

# The Methodist Church Hucclecote

<http://www.hucclecotemc.org.uk>

## Annual General Meeting Reports 17th April 2024 7.30pm

**Our Vision – we seek to be a community of people seeking to follow Jesus, trying to live as God intends, and inviting others to do the same**



## From Barry

Hello friends,

it's not my usual way to communicate with you but our GCM needs something from me to help the leadership after I step down.

we have had a busy year 2023/24, a lot has happened in regard to the premises; many of the tasks we wished to see achieved have been accomplished and for that I want to thank Mark Dickens and all who work open the property and finance team, what an amazing lot they are (really!).

The various groups and support groups associated with our church do a wonderful job; Jellytotz is an opportunity for outreach as is BB & GA. The craft group and the Welcome Café's many people cross our threshold.

But the main reason we are here is to tell this co ministry about the love of Jesus Christ for us. We exist to share the Good News and we do this to the best of our ability.

We should take care of our world and I think we do more than our 'bit' to encourage a response from the community; the gardens, the vegetable plot and the services where we explore eco themes and ideas.

So what of the future? If we are to survive and thrive we need to be as a lamp or a beacon tell others about what makes us Christians and why we believe. There is no other way- we can have as many social evenings there as we want but that doesn't build the Kingdom - people need to know the love of God and it's our job to tell them, by our actions, our manner, our kindness and if necessary by words. All of what we do is to support the work of God not to supplant it.

I hope and pray that as you move on later this year you will

remember, you are the ambassadors for Christ and He believes in you to do His will, do you believe in Him enough to step out in faith. I love this church and its people, let's ensure my great grandchildren will be able to visit a thriving, bustling, loving church. God Bless, Barry

## **From the Stewards**

As stewards we have had a busy year, preparing and leading six **Local Arrangement** services including the themes as follows:

Leprosy Mission – Did we realise that it costs only £28 to cure someone completely of Leprosy and it is possible that in the near future it could be eradicated.

Harvest Festival – During Creation Season concentrating on Let Justice and Peace Flow.

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow – including music across the ages of the church and hearing from Sue Woodward about the history of HMC.

New Year's Eve – Looking Back, Looking Forward in which we were all invited to visit various stations, provoking thought and prayer.

Unbounded Love – Visit us with thy Salvation using the Methodist Lent resources.

Rev. Barry Bishop initially came to work alongside us for a year. He's stayed for two! We are extremely grateful for his energy, enthusiasm and guidance after a difficult time, post pandemic. We are sorry to see him leave us, for a second try

at retirement, although we wish him and Ann good health and happy times going forward. We hope to see him return, not to lead but, to re-engage with the genuine welcome and warmth that has been given and received.

From September we will be without a full time minister. The Rev. John McNeil will have oversight as well as that for Lonsdale Road and Churchdown MCs. He will be available for our rites of passage services; weddings, baptisms, holy communion and Church Councils.

Alongside John we will have, it is hoped, a part-time Local Lay Pastor. This is a new position within the Methodist Church and they will be training whilst with us.

We all have another challenging year ahead at HMC but with God's Grace, his Love, our prayers and continued support for each other we will continue to grow, reaching out to those who are searching for a place of faith to call their home.

Lynne

## **Junior Church**

There are not many children regularly attending Junior Church now and the age range is from 5 to 18 years. Over the last 12 months we have had very interesting subject material with guidance mainly from The Methodist Way of Life. The themes have included "Our Faith," "Challenge and "Injustice". A questionnaire was prepared and given to the adults in the congregation for them to share their journey of faith. In "Openness and Hospitality" the children served the refreshments after the service. Also for the Sharing part of our faith we had activities, prayers, worship and games on the field and we made crosses out of twigs and wool and hung them on the fence so that others outside of the church could see.

The children have joined in with the congregation for the Local Arrangement services and Ethan and Emma regularly do the sound and projection for the church services.

Thank you to everyone who has donated used postage stamps. Over the years they have been processed and sent to several charities. Before the pandemic the Leprosy Mission benefitted but as the postage costs have considerably increased the stamps have been given to local charities, including Guide Dogs for the Blind, Young Lives vs Cancer and Oxfam.

Every year there is an Easter egg hunt and a Brunch style party on the field in July.

The children are our future church and need nurturing and encouragement and the JC leaders thank you for your continued support and prayers.

Sylvia

## **Communion Stewards**

Over the last year we had no problems getting stewards to cover all Communion Services.

Sometimes I need to ask Church Stewards to help bring people forward to the rail.

I would like to thank everyone on Communion Rota for their help, numbers at the services average about 50.

Arnold

## **Sunday Worship – Sound & Projection**

This report is by way of a Tech Update, principally as it affects our Worship Services.

As you are aware, we are well equipped to amplify our regular services, including a Loop system for those with hearing aids (those with the latest technology do not require the loop).

We also endeavour to project the hymns and other details as required by the preacher, for example, where a congregational response is required, or specific images or videos. Where ever possible we use this to enhance the presentation of the service.

As a result of moving our services into the Hall during the winter of 22/23, we set out to replicate the sound and vision in the Hall as in the church. A loop was installed and we have been loaned speakers (ideally, speakers appropriate to the hall should be used, however, we have avoided the cost).

HDMI facilities have also been installed to enable the projection of videos.

Staffing - in recent years we have experienced a drop off of people who feel capable of continuing to help on the Rota. We have been blessed with the help of Emma and Ethan, however, there is the potential of losing them to University in the not too distant future. This is going to leave us very short of personnel, which could lead to some services NOT being projected. In other words, back to the Hymn books for everyone.

On these occasions we would still require sound. This is not over technical and easily picked up. **Would you please consider offering your services**, even if you just want to give it a go.

Please contact **Peter Shaw** in the first instance and we can arrange for you to shadow one of us.

Peter

## **Pastoral Report**

The pastoral stewards meet regularly to discuss general pastoral issues, particular needs and ongoing changes to membership/worshippers' lists.

A recent meeting was held to discuss the reduced number of members now able to carry out the role of pastoral visiting, the

present system was discussed and another meeting of the pastoral stewards' will be held shortly to take this further. Any church members willing to become a pastoral visitor would be very welcome.

Debbie Long has provided details of DBS and safeguarding requirements. Training, for those who required it, was arranged in Cheltenham. An updated Methodist Church Code of Safer Working Practices with Adults has been emailed to all visitors.

The number of pastoral stewards remains at five and the total number of church members stands at 108.

Mary

## **Church Flowers**

Thank you to everyone for your continued generosity in supporting the Church flowers.

As always the flowers in Church have been lovely, and members of the Church Family who receive the flowers after Sunday Service are delighted with them.

Most dates on the rota are filled, but if you have a special occasion you would like to celebrate please let me know.

Dawn

## **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Church Volunteers who attend the Methodist Connexion Creating Safer Space Training are reminded that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and being aware of the types of abuse, recognising the abuse and knowing how to react to any potential safeguarding concern is covered in the training. In our world today sad statistics report that 1 in 3 women have experienced some form of domestic abuse and 1 in 4 men suffer physical violence in a relationship. According to the NSPCC sadly half a million children a year suffer abuse in the UK. Due to the Global pandemic and the cost of living crisis, domestic abuse cases

are thought to have increased significantly. We are therefore very fortunate to have wonderful Church volunteers who give their time to be involved in training sessions which enable our Church to be a safe environment. Those who come through our doors including those who we do not yet know, can be confident they will be welcomed into a friendly non-threatening setting.

My role is to ensure all our Church Volunteers' DBS and training records are kept updated.

The Methodist Connexion Creating Safer Space Trainings are held in the Gloucestershire Methodist Circuit on a regular basis and should you be interested in attending a training, please let me know.

Debbie

## **5<sup>th</sup> Gloucester Boys Brigade and Girls Association**

We have had another busy year in what is the Boy's Brigade's 140<sup>th</sup> year. We have taken part in lots of events and competitions as well as our weekly meetings. Membership is up to 46 young people, which is the highest for over 10 years.

Back in May we held our annual Awards Evening, which is always a special evening, where all members receive their awards and their achievements and commitment are recognised. We were delighted to welcome MP Richard Graham as our chief guest for the evening.

### Anchors

Anchors started back in September welcoming new and existing members back for a fun and action-packed programme. Our amazing Seniors continue to help on Monday nights, bringing lots of new games and ideas.

The Anchors have had fun doing lots of activities: they've learned about pandas, pretended to be pirates, played with parachutes, painted pancakes, and made poppies with their handprints.



They took part in the Brigade-wide 140th anniversary challenge by making a collage of themselves, their toys and their cakes! We entered the collage into the national competition, and they all earned the exclusive 140 challenge badge. Along with the Juniors, we also buried a time capsule, to be opened in 10 years' time on the 150th anniversary, when our Anchors will have grown up to become Seniors.

At Christmas, they made Christmas cards, chocolate reindeer and learnt about the "Greatest Ever Christmas Gift". We dressed up to take part in the whole-company Carol Service at the church and had a great time. We also had a Christmas party, with the Juniors, where they danced, turned each other into Snowmen (with toilet paper), tried to eat chocolate with a knife and fork and even had a visit from Father Christmas!

The Anchors spent a day at TRAC for the first full-company camp ever! They helped their teams to victory in a series of challenges across the whole campsite, as well as making some cool monster kites, and some delicious chocolate Easter cupcakes.

### Juniors

Juniors kick started their year attending the Battalion Football Competition last September and then enjoyed a sleepover at Air Hop Bristol to celebrate the Brigade being 140 years old. This was great fun with lots of pizza and bouncing fun.

November saw us take part in the Battalion Juniors' Quizzes and in December helped to create a tree for the Church Tree Festival depicting Dick Whittington.

The Battalion Swimming Gala took place in Evesham in February, followed by the District Sports Day in Yeovil in March.

The children have also been working hard towards their badges, including a project badge looking at Heroes of the Bible. Egyptians,

teddy zip wires and taking part in Parliament week, which have provided opportunities for fun and learning.

The year to date has been celebrated at TRAC Newent with a whole Company camping weekend where many children earned their first Nights Away awards. We have many more adventures planned for the rest of the year too.

### Company and Seniors

Both Sections have been working hard on their badge work. The Company Section badge classes have included BB knowledge, cooking and theme evenings on topics from gladiators to snooker. The seniors have covered topics including wellbeing, budgeting, 24 things for 2024 and a world without. They are also working towards the higher awards which are the President's Badge and Queen's Badge. The Seniors have also planned and run evenings for the company section.

All seven Seniors are attending the Seniors' weekend in Dartmoor in early April. This will cover the President's Badge, Queen's Badge and Duke of Edinburgh award.

We have taken part in lots of competitions over the year at Battalion, District and National levels including Masterteam, National Bowling and District Sports.

Both Sections joined the rest of the company at TRAC for weekend camp at the end of March and a great weekend was had by all. One of the best parts of the weekend was seeing all four sections mixing. It was great to see the older members helping and encouraging the younger members.

As a Company we are looking forward to the rest of the session until our annual display night which this year is on 17<sup>th</sup> May at 19.00. All are welcome to join us to celebrate the young people's achievements over the last year.

After the display we will move into the summer programme which for the company and senior sections finishes with week camp at the end of July in **Warcombe**.

I'd like to finish by thanking the Parents' and Friends' Association and the Church Family for your continued support over the last year.

Scott

## **Hucclecote Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association Parents and Friends Association**

Fundraising for the current year 2023/4 is progressing well with good amounts raised to date at jumbles sales and the Christmas Fayre. A cheque was handed to the above organisation at the AGM/Cake and Quiz night in October. Funds raised during the year help the Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association officers to provide a varied and interesting programme for the young people.

All events during the past year were well advertised and attracted people not only from Hucclecote, but also from the wider Gloucester community which raises awareness of both the Brigade and church.

We thank the Church Family and our Friends for their continued support.

Mary

## **Jellytotz**

Jellytotz Baby and Toddler Group has grown in the last year and attracts 15 to over 20 toddlers accompanied by parents, grandparents and sometimes child minders. We get responses to our banner on the fence at the lights, Facebook and our Whats app group. There is a continued involvement by families in other church events such as crib service, Christmas tree festival which we encourage We arrange planting of seeds with the children to be transferred into the Jellytotz garden area with the help of the gardening group

Our storage has now been greatly improved with new doors on under stage area and our own large cupboard where we bag and contain small toys. We have now got a toy rota for putting out toys and a working group which we hope will help with general running

We have parties at Christmas and Summer involving extra activities like bouncy castle, Father Christmas etc. We run a craft session on the third Tuesday of the month.

We would like to thank all the volunteers who help in the kitchen and with craft for their support

Kathy & Mary

## **Open the Book**

Open the Book is a project which offers primary school children an introduction to the major stories of the Bible presented in school assemblies through the school year. It brings together a local school with a team of Christians from a local church. Each presentation takes a maximum of 10 minutes and the story scripts, originally from the Lion Storyteller Bible, have all been written by Bob Hartman.

Open the Book fulfils OFSTED inspection requirements for Collective Worship and has been successfully used in a multi-faith context. Children are invited to say Amen at the end of each week's short prayer if they want to make it their prayer. What a privilege!

Hucclecote Methodist Church takes Open the Book into Coopers Edge school (as part of an ecumenical team) on a monthly basis and an all-Methodist team goes into Dinglewell Infant School most weeks. Whenever we ask the children for volunteers to join the “actors” the response is a sea of hands. We are very grateful to those who have made costumes and props over the years. The costumes are stored in team members’ spare rooms but it can be more challenging to remember where we put some of the props!

Both teams are looking for more adult volunteers. The Dinglewell team has been struggling recently due to illness and would particularly welcome new members - even on a part-time basis (i.e. not every week). Please talk to Elaine (Dinglewell team) or Sylvia (Coopers Edge team) if you want to find out more.

Elaine

### **“A place to remember”**

The garden at the side of the church has had a lot of work since this time last year, pruning, planting and arranging of stones and a path – and lots of weeding!

A number of painted pebbles in memory of loved ones have been placed.

We would encourage church members to have a walk around and to sit quietly and remember. The garden is accessible whenever the church is open, and also when the Welcome Café is open.

We would be grateful for any offers of help on a Wednesday morning from 9.30am. Even if you can’t come every week, any help would be much appreciated to help us keep this area looking nice.

Diana & Beth

### **Church Green Displays**

As in previous years, we have continued to use the church green to carry our message to the local community. There are permanent posters on the fence. One with the church name and one for the Café.

In addition, ad hoc posters are added by various groups highlighting events, such as the Plant Sale and Jumbles.

Key events in the religious calendar are specifically celebrated:

- Easter - we erect 3 large crosses with the centre one being appropriately dressed. 2 posters are attached to the fence. On Easter Day, a further “He is Risen” poster is added plus the dressing on the cross is changed.
- Pentecost - We have 2 posters to celebrate Pentecost.
- Christmas - our Nativity has been on the green for 3 years now and is increasingly well received by the general public. It is a great attraction and an important part of our Outreach.

We would always welcome any comments and suggestions for the future.

Peter

## **Welcome Café and Warm Space**

It has been another successful year for our Welcome Café.

We continue to tweak the running and fine tuning at regular steering group meetings, addressing issues or concerns that arise. Our inspection last year rated us with the ultimate grade 5 for hygiene and running procedures.

The Café is still run on a donation only basis, asking for a contribution only when cash is available and affordable for our customers.

Monday evenings, although slow in uptake initially, have grown with a regular customer base from parents of Brigades children and of course we have a regular family that have travelled with us from the very beginning. The twins are now 2 years old. We all miss Di Rotherham who was a staunch and regular volunteer working

alongside Sally. Lynne and Sue D have kindly filled the huge gap that Di leaves.

Now, on Wednesday and Thursday mornings, regular groups meet at the same time on our premises, taking advantage of the chance for a hot drink and a piece of cake. There is a definite buzz on our premises during these occasions and our volunteers are kept very busy.

We continue to open on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays of the month and our volunteers get a break as we remain closed on bank holidays. We have discussed, occasionally, extending our opening times. But feel that this would be too much for our limited group of servers. We would welcome more volunteers, should you feel able to help with this valuable work.

Our servings of cake and biscuits are supplied by generous home bakers and occasionally from other pre-prepared sources. We facilitate our cake storage by using the freezer, with the aim of never being short of an offering.

A huge debt of thanks goes to our volunteer servers and bakers who give generously of their time, energy and expertise. An afternoon celebration of 'Thanks' was held in February when laughter could be heard, and great fun was had.

Together, with a few grants and our donations, we have been able to upgrade the Welcome kitchenette and replace the flooring and tables. Our next aim is to replace the heavy red chairs with something more practical and easier to move. We continue to give regular grants to HMC towards heating and premises costs.

Thanks go to Nick Butler who has registered our Café as, "A Place of Welcome," an Anglican initiative and open to all denominations, and we can be seen on that and our own website as such.

Please pray with us for the continued work of the Café and for our lovely team of volunteers. This project has, in large part, contributed to HMC's awakening, post pandemic. Sue

## **MWiB (Methodist Women in Britain)**

for women, for justice, for Christ

This has been a year of change and reorganisation. The MWiB executive now has two co-chairs, one for the North and another for the South. The original Methodist Districts are now organised into larger areas, co-ordinated by ambassadors. HMC is in the Bristol and South Wales Area.

In February, finding that over three bi-annual meetings, our area ambassador was holding three identical meetings across the District, Circuit and Locally, it was decided to hold one meeting where all interested parties came together in one place, namely Hucclecote. It was good to get so many from across the Bristol District, all in one place at the same time, connecting across the larger area. Many would have met each other previously, pre pandemic, at the annual residential conference at Ammerdown. These times of fellowship and renewal haven't been enjoyed since the pandemic.

Locally and across the District we finished our two-year fundraising drive for Marie Curie last August. In total we raised £1700.

This year and for one year only (now back to our pre pandemic timeline) we concentrate on raising funds to support Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders). It is hoped that we will be able to listen to a speaker from MSF later in the year at Ladies Friendship Group.

The Easter Offering Service is written by members of MWiB every year and locally our circuit churches raise the best effort. Last year we contributed to over £7500 to the Methodist World Mission Fund.

The Service this year is based on the theme, "Let Justice Roll," and will tell of positive ways that individuals have addressed issues of justice. Ours, at HMC, including the dedication, will be held at Hucclecote on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April.

As an ambassador I will be traveling across the Area to inform and educate various church groups on the work, both at home and



abroad, of MWiB. If you would like to learn more, join me, and come along to one of our gatherings.

Sue

## **The Welcome Garden**

The Welcome Garden volunteers meet on Wednesday mornings throughout the year from 10am until 12. We are a group of people who enjoy chatting at the same time as growing vegetables and fruit. Anyone is welcome to come along and, if you cannot help us physically, then please come and sit on a bench and share your growing tips. We always spend (lots of) time in the Welcome Café!

Last year the produce from the garden was used at our own Friday Lunch Club and at the St Oswald's Food Hub in Coney Hill, we ate some ourselves and we gave some to people in the Welcome Café. We grew potatoes, onions, runner beans, kale, Swiss chard, peas, squashes, beetroot, tomatoes, sprouts and rhubarb. We have also planted thornless blackberry, raspberries, gooseberries and apples.

We aim to grow produce as sustainably as we can and without chemicals so we don't use slug pellets or weedkiller. We have experimented with a "no dig" bed which has produced good results. We make our own compost and leaf mould, turning natural materials (grass and leaves) that would otherwise be wasted, from the church grounds, into soil improvers. Thanks to Gus at Barnwood Builders a local scaffolding firm has recently donated some used boards for edging our vegetable beds.

We want to encourage children to get involved in growing food so we work with Jellytotz and the Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association, helping them to plant and enjoy sunflowers and crops.

One of our aims this spring is to level out the paved area at the back of the BB garage so that we can turn it into a safe working area for sowing and potting etc. The slabs have been moved and we are

looking for a contractor with a small digger to prepare the base. In November 2022 we were grateful for a grant of £1000 from the Leonard Laity Stoate Memorial Trust to help with these costs.

Using our field to grow food, trees and pollinator friendly flowers has arisen out of our concern about the decrease in biodiversity in the UK and wanting to do something as a church to help in the battle to tackle climate change. It also helps towards the Eco Church award. You may already have seen a small area of grass at the front of the Welcome being developed into a pollinator-friendly flowerbed, thanks to seeds and plants donated by church members.

Elaine

## **Eco Church**

We have continued to bring environment and climate issues to the attention of the church both through the Notice Board in the hall and via the weekly Notices and the church website.

Work on our Eco Church application for a Silver Award has continued. A recent trial application has identified areas where we fall short and where we already meet the required standard.

Further updates will be issued during the course of 2024.

Peter

## **Lunch Club**

We have had another very successful year, with an average of 22 people joining us for Lunch each time. It's a great opportunity to meet together with members of the Church family and people from the community socially. It's also a good opportunity for those who live alone to have a meal together with others. Meals vary from roast, stews and casseroles to old favourites such as Toad in the Hole, the most popular pudding continues to be Apple Crumble and Custard.

Thank you to the Cooks. We were lucky to have two extra cooks this year, Bev and Barbara, share the duties of cooking a meal, and this

has lifted some of the pressure on Elaine and myself. Thank you also to the small team of regular helpers, who are very willing to step in at a moments notice if necessary, and to to Richard, Ron and Roger for collecting some of our less able diners, and of course, my very sincere thanks to Marion to continues to be at my side.

This is really an excellent example of everyone working together. If you would like to come along, you need to put your name on the list on the notice board – quickly!!!!

Dawn

## **Property Report**

Another challenging year. It takes a lot of time and effort as well as money to keep our premises in the state to which you are all accustomed to. To achieve this the Property & Finance committee meet as a subcommittee of the Church Council on a bye monthly basis. New members are always welcome to join from the Church Council.

Over the last twelve months several maintenance tasks have been identified and completed e.g. But by no means a full list:

***Build Back Better Grant (BBB):*** Following the successful application and allocation of the grant of **£11,115** from the Council BBB scheme, the committee has spent the monies as follows:

- **Replaced Welcome and Kitchenett flooring**
- **Purchase 40 blue plastic chairs for the Hall**
- **Enhanced preparation and serving facilities in the Kitchenett**
- **Improved Wi-Fi resilience throughout our buildings**
- **Launched a new Church Website**

**Hall:** Panelling around Hall lower wall and new stage doors

**Roof Repairs:** Repairs to Choir Vestry and Organ loft roofs.  
Ongoing monitoring.

**Graveyard:** Essential maintenance was carried out to repair the corner of the graveyard wall.

**New chairs:** 20 new chairs purchased for our younger folk situated in the Fellowship Room.

**Heating:** Ongoing discussions being held around changing the Church heating and improving the Welcome heating.

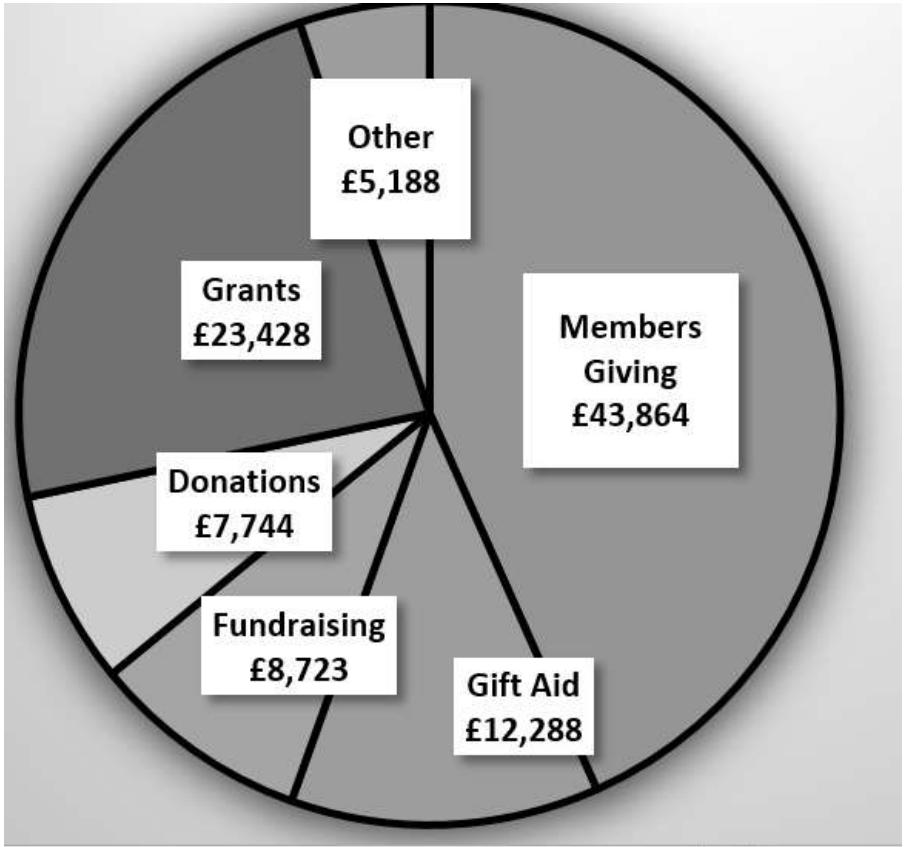
**Finances:** Further to the separate Treasurers report, allowing for the efforts of the various fund-raising activities the Church's balances bucked the trend of decline in the last financial year by finishing up on the previous year. However, the P&F have already overspent on this year's budget for maintenance, so we hope no unplanned expenditure appears.

How can you help! Well, the obvious one is reviewing your giving. Do you pay by standing order, thereby ensuring the Church receives your collection whether you attend or not? Gift Days. A lot of Churches also rely on members/adherents leaving a donation in their Wills either via a direct instruction or by a separate 'side letter'. Just some thoughts for your consideration.

Mark

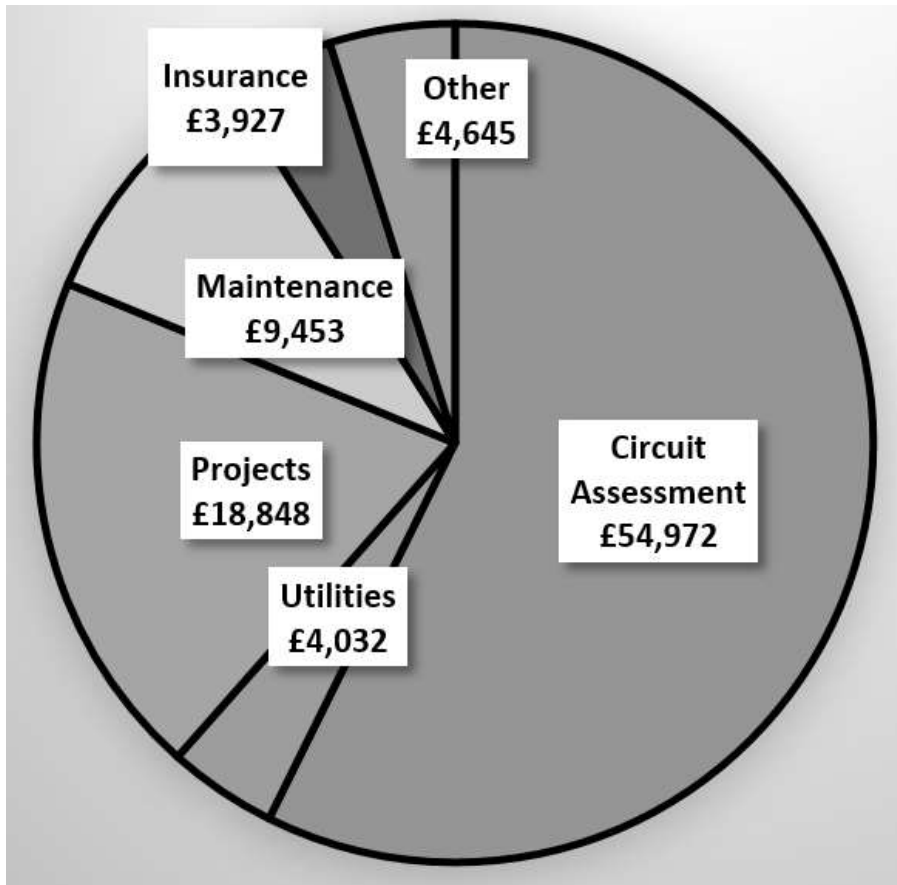
## Finance Report

We have had a rather different financial experience this year. We have received the remaining money from Enovert to fund work on the roofs, and money from the council's Build Back Better initiative. This is shown on the chart of income sources, below, a total of £101,235.



“Donations” is mainly gifts from individual groups in the church. We are grateful for this, particularly the amounts given from the café. And, as ever, we appreciate receipts from the fundraising events.

We now come to how that income was spent. The “Projects” covered various grant-funded work. The total spend was £95,877.



It might appear that we had a large surplus, but most of it is grant money still to be spent. We did, however, achieve a surplus (income over expenditure) of £777 once unspent grant money was taken into account. That the accounts were in surplus is due to the generosity and hard work of so many of us, for which we grateful thanks.

The figures in this report are a summary – ask if you want any information or amplification.

We were able to make the following donations, from our communion collections, special appeals and a tithe of our fundraising:-

Ukraine Collection	£65.00
Family Haven	£350
Action For Children	£630.21
Glos City Mission	£350
Macular Disease Society	£40
All We Can	£356.44
Easter Offering	£289
Turkey/Syria Earthquake	£350
The Leprosy Mission	£706.5
Christian Aid	£135

A total of £3272.15. This, of course, doesn't include the fundraising for various causes that church groups make that doesn't come onto the church books. It is good to see how we respond to a world of need. For the current year, we seem likely to keep income and expenditure roughly equal.

We might have bigger problems for the year that starts in September. We will have to accommodate a large increase in assessment, and most other bills seem likely to increase.

We know that we live in a time of financial insecurity, but you might like to consider prayerfully your weekly offering to the church. And if you don't want to spend Saturdays trying to find the collection, you might consider doing your giving via standing order. If you are fortunate enough to be a taxpayer and haven't made a gift aid declaration, perhaps this is a good time to do it.

But if we are to do what we all really want to be doing, bringing God to Hucclecote, it would be great to be able to concentrate on that, rather than worrying about the bills!

Finally, we should recognise all the work done by Andrew Jackson and Ron Keasley for all they do to help me with the Church finances.

John

## **The 8th Christmas Tree Festival – “Pantomime”**

Christmas seems a long time ago but I am sure you will all recall how beautiful the church looked for the 8th Christmas Tree Festival.

Each tree depicted one of the Pantomimes - Oh Yes it Did - and as usual each organisation had such unique ideas and the result was that every tree was stunning. I am sure you agree that the two Christmas scenes at the front of the church were amazing.

Visitors came from far and wide, as well as from the local community and Church Family, and everyone was very complimentary of all the work. Having a theme makes our Tree Festival different to others, and we are hoping to do it all again this coming Christmas.

Again, thank you to everyone who took part - whether making decorations, decorating trees, stewarding or serving refreshments, not forgetting the great team who helped to clear up and put the Church back together again. Thank you also for your advice, enthusiasm, passion and wonderful creative ideas.

Dawn

## **Ladies' Lunch**

We had a small gathering in the autumn, when we went to the Wheatstone Inn for lunch. As I write this, we are looking forward to our spring outing, again to the Wheatstone.

Any ladies are welcome to join us and lifts are always available.



Any suggestions or preferences for venue or day gratefully received.

Diana

## **Mens' Social**

At the beginning of 2024 it was suggested that the gentlemen of the church should consider setting up a regular meeting to act as a forum for getting to know one another better, and also to introduce appropriate speakers from time to time.

It was agreed to meet on Wednesday 21st February to consider whether to proceed and, if so, what format it may take.

It was agreed to meet on the 2nd Tuesday each month, 10am-12noon in the Welcome.

The inaugural meeting, on 12th March was attended by 11, with 5/6 others giving their apologies. We decided to proceed on an informal basis.

The meeting is intended not just for those attending HMC, but also friends and anyone else from the community.

Peter

## **Ladies' Friendship Club**

Our group of ladies is thriving! We meet on the second Monday each month (except August). We have 32 ladies on our register.

Our Easter devotions with Barry Bishop started our year in April 2023. And through the year we've heard some funny stories from Rosemary Morgan, heard about the Canadian Rockies and learned about the amazing work done by the helping hand charity – Bundles.

We've had quizzes, a games afternoon, cups of tea with cake and a bring & buy sale where we raised £190. This money was donated half each to Insight – a charity that helps people with poor eyesight, and The Butterfly Garden – a project for people of all ages dealing with disablement of any kind.

We took part in the Christmas tree festival and we spent one afternoon preparing for Ali Baba & the 40 thieves! We were very grateful to Kay Jenkins for leading us.

Our Christmas celebration was a bring and share lunch and we enjoyed the Christmas music Andrew played for us.

We've ended our year as we started it with Easter devotions. We were grateful to Heather Upton for coming and leading us.

Sadly we've lost 3 members this year - Joan Morris, Diane Rotherham & Carol Simpson. Both Diane & Carol were valued members of our committee & we will miss them.

Helen

## **Craft Group**

The Craft Committee thought that the Church Family would like to know the history of Hucclecote Methodist Craft Group.

The Craft Group was set up in approximately 1991 and was held at the Manse. It was run by Ruth who was at that time the current Minsters wife.

When the Meacham's term of office came to an end and transferred to another Church, it was decided that the Craft Group would continue with Dorothy Dwight as Organiser and Jill Payne as Treasurer, positions they held for many many years and also at this time the Group moved to the Church Hall on a Thursday morning 10a.m. till 12 noon.

Everyone was welcome whether a Church member or not and this is how it has continued. The only dates we don't meet are Maundy Thursday and 2/3 weeks at Christmastime.

Our first meeting of the New Year is a Bring and Share lunch enjoying games and Quiz's, a fun time is had by all.

During the year we gladly receive craft materials, wool, zips, ribbons lace etc from people clearing out attics or sorting out their own craft items.

We pay a 6 monthly subscription in January and July.

We give donations to Brockworth House, and knit squares to make blankets for the residents to keep their knees warm.

We give donations to the Church for the use of the Hall for which we are extremely grateful.

We have for many years knitted baby blankets, cardigans and hats for the Premature Baby Unit, only this week we have prepared 17 blankets, 19 cardigans and 10 hats.

We are at present making a large banner to be displayed in the Church at Eastertime.

We also decorate a Christmas tree for the Festival in December, a different theme is decided upon every year and we decorate the tree accordingly.

On a regular basis we have an average of 20 to 25 crafters attending each week, enjoying teas, coffees and cakes served in the Welcome, by the delightful tea ladies.

The Group is a way of meeting new friends. We hold small internal workshops to teach one another new skills and how to make new items – we are very lucky to have some very gifted and talented members in our Group.

## **EVERYONE IS WELCOME**

## **DATE FOR YOUR DIARY**

Our Christmas Fayre is to be held on 30th November 2024 10a.m. till 12noon in the Church Hall

Lorraine

## **Handbells**

The Handbell Ringers have resumed practice, after a short break for Christmas to enable us to play at the Easter Day Service.

We meet on Tuesday evenings, and are pleased to say, that Jill and Jan, two new bell ringers have joined our merry band, and we have been able to increase our repertoire.

Thank you to Peter who continues to crack the whip/beat us into submission in order that we give our best performance.

Dawn

## **Monday Makers (WaterAid Fundraising)**

Since January 2023 to March 2024 Monday Makers have raised with your help £2015 for WaterAid by making and selling recycled greetings cards, knitted tippets, jigsaws, books, embroidered cards, bags, and boxes.

In total since we began nearly £8000 has been donated to help transform lives around the world with clean water, decent toilets, and good hygiene. The ripple of change that comes with these three basic things is incredible. Helping to bring clean water to communities suffering from water crisis around the world changes lives and brings hope to families.

Our support has helped work in villages in Bangladesh, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Uganda and beyond. Our changing climate is impacting the poorest communities the strongest and without a reliable source of clean water families are least able to prepare and protect themselves when climate extremes or disasters hit.

Monday Makers are a small group of ladies who meet on Monday evenings enjoying each other's company, making lovely designs, having fun and learning new skills at the same time helping to raise money for a well-deserved cause.

Thank you to all who support us.

Sylvia

## **All We Can**

Our fund raising for **ALL WE CAN** has traditionally been at Christmas through the Christmas collections and also the Christmas card display. The Christmas card display was again in action and we collected **£150**, plus a further **£276.84** from the Carol Service.

Peter

## **Action for Children**

The Methodist Church has been passionate about helping children and families for more than 150 years. The church support helps vulnerable children and young people today, and helps them have a brighter future, by making sure they have somewhere to turn in a crisis.

In 2023, we collectively raised **£1084.59** through the collecting boxes plus a Christmas collection of **£309.88**.

**A very big THANK YOU to all our box holders.**

Lorraine

## **Badminton Club**

We now meet on Monday mornings 9.30 – 11.30. The number of our players – ladies and gentlemen – increases, and we welcome anyone who wants to join us. We don't have any skill level qualification – our matches are strictly for fun. And between games we always have time for refreshments and a chat!

Andrew