form in Highbury News indicating the way in which they are prepared to help in the daily running of our Church.

Highbury has always been acknowledged as a very friendly Church, and looking back over the years it has been full of dedicated people who have lived their life for Christ. In this new era and with our new minister may the Spirit of the Living God fall afresh on all of us so that we may all shine in the Light of Christ.

- Maureen Williams

#### **Church Flowers**

During 2019 the team has marked the events of church life, the sadnesses and joys, along with the church calendar.

In the autumn, Jenny reached the decision to retire from organising the flower rota. With Jason and Roger's guidance, it was time to review and simplify the system. The system is now in place, the details were in connect@highbury for several weeks and are now posted in the porch. I would like to thank Jenny for her years of hard work and commitment.

We appreciate your support, as none of us has received formal training and we would welcome more help, even if you only want to arrange flowers in a vase, so please think about it.

- Karen Wilkes

# **Discipleship**

It has been a year of change for all of us since the last AGM, not least for the Discipleship Ministry team. Judi has stepped down from leadership and we miss her greatly. Before she had to stop, she led Explore sessions in January 2019 on prayer focusing on Psalm 46and the hymn 'Be still for the presence of the Lord', and 'Generous Church'. In February we did a Lent Study from Embrace the Middle East entitled 'Transplanted to blossom'. In March Judi did two more with a Lent focus but using C S Lewis resources. And finally, in April we looked at 'The Servant King'.

We also had 'Explore through writing' with Ken Hart, a retired minister. He led Cotswold Scribblers in a workshop looking at sonnets. 'Explore through dance' had two sessions exploring our faith and response through dance using music/songs by Graham Kendrick, Stuart Townend for example, 'Sabbath Prayer' from 'Fiddler on the Roof' and 'You Raise Me Up'.

Since April we have covered a wide variety of subjects in Explore the Word: 'Abundant Life' was the title of the material written by our mission partners in CWM, addressing climate change and poverty; iChurch - a look at 21<sup>st</sup> century look at church; Eat Pray Share - a look at Communion.

In September we started our new timetable for Explore. Sadly, Richard has not been able to take Sing Explore so there have been some gaps. We have had Explore the Word once a month and have covered subjects such as the Holy Spirit, Hearing from God, the Apocrypha and many other subjects. Thanks to Jean who has made some wonderful cakes and to all those who have joined us through the year.

This coming year promises to be just as diverse. In Explore the Word we are looking at 'In the Dust of the Rabbi' a resource about discipleship for the first 3 weeks of February and March. I am now looking to form a team to support the Discipleship Leader with the aim of increasing our skill sets and areas of interest. If you feel led to take on the Discipleship Leadership or join our team please have a word with Jason or myself.

- Karen Waldock

#### Pastoral care

I think it would be fair to say the last year has been a challenging and busy one for us, especially while we had no Minister. I do hope we managed to reach out to all those in need and no-one has felt neglected. It is wonderful to have Jason here now and we are enjoying learning to work together caring for the church family. I remain the first point of contact for pastoral concerns and then escalate as appropriate to the Minister, Rachel, Louise or one of our faithful visitors to whom we offer our sincere thanks. I continue to write the weekly prayer message and serve at Cheltenham General Hospital on the Chaplaincy Team which I see as Pastoral outreach. It is a joy to work with a group from all denominations and you would be surprised how many conversations start on my round by people spotting my Highbury Bag that our young people produced many years ago.

As a Team we held two Dementia-Friendly Services during the year, with the support of Richard Sharpe, and two Pastoral Meetings. The Ministry of Flowers distributed after evening service is still very much appreciated by those who receive them and our thanks go to Betty who bunches them up each week and those who willingly deliver them. Thanks also to Nephesha Mary as our Deacon Mentor.

- Lorraine Gasside

During the past year we are now complying with the GDPR regulations, by all members and adherents completing the form agreeing to Highbury holding their addresses and details to keep in touch with church news. Thank you to all the visitors for making this possible.

Moving onto the visitors lists which I try to keep updated from the details received. If visitors are unable to make contact with people on their lists they are to let me know so that I am able to look into things. Our aim is to be a caring church family. The lists that go out with the magazine I have put into a more friendly document hoping it makes it easier when picking up material for distribution from the church. Thank you to Sue Cole who has been helpful with this process.

First Aid: we do well with few incidents. In November 2019 at the Pastoral Care Meeting I did a refresher training on First Aid and the use of the Church Defibrillator. This is checked monthly together with all the First Aid kits which are available around the various rooms in the church building.

Finally, regarding Pastoral Care to our church building, it is a weekly process to keep everywhere clear of unwanted items left around by various groups that use the premises.

#### - Rachel Jacques

Anyone who is over 85 years of age is visited on or around their birthday with a birthday card from the church. This gives an opportunity for the pastoral care team to make a pre-planned annual visit in addition to the regular visits the member has from their visitor. At present, there are 33 members who have reached this grand age, but unfortunately there are still a few dates of birth that we do not have. Please, if you know of anyone who has reached 85 let us know and we will add them to the list. Some of these older members are no longer able to come to church, but they are not forgotten.

#### - Louise Middleton

Please remember the work of the Pastoral Team in your prayers.

Lorraine Gasside, Rachel Jacques & Louise Middleton

## **Mission & Outreach**

Looking through the diary for 2019 we reached out to our local community and fringe church community especially at Easter, Harvest and Christmas.

We set up Experience Easter Outside for 2 weeks, and encouraged our friends, relatives, neighbours and passers-by to follow the trail around the church which told the Easter story and gave time for reflection on the meaning of Easter. Although I'm not sure how many people participated, I remember having at least 2 interesting

conversations with dog walkers.

Then at Harvest time we specifically celebrated with Embrace the Middle East 'planting' seeds for change with some of the world's poorest people, by finding out about the people needing our financial and prayer support.

At the start of Advent we held a dementia-friendly-church carol service, and then the church became busier than usual during the next 2 weeks with St John's School practising and then performing their nativity play. In the week leading up to Christmas, Pittville School's year 7 came for their carol service – and it was standing room only! During May we supported Christian Aid week's door to door collecting and held a simple soup lunch.

Each week the café has been well attended, and it's been particularly delightful to welcome babies Chloe, Jessica and Emma – and their mums! So now the age range of our 'regulars' is 6 months to over 90! Each month the Wednesday lunch has been popular too, and we are encouraged that people who live nearby and who may be lonely, join us sometimes via the contacts we have with professional carers.

As I now hang up my 'Mission and Outreach hat', I am very grateful to the all church family for their help and support of me in this role.

- Jean Gregory

## **Community Café**

This is open every Thursday from 10.00 until 11.30 a.m. serving fresh coffee, tea and homemade cakes. It is an important part of our community outreach, offering companionship and an opportunity to meet friends from church and the neighbourhood. There is always plenty of lively chat and when Ruth and Hayley bring along their babies the age range can span nine decades!

We miss Walter who always arrived with a smile on his face and a cheery "hello!", looking forward to a slice of sponge cake, preferably with jam and cream! Due to personal circumstances, we have lost several members of the café team, putting extra pressure on those left. If you feel you could help, even if just occasionally, or perhaps bake a cake, please talk to one of us.

Everyone is welcome on a Thursday morning, whether just to pop in or to stay for the whole time. You will receive a warm welcome so don't worry if you have never been before. Come along by yourself or bring a friend. We hope to see you soon!

- Angela Pickles

### Open the Book

The team of storytellers from Highbury goes into Oakwood School each Thursday morning in term time, offering primary school aged children an opportunity to hear the major stories from the Bible. During year one of a three-year programme, there is an overview of the Bible from creation to the ascension, and in years two and three we use themed material from the Bible. Open the Book 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 are delighted that Helen Roberts and Karen Haden joined us in September, Karen just until Christmas, but with a plan to slot in again sometime in the future. We all think that our Thursdays begin well by doing Open the Book together.

- Jean Gregory

## **Wednesday Lunch**

The Wednesday lunch, which is held on the second Wednesday of the month, is valued by all those who attend. We cater for between 20 and 40, with a few more at Christmas - the charge is £5. We (the cooks) are very grateful for the help of the table and chair movers and the washer uppers. Over the last year our friend Janet has joined this part of the team. There is a welcome for everyone, of any age. Just book your place by signing on the list by the car park door.

#### Hy-Speed 2019

Hy-Speed, Highbury's digital Scalextric club, had a very quiet 2019. We had a break from regular meetings and just did a couple of one-off events: the UK slot car festival in May, Cheltenham Cricket Club beer festival in September and the St Johns school Christmas fair and Highbury Christmas Café in December. We are restarting from February with our monthly Saturday race meetings at Highbury and have half a dozen dates in the diary for 2020.

As ever we would welcome any offers of help. Please do spread the word about the club to any who may be interested. See the website (<a href="www.hy-speed.co.uk">www.hy-speed.co.uk</a>) or Facebook for more details.

- Adrian Blazey, Iain Wallington and the Hy-Speed team.

#### **Council for World Mission**

We restarted CWM in the Church in October 2019 and therefore only have three months to report on. In this time the donations are as follows:

Birthday scheme £75.00 Missionary boxes £137.13 Total £212.13

We would like more people to join the CWM Birthday Scheme / Missionary Box Scheme – please give us your names and Birthday dates. We look forward to your joining the scheme.

- Margaret & Brian Cook

#### **Chosen Charities**

We have continued our practice of supporting a different charity each month as a way of remembering that our Separatist forbears risked imprisonment for worshipping in the way to which they felt led. I don't know if this practice started when Highbury was established in Cheltenham, can anyone tell me?

Certainly, much has changed since I first started reporting on the charities we support - my first piece was written after a face to face interview to which I went armed with my notebook and pen! Similarly, a lot has changed in the ways in which charities like to receive donations. Although pleased to receive any donations however infrequent, many prefer a regular donation (even if small) so that they have a predictable income which they can budget. Perhaps at some point we may have a rethink about how we continue with this.

Nephesha Mary Michael

#### **Christian Aid**

Highbury has been busy again this year contributing to raise vital funds for Christian Aid. We have helped raise funds and awareness of Christian Aid through a variety of ways. The willing collectors, counters and contributors raised £850 in the door tMay. In December we had a bumper group of Carol singers accompanied by Adrian and Alan and raised £126 in one hour, at Sainsburys. A team of Highbury helpers gave their time and talents, baking and serving at the café plus donating new items to enable the running of a gift stall to assist in the success of CA Autumn Fair. We also raised funds with a soup lunch at Highbury. To keep up to date on how Cheltenham Christian Aid is making a difference and how you can help locally, please see <a href="https://www.cheltenhamca.com">www.cheltenhamca.com</a>

Christian Aid week is 10th-16th May 2020.

Thank you for your continuing support. Speak to Laura or Louise Middleton for any more details.

- Laura MacLeod

## **Highbury News**

We have managed to produce our monthly newsletter with the object of disseminating information to readers in and around the Church. The only exception to the monthly production was the amalgamation of the July and August editions into a single publication. Contributions are welcome whether to inform, amuse or generate thought or debate. The office printer and binder, installed in December 2018, have continued to be a useful asset allowing us to produce "in house" documents and Highbury News at a competitive cost.

Thanks are due to our team of Highbury Visitors who ensure distribution of the newsletter. We continue to send a number by post to interested parties and also to a larger number by email.

- Susan Cole

## **Community use of Highbury Rooms**

The room booking receipts for 2019 showed an improvement on the previous year and the outlook for 2020 is good with two new long-term bookings in place and our other regular users looking set to continue throughout the year.

Our church is used for the benefit of our congregation:

Toddler group

HyTec

addiction

Hy-Speed

Community Café

Highbury Lunch

Messy Church planning meetings

Messy Church worship events

Explore the Word, Crafts, Music etc.

Music planning meetings

Re-Fresh – alternative worship

Film Club for families

LGBTQI and Allies Board Games

Our church is used for the benefit of external groups from the community:

a) The following groups use our facilities regularly:

Uniformed organisations: Scouts, Cubs, Beavers, Guides and Brownies Narcotics anonymous, Gamblers anonymous - recovery programmes for

NHS Retirement Fellowship

Highbury Club for the visually impaired

Heart to Heart – exercise group for cardiac patients

Trish Ten – stretch and balance group

Karen Soo – Tai Chi & Qigong

Building Circles – cooking class for people with special needs

U3A Bridge (2 groups), U3A History of Art, U3A Art, U3A Recorders

group – rehearsing for a variety of concerts

Monkey Music for toddlers and carers up to 5 years old

Upholstery repair of various types of furniture

St. John's School – music group and nativity play

Midlife Choir

Townswomen's Guild

Mother and Baby Fitness

Horticultural Society

#### b) Occasional external groups

Cotswold Scribblers – poetry and writing group

Worker's Educational Association – lectures on a wide range of subjects

Gloucestershire Industrial Archaeological Society – lectures on local

## companies

Children's parties (e.g. birthdays)

First Aid training by Rachel Jacques

Cheltenham Silver Band - charity concert

NHS motivation group

**U3A Family History** 

Street Pastors.

May I take this opportunity of thanking our administrator (Julie) for the assistance she has given me and also those members who have opened/locked up on the occasions when I have not been available.

- Peter Harrison

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#### **Street Pastors**

At present, we do not have any active Street Pastors from our Church, but we do support their continued work on the streets of our town during the late hours of the weekends. They are a mission to support any in need in and around the town, giving practical help and direction on a non-judgemental basis, without preaching or evangelising. The Stable, a converted horsebox providing a Safe Space, continues to be a prominent feature on the street and an asset for any vulnerable person.

Our Church supports their activities in having Prayer Pastors, considered essential in giving background support and encouragement to those patrolling the streets.

During 2019, the teams distributed 1,136 bottles of water, 920 pairs of flip flops and 4,400 lollipops. They picked up 2,358 bottles or broken glass items, assisted 164 vulnerable people, attended 10 antisocial incidents and 30 cases needing first aid.

For an enriching experience new recruits are always welcome. Please contact <a href="mailto:cheltenham@streetpastors.org.uk">cheltenham@streetpastors.org.uk</a>

- Susan Cole

# **Congregational Federation**

Nationally the Federation seems more settled. The 2019 May Assembly had a completely different atmosphere. The job of moving forward into a better understanding of the purpose of the Congregational Federation is considerable: as well as reviewing and updating our governance and working practises to improve communication, transparency and relevance is an ongoing process. We welcomed

Janet Wootton as President and Suzanne Nockels as President Elect. The place and date for the next Assembly is 9<sup>th</sup> May in Solihull.

The South West Midlands area has been busy. Highbury is well represented on the steering committee, with Jason as Chair and Me as President. We had to ask the churches for extra donations this year in order to keep Joy our area children's worker and if we are to continue her very important work we will need to ask again for more funds. The next meeting is the AGM at Sherston on 28<sup>th</sup> March.

- Karen Waldock

# **Children's Ministry**

## **Big Screen Family Films**

Our big screen family film afternoons are still very popular and well attended. The film afternoons are an outreach opportunity to the community. They come and receive a warm welcome, hospitality, and a chance to enjoy a family afternoon with each other in a church, with a message of fellowship and a Christian view on the film they watch. We regularly receive new families from toddler group and Messy Church as well as others from the local community. This is a stepping stone for welcoming new people to explore what else Highbury has to offer.

The Easter family film was Mary Poppins Returns. Her catchphrase was "Everything is possible, even the impossible" so for an Easter film, this was a very apt message when we think about Jesus's resurrection.

Other films shown were 'Ralph breaks the Internet', 'Dumbo', 'Hotel Transylvania 3', 'Toy Story 4', 'The Lion King', 'Aladdin', and 'Shaun the Sheep's Farmageddon'. November saw 70+ people watching Toy Story 4! Family films take a break during summer months June, July and August.

## **Messy Church**

Messy Church continued to have a number of regular families attending. As time goes on, these families are getting to know each other better and there is good conversation around the dinner table. We continue to use the "Get Messy!" Magazine material and the planning session is a valuable Bible study as well. The Bennington Hall Trust Fund continue to give a quarterly grant to help fund this activity.

In October we ran a Messy Starlight Party (with financial support from the Bennington Hall Trust Fund) which saw families from all areas of outreach. December's Messy Church was a Messy Christingle. It was the first time that we have had the uniformed organisations taking part in Messy Church. The evening was buzzing with lots of people and families, not just making the Christingle but learning about each part of it as well.

#### **Easter**

During Holy Week, we had stations of the cross outside for people of all ages to "Experience Easter Outside" and explore the Easter message at any time to suit them. Bennington Hall Trust Fund supported the giveaway of the Bible Society booklet *Three Friends and the Miracle Man.* 

#### Summer

We kicked off summer fun with a day at the Lido courtesy of Joy Howell, our Children and Youth Workers for the South West Midlands Area of the Congregational Federation. 13 adults and 20 children joined us, starting off at Highbury with a praise party. The group was made up from a combination of outreach activities, including Toddlers, Messy Church, Highbury members, and HyTec friends. It was a valuable day of building friendships from our outreach activities and bringing together those who haven't been to Highbury for a while.

We also held an Eco activity morning in combination with the Thursday Community Café. We were joined by a small number of families from Messy Church and toddlers mainly. The idea was to start building on the wildlife garden and add to the work we have started with the Eco church efforts by adding bird feeders, building a brick bug hotel and planting some herbs to encourage bees and other pollinators.

#### **Fairview Fireworks**

Highbury supported the Community Fireworks Display at the Fairview Cricket Ground. We were short in number of helpers so we didn't take the craft activities that we have done in the past. We were joined by a family who remembered us from previous years (ex-toddler group) and they were ever grateful for our presence there.

#### St John's School

It was a pleasure to welcome St John's School into Highbury again this year during SATs week. St John's don't have enough space for everyone while these exams take place so they value being able to use the Church to ease the pressure. We had a presence at their Christmas fair which was a perfect opportunity to help re-launch Hy-Speed. The school also used Highbury Church to host their Nativity services. Jason is going into the school to lead RE assemblies.

## **Highbury Toddler and Baby Group**

This group runs with the help of Helen Roberts weekly on Tuesday mornings. We continue to have a good number of mums, grandparents, dads and nannies, bringing babies and toddlers every week.

The group is very friendly and supportive of each other, particularly when some families have had to deal with illness and other upsets. We have good relationships with those who come, and we are hoping to build on this with Jason as well, as he is making time to share a story or song during "singing time". Many of these families look forward to family film afternoons and we have a good number who also come to Messy Church.

#### - Andrea Lacey

#### **Junior Church**

Junior Church began 2019 still with distinct age-based groups (Bubbles, Splash, X:Stream and HyTide) and our monthly all-age Sunday Special (with breakfast). Reduced/irregular attendance on Sundays (other than Sunday Specials) led us to develop more all-age sessions, with Junior Church leaders taking turns to lead. This is quite a challenge as some of us are comfortable with younger children and some with older ones, but it has also encouraged us to work more closely together in planning and learn from each other – which is certainly a good thing.

Since September we have been working with Jason too and seeking to align more closely the themes of Junior Church learning with those of the main services. We also held our first all-age Sunday Explore in November on the parable of the sower, using different ways of learning to explore what this meant for us as individuals. As we go into 2020, we are using new materials and developing some of these ideas further. Current Junior Church leaders are Angela Pickles, Elaine Schonbeck, Laura MacLeod, Louise Middleton, Mary Buchanan and Andrea Lacey. Judi Marsh stepped back from this work in the spring; our thanks to her for all the inspiration, ideas she brought to our planning and the love she has for the children. Particular highlights of Judi's work were the Easter Garden, a session on 'Trust' and a look at Jonah.

- Mary Buchanan (Youth Ministry Leader) and Andrea Lacey (Children's Ministry Leader)

# **Youth Ministry**

2019 was a very positive year of growth for work with teenagers at Highbury.

HyTec (Highbury Youth - The Eternity Club) for years 7-13 on Sunday evenings

- We have three HyTec leaders: Matt Winton, Grace Blazey and Mary Buchanan, with the support of up to six older HyTec-ers in the planning and running of the Sunday evening programme. Two of the stalwart HyTec leaders Ruth Wyatt and Hayley Bird went on maternity leave at Easter.
- Numbers in HyTec have risen from nine regulars at the start of the year to up to 15 at the end; an influx of years 7-9 in September marked the biggest change as well as a new family next door. The newcomers have now been introduced to a number of good HyTec traditions such as the monthly café, the regular games (e.g. mafia, UNO, loo roll netball) and our prayer times together; the group is gelling guite well.
- The HyTec programme covered learning new skills last winter, being out and about in the summer and travelling the world (from the security of the dining room) in the autumn. Everyone will have their own memories of what was

- especially good or bad; for me, the mist closing in on us on Cleeve Hill as we went in search of the HyTec tree will not quickly be forgotten.
- The involvement of HyTec-ers in the process of appointing our new minister and in the periodic review of the Youth Ministry Leader has been very encouraging.

### Other Youth Ministry developments in 2019:

- Collaboration between the Youth and Children's ministries has increased over the last year and valuable connections to families with children approaching teenage years have developed.
- Reengagement with Joy Howell, the area Children's and Youth support worker, led to plans for an area youth weekend at Highbury in February 2020. Joy has also provided considerable support in reviewing our safeguarding policies.
- The Sunday morning group HyTide has been suspended for the time being (see separate report on Junior Church) so teenage young people either stay in the service or join the organised all-age activities.
- A tentative approach to the University of Gloucestershire Christian Union with an invitation to come along to Highbury elicited a tentative response, but has so far not developed into anything more. Work with college age young people is still a gap.
- Mary Buchanan

# **Uniformed Organisations:**

#### **Cub Scout Pack**

During 2019 the Cub section has continued the growth we saw in 2018, reaching a peak of 32 members. We have welcomed back Doug from Scotland who was with us in 2018 for a year. He has completed his university course at home and has now become a permanent leader at Highbury.

The Cubs have continued their balanced programme, doing many different types of activities. We learnt about Japan during the world cup, we learnt how to prepare a pheasant when you are camping and went on a long road-bike ride to support the Cubs learning and confidence in cycling.

We went on 2 camps last year, one with the entire Scout group, and once as a Cub pack. The Cubs battled through the cold, wind and rain on both camps, giving them a lot of experience and resilience, which will aid them in their futures.

- Jeremy Gibbs

#### **7th Cheltenham Brownies**

2019 was a challenging year as both leaders and girls understood and implemented the New Brownie programme. We started using the Unit meeting Activities ranging from making sock puppets and bottle mansions to invisible bubbles and snow vision. Then

we introduced the Skills Builders completing BE WELL – Feel Good stages 2+3 and SKILLS FOR MY FUTURE – Live Smart level 3 as well as doing an odd challenge form other Skills Builder themes which the girls chose to try. The top badge is the Gold Badge and because some girls were already on their way to completing the old programme a transition syllabus was introduced mixing old and new badges. We are very pleased that Rhianna was able to successfully complete her Gold Badge.

Three girls attended the Count Arts Day in March and some girls attended the activity day organised by the District in May.

We had a meeting collecting litter around Fairview and not only were we praised but we were given some sweets for our efforts.

We also did a one night sleepover in June (on the hottest day of the year) and went to Apperley for a weekend in October.

In July we tried doing the Low Ropes course at Deer Park but need to work on our team working skills.

We started the autumn term doing the Growing Guiding Challenge in order to gain more members but we still have a few places.

We helped the Guides celebrate their  $100^{\text{th}}$  Birthday and then a group of us joined members from Gloucestershire at a special showing of Frozen II.

It has been quite a busy year and we have unfortunately had to say goodbye to Andrea one of our Leaders but we have gained a new Caroline who is now busy training.

- Christine Lodge

## **Highbury Guides**

2019 has been a year of celebrations for the unit. Two of our guides completed their Baden Powell Award, the highest award for Guides under the old programme, completing interest badges, running activities for the unit, developing hobbies and skills and attending a residential weekend. We celebrated Caroline's award in May with the first of the year's parties and Alex's award in October which gave us an opportunity to show how proud we are of their achievements. In the summer one of our guides attended the county camp at Cowley marking 50 years since the opening of the county headquarters there.

Our big celebration was the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of the unit. During the year we completed various activities connected with the birthday, including 100 Activities for 100 years (parts 1 and 2), decorating pots and planting bulbs to give as gifts to people attending

our party and joining the church for a celebratory Church Parade in October, with the guides dressing up in old uniforms.

In the summer, Kate, Alex and Alex's mum took part in a programme on BBC Radio Gloucestershire, discussing the unit's history and our current guide activities.

On 15th November, we hosted a party for our centenary. Over 80 guests attended, including former Guides and relatives of former Leaders. We had displays of uniforms and memorabilia from the last 100 years of Guiding at Highbury. Guests had the opportunity to take part in activities from previous Guide programmes and learn about the current Guide programme launched in 2018. We all played pass the parcel with each layer giving a fact from the unit's history. The core of the parcel surprisingly revealed current 'Captain' Tania's 30-year service badge. The birthday cake was cut by former Queen's Guides Cheralyn Burton, Christine Lodge and Lesley Adams. We would like to thank everyone who helped make this a success – particularly Kate and Felicity who put in an incredible amount of work tracing the history of the unit and the people involved but also everyone who helped with providing the displays, provided refreshments and joined in with the activities.

During the year we have worked in earnest on the new programme and between them the Guides have now earned 13 skills builder badges and 2 new interest badges. We have had wet and sunny evenings at Cowley, joined with other units for a day of adventurous activities at the Woodhouse Scout Activity centre, taken part in the Bubbs Hill Bash and had a joint evening of grass-sledging, tunnels and a campfire with the Cornerstone Brownies and 1st Aston Keynes Beavers and Scouts. We repeated some favourite activities including attending the Big Gig Concert and taking part in the annual Round Table Swimarathon. We ended the year with an evening of Christmas crafts and collected items for the Open Door Charity.

We would like to thank everyone at the church for their continuing support this year and throughout the Unit's 100-year history.

- Tania Ashdown - Guider

Contact us at

11cheltenhamguides@gmail.com

# Highbury Church Income & Expenditure Account - all Funds 12 months to 31st December 2019

INCOME		TOTAL	TOTAL
Header	A/C	THIS	LAST
	code	YEAR	YEAR
		£	£
Offerings, Legacies and similar inco	mina	resource	es
Envelopes & loose change	1101	4,061	4,850
STO & single cash/cheque	1102	34,775	34,080
Tax refund	1103	9,280	9,277
Gifts	1121	0	0
Legacies	1122	0	5,250
Gift Day	1123	8,807	6,980
Harvest		767	1,374
Grants received	1200	4,811	550
Miscellaneous income	6110	1,102	213
Total - Incoming resources		63,603	62,574
	_		
Activities in furtherance of the chari	ity's o	bjectives 	
Other room hire	1141	15,447	13,610
Church users room hire	1143	1,100	1,390
Weddings & Funerals	2801	185	872
Alpha income	3102	0	
Social events income	3205	0	
Deacon's Day income		0	
Highbury News income	3402	576	723
Highbury News advertisers		301	361
Congregationalist income	3514	63	92
Scouts insurance	6105	148	141
Event income	6108	0	
Photocopier income	6613	0	36
Outreach income	6700	3,948	3,278
Total - Incoming activities		21,768	20,503
Activities for generating Funds			
Fund raising	1131	0	

Investment Income			
Dividends & Interest	1151	336	103
Total Income		85,707	83,180
further analysis:			
Envelopes	1101	1,335	1,149
Loose change	"	1,413	2,537
Envelopes & loose change	=	2,748	3,686
EXPENDITURE		TOTAL	TOTAL
Header	A/C	THIS	LAST
	code	YEAR	YEAR
		£	£
Activities in furtherance of the chari	ty's o	bjectives '	•
Ministry salary etc:			
Minister's gross salary	5101	8,658	16,506
Minister's employers NI		0	358
Minister's pension EE and ER	5103	972	1,469
Employers Insurance		0	
Car mileage allowance		151	663
Felicity's gross salary	5201 5203	0 0	
Felicity's pension Children's Worker gross salary	5203 5801	13,857	13,352
Children's Worker employers NI	5802	13,037	73
Other expenses:	0002	Ĭ	
Preaching	2101	3,221	1,821
Junior Church/Sunday Special	2302	266	248
Video licence	2304	426	424
Organist		1,666	1,598
Music	2502	0	
Organ Tuning etc	2503	0	
Pastoral	3201	5	224
Pastoral gifts	3202	197	224
Deacon's Day Ministry Leaders exps Worship	3203 3210	0 0	
Ministry Leaders exps Worship  Ministry Leaders exps Children	3211	0	
Ministry Leaders exps Youth	3212	0	
Ministry Leaders exps Discipleship	3213	30	120
Ministry Leaders exps Pastoral Care		45	41
Ministry Leaders exps Mission & Outreach	3215	4	161

Ministry Leaders exps Joint	3216	0	
Highbury News expenses	3401	21	1,689
Publicity/advertising	3404	0	22
Neighbourhood cards	3405	132	96
CF affiliations/SW Midlands area	3501	1,479	2,065
Other affiliations	3502	310	125
CF Ministry & Society CWM Boxes & B'day	3504	800	776
Congregationalist expenditure	3513	112	96
The Year book expenses	3515	0	
Pastoral	_	0	
Worship resources	5115	132	234
Church equipment/furnishings	6109	0	
Event expenditure	6605	0	740
Miscellaneous expenditure	6801	90 4 752	712
Outreach expenditure	6800	1,753	1,604
Total - Outgoing activities		34,327	44,477
EXPENDITURE		TOTAL	TOTAL
Header	A/C	THIS	LAST
	code	YEAR	YEAR
		£	£
Support costs			
Ministry expenses:			
Stationery	5112	0	242
Telephone		155	210
Postage		0	20
Travel, excluding Car In -service training	5116 5117	0 0	39
Subsistence		12	
Children's Worker - expenses	2505	0	
Project Worker - expenses	<b>2506</b>	0	
Manse expenses:	2000	0	
Manse insurance	5301	262	269
Manse - gas		69	751
Manse - electricity		138	296
Manse - water	5304	296	395
Manse - community charge	5305	1,229	985
Manse - maintenance	5307	0	217
Other expenses:			
Project		25,582	7,569
Church - Maintenance	6101	1,589	6,660
Maintenance Charge		0	0.000
Gas	6102	4,290	3,888
Electricity		2,687	1,644
Insurance Trade disposal		2,278	2,144
Trade disposal	6106	349	342

Housekeeping	6301	186	202
Cleaning materials	6302	679	693
Administrator salary	6401	5,330	3,466
Caretakers gross pay	6501	5,803	5,611
Assistant Caretakers gross pay	6503	1,104	1,070
Stationery/directory	6601	42	101
Postage	6602	124	136
Telephone	6603	874	261
Office equipment	6604	270	437
Payroll costs	6606	96	0
Photocopy hire/copy charge	6611	1,420	1,676
Photocopy paper	6612	193	174
Bank charges	6701	393	436
Legal costs	6702	0	
Recruitment costs	6703	53	19
Training non Minister	6704	1,000	
Total - Support costs		56,503	39,691
Total Expenditure		90,830	84,168

# **Income & Expenditure Account - all Funds**

Income/Expenditure	TOTAL	TOTAL
Header	THIS	LAST
	YEAR	YEAR
	£	£
Income		
Incoming resources	63,603	62,574
Incoming activities	21,768	20,503
Fund raising	0	0
Dividends & interest	336	103
Total Income	85,707	83,180
Expenditure		
Outgoing activities	34,327	44,477
Support costs	56,503	39,691
Total Expenditure	90,830	84,168
All Funds surplus/(deficiency)	-5,123	-988

# 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.

Date 11. 2. 2020.

**Brian Sneddon** 28 Chardwar Gardens Bourton-on-Water **GL54 2BL**