

WRU Annual Conference 2023

LIST OF OFFICERS 2022-2023

PRESIDENT

Mr George Phillips

PAST PRESIDENT

Rev Colin Braithwaite

PRESIDENT-DESIGNATE

Rev Michael Hedley

TREASURER

Mr George Phillips

ADMINISTRATION MANAGER

Mrs Alina Taylor

ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT

Mrs Debbie Young

GUARDIAN REPRESENTATIVES

Rev Phillip J Hearson

Mr George Phillips

Mrs Muriel Stonehewer

Rev Colin Braithwaite

PASTOR TO THE PASTORS

Rev Peter Norton

TRUSTEES

Mr Stuart Allen

Mr Graham Evans

Mrs Sandra Fall

Mrs Daphne Hodgkinson

Rev Sharon Hollamby

Mr David Rooksby

REPRESENTATIVE OF HOME MISSIONS

Pastor Andy Wilcock

REPRESENTATIVE OF OVERSEAS MISSIONS

Mrs Lindsey Hedley

REPRESENTATIVE OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND SOCIAL ACTION

Mr Graham Johnson

REPRESENTATIVE OF WOMEN OF ACTION

Mrs Sandra Fall

REPRESENTATIVE OF LOCAL PREACHER'S FELLOWSHIP

Mr David Tuckett

CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES TO THE CONFERENCE

Alderman's Green	Mr	David	Lee
Glasgow	Rev	Eddie	Mubengo
Attleborough	Mr	Matthew	Halladay
Beacon Community	Mrs	Michelle	Norton
Bedworth	Mr	Graham	Johnson
Bethel Community	Mrs	Cassie	Biggin
Bowbroom	Mrs	Christine	Houghton
Bozeat TLC	Mrs	Susan	Norton
Griffydam	Mrs	Judith	Darby
Church on the Rock	Mrs	Jackie	Clarke
Cliffe Bridge	Mrs	Ann	Hewitt
Cornerstone	Mr	John	Houghton
Curbar	Mr	Stuart	Allen
Dodworth	Mrs	Dorothy	Irwin
Dorrington	Mr	Hugh	Kinnard
Ellistown	Rev	John	Langford
Hampden View	Mrs	Carole	Parkinson
Hazlemere	Mr	Tony	Child
Heath End	Mrs	Lisa	Macbeth
Hough Lane	Mr	Graham	Evans
Jump	Mr	Ian	Sykes
Mexborough	Dr	Steven	Jenkins
Moira	Mr	Clifford	Darby
New Swannington	Mr	Jim	Rossell
Newhill	Mrs	Jean	Sykes
Owlerton	Miss	Maureen	Robinson
Richmond	Mr	Martin	Ludbrook
Rushden High Street	Rev	Phil	Hearson
Rushden Mission	Rev	David	Bracken
Ruskington	Mr	George	Phillips
St. James - Old Hill	Mrs	Elaine	Heathcock
Stoney Middleton	Mrs	Beth	Ely
Ashington	Mr	Brian	Watson
Worsborough Community	Mrs	Tracey	Hamby
Wymington	Mr	Bob	Major

UNION DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE CONFERENCE

Christian Ethics and Social Action	Mr	Phil	Hartshorn
Home Missions & YPD	Mr	Andy	Wilcock
Local Preachers Fellowship	Mr	David	Tuckett
Ministerial	Rev	Sharon	Hollamby
Overseas Missions	Mrs	Lindsey	Hedley
Women of Action	Mrs	Anne-Marie	Wilcock

VISITORS AND GUESTS

Mrs	Rita	Allen	Mrs	Lyndis	Payne
Mrs	Linda	Ashton	Mrs	Sandra	Rooksby
Mrs	Ann	Goodwin	Mr	Richard	Saunders-Hindley
Revd Canon	Phil	Harris	Mr	Anthony	Taylor
Mrs	Ruth	Harris	Mrs	Elaine	Tuckett
Mrs	Susan	Hartshorn	Mrs	Hazel	Watson
Rev	Anthony	Hodkinson	Mr	Michael	Wood
Mrs	Kathy	Kinnard	Mrs	Pippa	Wood
Mrs	Helen	Lee	Mrs	Susan	Woods
Mrs	Eleanor	Minney			

MINUTES OF BUSINESS

For The 174th Annual Conference of the Wesleyan Reform Union of Churches

The Business Sessions of the Conference will be preceded by devotions, and will be conducted by the following:

MONDAY AFTERNOON

TUESDAY MORNING

WEDNESDAY MORNING

THE RETIRING PRESIDENT

THE PRESIDENT

THE W.A. REPRESENTATIVE

Mr George Phillips

Rev Michael Hedley

Mrs Sandra Fall

Monday, June 12th

Opening Devotions

These were led by the President, Mr George Phillips who read from Acts 9:26-28, commented, and led in prayer. We sang "Lord, for the years".

1. Names of Representatives

As the rules of Conference changed on becoming a CIO, the names of those attending Conference were taken "as read" as per the above list.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Muriel Stonehewer, Graham Johnson, Simon Sykes and Jackie Clarke

3. Appointment of:

- Secretary to Conference: Mrs Alina Taylor
- Recorders of Minutes: Rev Colin Braithwaite (with assistance from Phil Hartshorn, Phil Hearson, Cliff Darby & Peter Norton)
- Letter Writers: Daphne Hodkinson & Judith Derby
- Decide as to the admission of representatives of the Press and Visitors: Agreed

All the above were proposed, seconded and agreed.

4. **Decide as to Standing Orders as follows:**

Discussion only allowed on a motion duly moved and seconded.

No delegate to speak more than once on any subject, except the mover of the Resolution, who has the right to reply.

- The mover of a Resolution must not exceed ten minutes, and the seconder five minutes.
- Subsequent speakers and the reply of the mover, not to exceed five minutes.
- All printed reports and statements to be taken as read.
- Only Representatives have authority to vote. No others must accept or use voting privileges.

Standing Orders, as above, were proposed, seconded and approved.

5. **Obituaries**

Conference stood to remember members of our churches who had died during the last year. Particular mention was made of Brian Armit, a past president and member of General Committee.

6. **Read Correspondence for Conference**

There was no correspondence to be addressed at Conference.

7. **Nomination of President**

The nomination of Rev Michael Hedley for the position of President (2023-2025) was made by Phil Hartshorn and Conference agreed unanimously. Michael responded to the nomination and thanked God for His empowering.

8. **Conference Dates**

2024 Mon 17th June to Wed 19th June, Swanwick

2025 Mon 9th June to Wed 11th June, Swanwick

The above dates were approved.

9. **General Meetings Dates**

March – 1st Saturday, Rushden Mission Church & Zoom

October – 3rd Saturday, Jump Church & Zoom

The above dates were approved.

10. **Women of Action Report**

Report by Mrs S Fall

This last year has been such a blessing. We have thoroughly enjoyed our times together in prayer, discussion and at the events around the country where we have met so many different ladies. We have seen God answer prayer, meet with us wherever we were, and touch lives with encouragement and challenge. God is so good at taking what we offer and somehow make it useful to so many in different ways. We worship and thank Jesus.

When we met together for the morning in April we spent much time in prayer, thanking God for all that He has done through the women of the Union past and present, and also seeking His face and favour for the future. After much prayer and discussion we have concluded that after 2 years, 5 events, many prayer times and a bible study, 'He Restores My Soul' will end this year with the last event on 23rd September at Syresham. We began a conversation about the format of any future events, but more prayer is needed for the teaching content as we only want to do what God is directing us to. We can have many good ideas but we need to know God's heart in this, as only His leading will bring fruit, and prosper the ladies in their relationship with Jesus.

We talked about our media presence, and asked ourselves how do we attract more women under the age of 50? We will continue to progress this conversation through the coming months but for now will be adding a 'thought for the day' to our information on the WRU web page which will be updated monthly, and can then be shared on our own individual facebook pages.

Following an open discussion at the AGM it was agreed that we would not rejoin the World Day of Prayer. Overall it was felt that if ladies had a heart to pray for a particular country, up to date information is widely available and easily accessible at any time. We did agree to review this decision annually.

Prayer is still an important part of our journey together so we have arranged several dates to meet to pray: Monday 18th September, Monday 20th November, Monday 15th January, all at 6:30 on Zoom. In person prayer will be on Saturday 16th March 10:30am at Griffydam. The AGM will be at Hampden View on Saturday 27th April 2024. All ladies are welcome to join us for any of our times together.

Our desire is still to be obedient to God's directing for the Women of Action so please continue to pray for us, and join with us. We are looking forward with excitement and eagerness to spread the good news of Jesus, and encourage and support the ladies of our churches in their faith and witness. Thank you for your continued prayers, support and financial donations.

Election of Officers

Co-Ordinator/Secretary	Sandra Fall
Treasurer	Daphne Hodkinson
Minute Secretary	Ellie Minney
Magazine Secretary	Ellie Minney
WA Representative	Anne-Marie Wilcock

The following additional comment was made:

The WA would be happy to receive any financial donations should anyone wish to make a gift. The "He restores my soul" workshops were continuing to be a blessing to the ladies. These workshops will come to an end at the end of this year. Further activities are being considered for the future. Encouraging comments were received from the floor of Conference. Sandra Fall was thanked for all the work that she did on behalf of the Women of Action and presented with a gift.

The above report was presented, seconded and accepted.

11. Union Trustees Report & Statistics

Report by Mr George Phillips

With the Wesleyan Reform Union becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) as agreed at Conference 2022 there is now a requirement for a Trustees Report to Conference.

The Trustees have met five times during the year. The National Spiritual Coordinator, Administration Manager and Administration Assistant has been invited to the meetings.

This has been a transitional year with the submission to the Charity Commission to become a CIO being prepared and submitted. At the time of writing, we are awaiting the new charity number after which all assets and properties will be transferred.

The property portfolio has increased during the year taking ownership of the former Ivinghoe manse and part ownership of the Hazlemere manse. Rental income from the four properties in the portfolio has supported Union finances and, therefore, there has been no requirement to increase assessment.

The Trustees have been involved in the disposal of several the Church buildings.

Over Haddon
Deddington
Lowestoft
Smithies
Fife Street, Nuneaton
Grimesthorpe
Brant Broughton

Many of these have not been straightforward with lost deeds and no property trustees. Fife Street sale will be completed shortly but other are some months away.

The Trustees have performed a management function over the Union employees and continue to monitor the effectiveness of the roles and the grants given in support of Churches by qualitative (reports etc.) and quantitative (measurable statistics etc.) means.

As part of the legal duties time has been given to discuss any changes in investment policies and any issue that may affect the reputation of the Union.

Statistics

Name of Church	Junior Members	Senior Members	Preachers Full & Trial	Scholars	Teachers	Children: Primary School	Young People: Senior School	Devotional Meeting (Inc. WA)	WA Members	Average Attendance
ALDERMANS GREEN		39		8	3			1		33
<i>ASHBY CIRCUIT</i>										
Ellistown		4						1	3	12
Ibstock		6								25
Moira		9						1		10
New Swannington		4						1		12
	0	23	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	59
Ashington (Word of Life)	10	30	8	10	4			3	4	42
Attleborough		9						1	12	16
Beaconsfield		10								8
<i>BAKEWELL CIRCUIT</i>										
Bonsall		12						1		16
Curbar		6						1		16
Stoney Middleton		4	1					1		8
Winstar		4						1		10
Youlgrave		6						1		10
	0	32	1	0	0	0	0	5	0	60
<i>BARNSLEY CIRCUIT</i>										
Cliffe Bridge		5	1					1		18
Dodworth		8	2							12
Hunningley		9								9
Staincross	3	9	3							15
Worsbrough		5								6
	3	36	6	0	0	0	0	1	0	60
Bedworth		21	1							17
Birds Edge		7	2							8

<i>BRADFORD CIRCUIT</i>										
Addingham		9						2		14
Beacon Community		35	1	3	2			4		37
Bethel Community		10	2					2		38
Muff Field		19	1					1		12
		0	73	4	3	2	0	0	9	0
Choppington	1	6	2					1		13
Church on the Rock		14	2	4	1			2	1	10
Clydebank	6	18	1	6	2			2		24
Denby Dale		6	1						1	19
Dorrington		6	1		1				1	22
Fritwell		9								14
Glasgow (Abundant Life and Liberty Centre)	2	6	1					2	1	20
Griffydam		13		4	2			9	4	28
Hazlemere		27	1		1				2	34
Heath End		25		14	3	5	18		2	46
Heckington		6							1	9
Old Hill		25	2						2	9
<i>ROTHERHAM, MEXBOROUGH AND DONCASTER CIRCUIT</i>										
Bowbroom		24							1	20
Cornerstone		5								5
Hough Lane	1	23	3					25		27
Jump		25							1	23
Mexborough Life Church	14	37	1	12	5				1	55
Newhill		10							1	20
		15	124	4	12	5	0	25	4	0
<i>SHEFFIELD CIRCUIT</i>										
Coal Aston		4								8
Greenhead		6							1	5
Hampden View		12	5	5		5	1		2	10
Mayfield		11							1	13
Oughtibridge		12								
Owlerton		23							4	7
Philadelphia		5								8
Richmond		19	3	5	3	12	3		4	8
St Mary's		3							1	12
Woodseats		4							1	16
		0	99	8	10	3	17	4	14	25
<i>SLEAFORD CIRCUIT</i>										
Ruskington		10	1							17

	0	10	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	17
St. Just		10						4		12
Syresham		11						1		15
<i>WELLINGBOROUGH CIRCUIT</i>										
Alma Street		3								10
Bozeat		14	2					1		13
Isham		2								9
Finedon		31							16	20
Rushden High Street		41	2	7	3	11	10	3		46
Rushden Mission		36	1	19	5	6	3	3		45
Wymington		9						1		14
	0	136	5	26	8	17	13	8	16	157
SUMMARY OF STATISTICS										
TOTALS FOR 2022	20	825	51	100	36	71	45	60	43	1050
TOTALS FOR 2023	37	831	51	97	35	39	76	69	69	1183
INCREASE	17	6					31	9	26	133
DECREASE			0	3	1	32				

The above reports (Trustees report & Statistical report) were presented as one item and seconded. After discussion, it was accepted.

The statistics were slightly slurred due to Covid 19 and therefore the Chairman compared this year with 2019

- Churches decreased by 13
- Membership decreased by 254 (23%) – after discounting churches that had closed, the decrease is 139 (14%)
- Attendance decreased by 261 (18%) – after discounting churches that had closed, the decrease is 120 (11%)
- Churches given financial support – increased attendance by 22 (15%)

Comment was made about the totalling of the statistics and corrected.

The question as to whether we were quorate was raised and it was confirmed that we were.

12. National Spiritual Coordinator Report

Report by Rev Michael Hedley

Lindsey and I have completed 65 visits in total to 55 Churches across the Union. We have covered over 12,500 miles in 11 months and have been welcomed and blessed wherever we have been. Some Churches have had a multiple of visits as we needed to give assistance to some Churches that required urgent help. All Churches apart from 3 have been contacted by telephone but all have been contacted regularly via email, Zoom, Teams or WhatsApp Video.

That's the statistical element of what's happened. From the outset Lindsey and I took time in prayer and asked the Holy Spirit to give us guidance as to where to go, who to visit and what would be said in our discussions with each Church. So the main message that came from the Holy Spirit was one of "Check Your Foundations." This was a very clear Holy Spirit prompted and inspired message and the further we go in the role the more it makes absolute sense.

The message is to check where we all are in our individual prayer lives as well as our corporate prayer lives, to check where we are in studying God's Word individually and corporately and being in step with His Holy Spirit, and where we are in our taking of Holy Communion as this is so important to the Church, but also how to communicate the Gospel message simply in every day conversational language.

Prayer has been the main focus of our discussions. Prayer is the key to unlocking so many things in our Church lives and should be the very foundational element that helps us to maintain vision and purpose within our communities. Nationally, we have implemented a bi-monthly prayer email, which includes answered prayers as well as prayer requests. We have sent to many churches a prayer poster which simply states, "We are a praying church and we are praying for you!" This helps link us to the communities in which we serve to know we are praying for them. Some churches have installed a prayer request box either outside or inside the Church so that passers by can put a prayer request into the box. We have also asked Churches to send out emails frequently, to local Schools, Health Services, Businesses, Parish or Town Councils, Police, Ambulance, Fire Services etc to let them know we as a Church are praying for them. Again this helps to let community know we care for them enough to spend time to pray for them even if they don't give a request back.

This next phase is that we are currently working up materials for prayer workshops to ensure that we are clear about what we mean about the power of prayer and how it can change the atmosphere and take back the ground the enemy has stolen from us wherever we are serving. We will be delivering these workshops in the next years to groups of Churches and the aim will also be to have all the resources on the Union Website as well. We believe that Church can once again affect communities through the power of prayer.

We have spent most of the rest of the time working from home sending emails, telephoning around all of the churches at least bi-monthly offering prayer, discussing issues that we can help with, and getting updates from our Christmas, Easter and other programmes which seem to have gone very well. In at least 20 of our Churches, we are seeing real growth both numerically and spiritually. This may not show itself in increased membership, but it will no doubt show in the average attendances across many churches.

There are a few churches which are very clearly struggling and are down to 3 or 4 members and in some places holding only once monthly services, with not much else happening. But yet in some cases where numbers are in single figures there is a real desire to see change and effect spiritual change in their communities, so even in those cases there is cause for hope.

The positivity certainly outweighs the negative issues around our churches, and it delights us to see that many are experiencing personal growth spiritually as well as growth numerically and many want to have and are appreciative of the support that is on offer from the Union through the NSC role.

We have offered support to many churches during the past three months, including being part of the review team for Rev David Bracken's Probationary Review, helping to start the process of recruiting new Pastor/Ministers for Beacon Community Church, and Addingham Mt Hermon.

One of my greatest pleasures during this time has been to have now completed the upgrade of Geoffrey Lee's Theology course, and this has been distributed electronically to the Ministerial Committee. We now have a marking plan, student and teacher handbook, which includes a foreword, a course overview, a learner and tutor responsibilities guide, a suggested reading list, a guide to writing assignments, a marking criteria matrix, and a description of assignment grades. The course material now also has a set of aims and objectives as well as assignment tips, this assists the process of marking assignments but also allows the learner to know what is expected of them in each module and each level of the course. This will cement a greater understanding of what is expected of both the learner and the tutor. We will also be producing a new enrolment form to go with this pack so that the reasons for studying will help form part of the learning agreement.

We have at least 7 people across the Union who are interested in the Theology Course, and as we go around the churches on our next set of visits that could increase. The next stage of getting the course accredited is to write up the Quality Assurance Document, which I intend to commence in the coming weeks and hope to complete the accreditation process by the end of this year. The Course will also be copyrighted to the WRU.

As we have travelled around the Churches, we have learnt a lot about what people think of the Union and their own Churches. Each Church has a clear local focus and are very much attuned to what they can and are doing in their local Churches with some interest and prayerful support of the Churches in the Union. There still however, seems to be a disinterest in all things nationally regarding the Union, its committees and conference. This needs to be discussed further and we will be submitting further proposals to try to get some much-needed discussion around this issue.

We would also like at this point to thank you for your prayers as we travel around the country, doing God's work and exalting His Name High and being obedient to His calling on our lives.

The NSC emphasised the importance of prayer in all things. He and his wife had been richly blessed by their visits to the churches. The theological training material is currently being updated and should soon be complete. He thanked churches for the fellowship they experienced during their visits. Michael was thanked for all he had done over the last year – but advised not to overstretch himself.

The above report was presented and seconded. After discussion on the validation of the theology course, it was accepted.

Tuesday, June 13th

Opening Devotions

Opening devotions were led by the President, Rev Michael Hedley. He read from Psalm 23, commented and led in prayer. We sang "The Lord's my shepherd" and "I will offer up my life".

13. Resolution of Loyalty

to be moved by The President, Michael Hedley

To the Kings most gracious majesty It is with great pleasure that the members of the 174th Conference of the Wesleyan Reform Union of Churches assembled at the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire, send to your most Gracious Majesty their sincere and loyal greetings.

In obedience to Holy Scripture, we would like to assure you and your family of our continued prayers that God will sustain you and continue to bless you as you reign over us under His divine guidance and authority. That you would know that blessed peace that surpasses all understanding, that will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We give thanks to almighty God for your recent Service of Coronation, and offer continual and persistent prayers on your behalf, that you may devote yourself to loyal service and Christian witness to our nation and the commonwealth.

The above Resolution of loyalty was read to Conference and was followed by the singing of the National Anthem.

14. **Safeguarding Report**

Report by Mr S Sykes

Sorry I cannot be with you in person this year but unfortunately, I am unable to get time out of work this term. Its been a fairly quiet few months safeguarding wise but I ran a full day safeguarding course at Rushden Mission earlier this year that went well, we ran a hybrid meeting which was interesting but the feedback was positive.

The short basic safeguarding course I have put together is now ready to use. The original idea was to put it straight on the union website but I am asking if churches want to contact me if they are interested in running it at their churches, I can then send them a copy of the course to use and talk them through it so they are prepared to deliver it. The course covers the basics on safeguarding children and does touch slightly on adults as the 2 areas do overlap. It covers different types of abuse and neglect and covers the basic responsibilities for church members. The course does not go into any depth on reporting or the role of the safeguarding lead but is suitable to be shared at a church meeting for all members.

The course takes between 1 and 1.5 hours to complete depending on how much discussion it raises. I have tried to make it self-explanatory but if any questions do arise that you cannot answer from your own knowledge they can be directed back to me and I will get back to you with some answers.

I have had a number of discussions with churches recently regarding DBS checks, remember anyone who is in regulated activity at your church should have a DBS check. I have a good guide to follow if you are not sure if a role falls under regulated activity and I am happy to send it to you if you drop me an email. Regulated activity in adults is harder to justify for the purpose of a DBS and you will only be able to obtain a check for a few specific roles.

DBS checks for volunteers should be free and the new update service is also a free service so your DBS is always current and up to date. Paid workers will have to pay for a check and these cost around £45 (the update service is then £12 a year) A DBS check is recommended to be renewed every 3 years if they are not on the update service but that is only a recommendation and a DBS check never really expires but is only accurate on the day it is performed. There are a number of umbrella companies that carry out DBS checks and can be found using a quick search on the internet. The company I have always used is called Atlantic Data and is a really easy online system to use and checks usually take between 2-4 days to come back, but I have had them back in as little as 16 hours.

To finish please remember to keep safeguarding on your church meeting agendas so policies can be kept up to date, make sure it stays in regular discussion within our churches so that we can keep on top of issues before they arise. The more safeguarding is feared and buried away and not talked about, the more chance we have of failing to keep people safe. Never fall into that trap of “It would never happen here”.

In the absence of our Safeguarding Officer, the above report was presented by the President. Brief comments were made from the floor. The report was proposed, seconded, and accepted.

15. Union Treasurer's Report

Report by Mr G Phillips

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH 2023

	2022/2023		2021/2022	
Employment of Funds				
LAND AND BUILDINGS		760,000		558,000
FURNITURE AND FITTINGS COST	26,581		15,043	
Less: Depreciation to date	11,597	14,484	7,143	7,900
INVESTMENTS		1,007,010		1,005,681
LOANS TO CHURCHES				
Chapel Loan Fund			13,350	
Extension Fund	60,750	60,750	37,500	50,850
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors:				
Union		619		
Year Books		13	13	
National Westminster Bank plc				
Deposit Account	88,405		467,313	
Current Account	6,800		5,629	
Cash in Hand	1,391	97,228	1,938	494,298
		<u>1,39,972</u>		<u>2,086,729</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Creditors:				
Union Expenses	1,128		1,128	
Actuarial Fees	3,100	4,228	3,000	4,128
		<u>1,935,744</u>		<u>2,082,601</u>
REPRESENTED BY:				
Property Fund		760,000		528,000
Loan Fund				139,185
Extension Fund		491,238		699,101
Ellis Crossley Training & Pastoral Aid Fund		4,275		4,536
Home Missions Account		770		946
Overseas Missions				
General Fund		403		695
Training Fund		2,367		2,367
Project Fund		1,525		11,136
Young People's Department Account		8,786		8,467
Christian Ethics and Social Action		448		405
Ministers Provident Society		15,238		19,405
Local Preachers Fellowship		2,899		3,067
Women of Action		898		893
General Reserve		178,720		181,991
Holdback Policy Capital Account		468,177		482,407
Holdback Policy Capital Account		<u>1,935,744</u>		<u>2,082,601</u>

UNION EXPENSES ACCOUNT

		2022/2023		2021/2022
Income				
Assessment		30,949		34,713
Investment income		8,052		1,182
Year Books sales		419		571
Conference income		10,358		9,441
Sundries		399		677
From General Reserve		27,027		28,604
From General Reserve		<u>77,204</u>		<u>75,188</u>
 Expenditure				
Salaries etc		36,498		35,150
Pension		6,558		7,035
Head Office Expenses		3,087		1,850
Year Books costs		422		506
Conference costs		13,568		15,972
Administration -	Telephone	1,351		1,614
	Postage	78		198
	Stationery	2,169		1,827
	Insurance	<u>786</u>	4,384	<u>762</u>
				4,401
Travelling -	Conference	387		266
	General Meetings	1,104		266
	Committees	<u>737</u>	2,228	<u>1,358</u>
				1,890
Sundry Expenses-	Subscriptions	778		1,330
	Bank charges	463		439
	Sundries	<u>74</u>	1,315	<u>145</u>
				1,914
Depreciation		4,454		2,282
Accountants		1,128		1,128
Actuaries		3,562		3,060
		<u>77,204</u>		<u>75,188</u>

GENERAL RESERVE

	2022/2023		2021/2022	
Balance 1st April 2022		181,991		215,986
Sundries				786
Rent from Cardwell Avenue	7,751		6,621	
Less costs	<u>685</u>	7,066	<u>782</u>	5,839
Rent from Thornbrook Close	9,700		4,061	
Less costs	<u>1,945</u>	7,755	<u>964</u>	3,097
Rent from Willow Walk	8,580			
Less costs	<u>0</u>	8,580		0
Rent from Windsor Road	3,766			
Less costs	<u>0</u>	<u>3,766</u>		<u>0</u>
		<u>209,158</u>		<u>225,708</u>
Legal advice		2,403		6,422
Thornbrook Close refurbishment		27,027		8,691 28,604
Union expenses		1,008		
Sundries		<u>178,720</u>		<u>181,991</u>
Balance 31 st March 2023		<u>209,158</u>		<u>225,708</u>

		2022/2023	2021/2022
HOME MISSIONS			
Balance 1st April 2022		946	899
Donations		3,445	3,463
Interest		8	1
Sundries			641
Transfer from Extension Fund		107,500	68,500
		<u>111,899</u>	<u>73,504</u>
Cost of Development and Outreach Consultant		17,720	17,695
Car		3,202	3,398
Travel		284	182
Cost of National Spiritual Coordinator		28,782	
Car		3,738	
Travel		1,599	
Accomodation		1,122	
Grants			
	New Swan/Ellistown	3,600	
	Rushden Mission	3,750	
	Glasgow	19,629	
	Bedworth	12,000	
	Ashington	9,283	
	Bethel, Bierley	6,250	
		<u>54,512</u>	<u>51,283</u>
Training		170	
Balance 31st March 2023		<u>770</u>	<u>946</u>
		<u>111,899</u>	<u>73,504</u>
YOUNG PEOPLES DEPARTMENT			
Balance 1st April 2022		8,467	7,668
Donations		250	790
Interest		69	9
		<u>8,786</u>	<u>8,467</u>
Salary, etc.			
Travel			
Balance 31st March 2023		<u>8,786</u>	<u>8,467</u>
		<u>8,786</u>	<u>8,467</u>
CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND SOCIAL ACTION			
Balance 1st April 2022		405	385
Donations		1,225	1,315
Interest		3	
		<u>1,633</u>	<u>1,700</u>
Caring for Life		450	500
Christian Institute		450	500
Day One		100	100
Conference fees		185	195
Sundries			
Balance 31st March 2023		<u>448</u>	<u>405</u>
		<u>1,633</u>	<u>1,700</u>

		2022/2023	2021/2022
LOCAL PREACHERS FELLOWSHIP			
Balance 1st April 2022		3,067	3,441
Ministry Day		312	180
Interest		25	4
		<u>3,404</u>	<u>3,625</u>
Ministry Day		320	363
Conference		185	195
Sundries			
Balance 31st March 2023	General Fund	1,252	1,420
	Trust Fund	1,647	3,067
		<u>3,404</u>	<u>3,625</u>
ELLIS CROSSLEY TRAINING & PASTORAL AID FUND			
Balance 1st April 2022		4,536	4,528
Donations		1,035	1,630
Fees		15	15
Ministers/Pastors fund			285
Ministers/Pastors donations		55	
Interest		37	5
Transfer from Extension Fund		3,000	2,000
		<u>8,678</u>	<u>8,463</u>
Tutor Salary etc.		128	180
Pastoral Salary etc		3,343	3,187
Service Increments		310	560
Travel		247	
Removal fees		275	
Ministers & Pastors speaker		100	
Balance 31st March 2023		<u>4,275</u>	<u>4,536</u>
		<u>8,678</u>	<u>8,463</u>
WOMEN OF ACTION			
Balance 1st April 2023		893	1,037
Donations		183	100
Interest		7	1
		<u>1,083</u>	<u>1,138</u>
Conference		185	195
President Gift			50
Sundries			
Balance 31st March 2023		<u>898</u>	<u>893</u>
		<u>1,083</u>	<u>1,138</u>
MINISTERS PROVIDENT SOCIETY			
Balance 1st April 2022		19,405	24,261
Donations		1,660	1,960
Subscriptions			24
Interest		173	28
		<u>21,238</u>	<u>26,273</u>
Gifts		6,000	5,850
Funeral contributions			1,000
Sundries			18
Balance 31st March 2023		<u>15,238</u>	<u>19,405</u>
		<u>21,238</u>	<u>26,273</u>

	2022/2023	2021/2022
OVERSEAS MISSIONS		
General Fund		
Balance 1st April 2022	695	1,356
Donations	2,833	1,191
Interest	25	5
Sundries	<u>3,553</u>	<u>2,552</u>
Conference fees		15
Postage		42
Grants		
People International	250	
Christian Aid Ukraine	500	
Arab World Missions	800	
Hope House	800	
I Fall)	800	
	<u>3,150</u>	<u>1,800</u>
Sundries		
Balance 31st March 2023	<u>403</u>	<u>695</u>
	<u>3,553</u>	<u>2,552</u>
Training Fund		
Balance 1st April 2022	2,367	2,367
Sundries		
Balance 31st March 2023	<u>2,367</u>	<u>2,367</u>
Madagascar Project		
Balance 1st April 2022	400	4,206
Donations		<u>1,194</u>
	<u>400</u>	<u>5,400</u>
Grant	400	5,000
Balance 31st March 2023	<u>400</u>	<u>400</u>
	400	5,400
Minibus Project		
Balance 1st April 2022	10,736	
Donations	<u>1,101</u>	<u>10,736</u>
	11,837	10,736
Grant	11,837	
Balance 31st March 2023	<u>11,837</u>	<u>10,736</u>
	11,837	10,736
Safe Haven Project		
Balance 1st April 2022		
Donations	<u>3,453</u>	<u>10,736</u>
	3,453	10,736
Grant	1,928	
Balance 31st March 2023	<u>1,525</u>	
	3,453	0

		2022/2023	2021/2022
EXTENSION FUND			
Balance 1st April 2022		699,101	788,097
Sales	Cudworth	74,725	
	Grimesthorpe	7,501	
Transfer - Loan Fund		139,185	
Sundries			5,000
		<u>920,512</u>	<u>793,097</u>
Transfer to Home Missions		107,500	68,500
Transfer to Training & Past Aid		3,000	2,000
Grants	Ellistown	17,556	3,000
	Beacon	50,000	
Ashington car park			10,020
Willow Walk, Hazlemere		232,000	
Costs	Ashington	2,567	
	Hoyle Mill	595	
	Grimesthorpe	8,392	
	Lowestoft	521	
	Nuneaton	4,910	
	Over Haddon	2,176	
	Brant Broughton	57	
		<u>19,218</u>	<u>10,620</u>
Balance 31st March 2023	Investments	430,488	661,601
	Loans	60,750	37,500
		<u>491,238</u>	<u>699,101</u>
		<u>920,512</u>	<u>793,241</u>

LOAN FUND

Balance 1st April 2022		139,185	138,685
Collections			500
		<u>139,185</u>	<u>139,185</u>
Transfer - Extension Fund		139,185	
Balance 31st March 2023		<u>0</u>	<u>139,185</u>
		<u>139,185</u>	<u>139,185</u>

EXTENSION FUND - LOANS OUTSTANDING

Description	Original Loan	New Loans Year to 31/03/23	Balance 31/03/22	Repaid Year to 31/03/23	Balance 31/03/23	Collection Received 31/03/23
2002 Ellistown	3,000		100	100	0	
2018 St Just	20,000	10,000	13,250		23,250	
2009 Clydebank	60,000		37,500		37,500	
		10,000	50,850	100	60,750	0

		2022/2023	2021/2022
HOLDBACK POLICY CAPITAL ACCOUNT			
Balance 1st April 2022		482,407	511,760
Sales	Cudworth	70,770	144
		<u>553,177</u>	<u>511,904</u>
Grants	Staincross	10,000	
	Hough Lane	9,000	
	Jump	3,500	
	Worsborough	7,500	
	Stoney		
	Middleton	<u>55,000</u>	<u>29,497</u>
Balance 31st March 2023	Bakewell Circuit	119,976	174,976
	Barnsley Circuit	53,270	
	Bradford Circuit	14,223	14,223
	Denby Dale	20,419	20,419
	Guidepost	25,000	25,000
	Mexborough	50,632	50,632
	Mexborough Capital	53,182	53,182
	R,M & D Circuit	87,453	99,953
	Sleaford Circuit	40,171	40,171
	Wellingboro Circuit	<u>3,851</u>	<u>3,851</u>
		<u>468,177</u>	<u>482,407</u>
		<u>553,177</u>	<u>511,904</u>

INVESTMENT DISTRIBUTION

Interest from Investments	8,399	1,207
Less Retained by Union Expenses Account	<u>8,052</u>	<u>1,182</u>
	<u>347</u>	<u>25</u>
Distribution:		
Home Missions	8	1
Overseas Missions	25	5
Young People's Department	69	9
Ellis Crossley Training & Past Aid	37	5
Ministers Provident Society	173	
Christian Ethics and Social Action	3	
Women of Action	7	1
Local Preachers Fellowship	<u>25</u>	<u>4</u>
	<u>347</u>	<u>25</u>

INVESTMENTS

	Invested at 31/03/2022	Invested 2022/2023	Repaid 2022/2023	Invested at 31/03/2023
Income Bonds	500,000			500,000
Virgin Money	505,681	1,329		507,010
	1,005,681	1,329	0	1,007,010

The financial report was presented by the Union Treasurer. It was noted that there were a few errors in the accounts printed in the Handbook and corrected sheets had been inserted.

General accounts comments:

- First year all accounts have been in one account.
- Union expenses account shows cost of running the Union.
- Almost at break-even point when General Reserve is taken into account
- Interest rates have increased.
- We have four properties which now bring in income.
- No need for assessment to be raised.
- Home Missions account now included the salary of the NSC.
- Almost all the money from this fund comes from the sale of properties.
- Transfer loan fund into the extension fund
- Extend the name of the extension fund to “Chapel extension fund”.

Balance sheet comments:

- Support to churches in the current year is £263,000 and since 2010 we have supported churches to a sum of £1.7million
- We have a strong balance sheet.
- Grateful to the Administration Manager and Admin Assistant

- The treasurer was thanked for all the work he does.

Discussion from the floor:

- Retention of £400,000 in the extension fund – It was confirmed that it had been approved and required by the Charity Commission

After being proposed and seconded, the report was approved by Conference.

16. Overseas Missions Department Report

a. Report prepared by OM secretary Lindsey Hedley

The Overseas Missions team would like to thank you for all your support, both prayerfully and financially. We are excited and blessed to welcome Rev Ian Fall to our Mission Personnel list this year and walk with Flame International in their mission field to bring the Gospel to many war torn areas. Once again, we have been able to send gifts to our missionary personnel, and for the first time we have been able to send monies directly to the Hot Meals Project, intermittently to help keep the programme going.

As a team we have decided to further support the Hot Meals Project in Lebanon for another year as there is a very great need. It is a very new outreach programme which helps the children and brings the Gospel message to a troubled land. Your further support is greatly needed.

Food is very expensive in Lebanon and the children often go without food for many days. The school programme provides education, food and encouragement as well as sharing the Word of God and the love of Jesus to all and any who come in.

As an Overseas Missions Team, we are always looking for future projects, if you have a project that you would like the WRU to support, please get in touch with us, and we will prayerfully consider them.

The projects normally run for 1 year.

We are represented all over the world in the mission field, united in Christ with our brothers and sisters who are called to serve overseas. We as a Union can make a difference when we work together with our

Overseas personnel and projects. If you would like to know more about the Overseas Missions outreach, please get in touch.

God bless you all and once again thank you very much for all your support from all the Overseas Missions team.

b. Present List of Missionaries

2003	Helen	AWM - Arab World Ministries of Pioneers P O Box 51 Loughborough Leicestershire LE11 3WQ
2016	Dr Lesley Noghti	c/o Friends of Mandritsara 14 Loraine Gardens Ashtead Surrey KT21 1PD www.mandritsara.org.uk
1995	Phil & Diane Benstead	People International c/o Wesleyan Reform Union Church Street, Jump Barnsley S74 0HZ
2023	Ian Fall	Flame International c/o Wesleyan Reform Union Church Street, Jump Barnsley, S74 0HZ

Comments were made:

- The OM Team were grateful for all donations.
- Ian Fall had been added to the list of mission personnel.
- The current project will continue for a further year.
- New suggestions for further projects would be welcomed.
- Names of personnel were read.
- Smarty tubes were to be used as a means of collecting 20p or £1 coins.
- Donations of £4,192 had already been sent to the Lebanon project.
- A short video from children in Lebanon was shown.

The above report was presented, seconded and approved.

17. Housing for Retired Ministers Fund Report

a. Report by Alina Taylor

The Housing for Retired Ministers Trust continues to assist our ordained Ministers financially, particularly at the time of their retirement when sometimes they have problems with housing and other needs. The Trust has been able to help several of the Ministers over the years in different ways.

If such needs arise, please contact the Administration Manager to request an application form. Any requests will receive a sympathetic ear.

As last year the Trustees remain: Muriel Stonehewer, George Phillips, Cliff Darby and David Rooksby.

We thank all the Churches for their donations in support of this fund. It is much appreciated, and we look forward to new and continued support. If any Church feels able to support this fund, kindly send donations to the WRU Head office.

c. Accounts by Mr G Phillips

	2023	2022
	£	£
<u>Receipt</u>		
Interest Virgin Money	239.04	106.67
Loan repayment		15,000.00
Donations	<u>1,515.00</u>	<u>3,405.00</u>
	1,754.04	18,511.67
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Grant towards Rent	<u> </u>	<u>200.00</u>
Net Incoming Resources	1,754.04	18,311.67
 Building Society Balance at 31 st March 2022		
	<u>90,886.12</u>	<u>72,574.45</u>
 Building Society Balance at 31 st March 2023		
	<u>92,640.16</u>	<u>90,886.12</u>
 <u>Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31st March 2023</u>		
Building Society Account		
Virgin Money	92,640.16	90,886.12

Thanks were given for all donations.

There being no discussion, the above report was presented, seconded and approved.

Wednesday, June 14th

Opening Devotions

Opening devotions were led by the WA Coordinator, Mrs Sandra Fall. She read from various passages of scripture. She commented on the breath of God in our being that gives us life and this being synonymous with the presence of Holy Spirit within us and led in prayer. We sang "Breathe on me, breath of God" and "He gives life".

18. Home Missions and YPD Report

a. Report by Rev Michael Hedley

In May 2023 we held the first of our HM Forum events. Every Union Church was emailed of this event and the time and date. In total 4 churches were represented at this meeting. There was no agenda as it was very much a discussional forum event, and the only thing that we discussed is the need for Youth provision in our churches, what is happening in our churches as presented by those who were present and one church who sent information as to what they do, but couldn't attend. We also discussed how the Youth provision was set up and the means to fund that provision outside of Church offerings and Union Support.

Rushden Mission reported that they facilitate a Friday Night Live session for their young people, outside of their normal Sunday School provision. This commenced in February and is well attended. They run sessions with an icebreaker to commence with, they have used videos of the attributes of God, and the sessions are firmly musical and family orientated. They also use Scripture Union resources. They also have a Youth Worship Group which operates weekly and Linda is teaching Guitar to many of those who attend, as well as percussion instruments. The Youth Worship Group leads a Sunday Service once per month and it is a great opportunity to develop worship leaders for the future. These sessions are run on a Thursday and are well attended. Rushden Mission are excited about their youth provision and are seeking to grow it through means which will be discussed later.

Hough Lane Together Church reported that their Youth Group runs every Friday evening from 7:00 – 8:30pm. They focus on trying to ensure they create a safe welcoming space for young people to be themselves, focussing on ensuring the church do not come across as weird people. They are currently working with a range of ages from 12 - 18 years, many of whom are currently in the stressful time of working towards GCSE exams, so they offer a space where they can discuss any issues they might be having with stress and offer opportunities to discuss their feelings, and bring about how being a Christian can help in these situations and focus on how the Christian life does bring about transformational change.

The resources they have are such things as a pool table, table tennis, basketball nets, playstations and other video consoles which they received free. Each session begins with 20 minutes of fronting up and having time to chill, relax and participating in discussions pertinent to their age group and related issues, then there are games for the next hour. They have a team system in place and points are awarded for each team in the games they participate in. It can be boisterous but that is normal where young people are concerned. There is a reward system in place for the teams with the most points.

The young people are also involved in mixing and presentational items for the Church service and participate in music production. They have a time at the end of the session where they bring together elements of worship and the Word of God to apply in what they have been learning in their sessions. With any of the non-church kids there is follow up to ensure they are part of the group and in some cases decisions have been made to follow Christ and they follow-up further with discipleship.

Each Saturday from 10 - 4 there are 3 sessions on worship and a message on worship, what it means, who is involved and the many streams that are involved in the production of that worship with the final session being a practical session. They focus on 1 Bible verse related to worship and finish with prayer. They also attend various events such as "Rock Nations" and other Christian events.

Hough Lane Together Church also hosts its own youth conference, "Zeal", where they have youth ministries from as far as Hull come and join them. They hold the conference in March every year. They also hold their own internal Together Conference in October. If you would like to send any of your youth fellowships to these please contact Jordan Corbett via email on: togetherfusionyouth@gmail.com Together Church is growing as a Church because of the work they are putting into their youth provision, and this is a laudable thing as it is so important that the future of the Church can be handed to young people fully grounded and birthed in Scripture.

Carl Jukes representing the Church on the Rock in Oldbury in the West Midlands informed us that they have 2 people in their youth programme who have come through the Church from Children. They are 12 and 16 years old. Prior to Covid they had up to 20 non-church kids attending, but since then those kids have grown up and moved on to other things, but it was really positive time, they are hoping to recommence their young people's movement again but are looking for help and resources to do so. They have held a Youth Alpha Course which went reasonably well, and they may look at that again. They meet from 5:30 – 6:30 every Wednesday. The young people who take part have taken part in Christmas Nativity plays and have performed dance routines in Easter plays.

Word of Life Church Ashington. Lindsey reported that we have a thriving Sunday School with up to 10 children taking part and 3 teenagers. There has been since January a Youth meeting each Sunday evening from 5:00 till 6:00pm. They are investigating in a fun way using games and other resources how Scripture informs and leads us in our lives no matter what our age is. We are looking to develop this further as some of the older children move into their teenage years, and we may look at offering this out to young teens in the local community.

Andrew Copley from Mexborough Life Church reported that they are fully committed to Youth Work in Mexborough and have set up a weekly Sunday School called "roots" with around 12 children weekly. They run a weekly Mother and Toddler Group, and are scoping setting up a youth group and looking into this and various possibilities. They are hoping to start ad hoc and then develop and build this provision up. They are aiming for this to be a Christian focused group to build up their youth and then for them to invite their friends to it. They are very much looking forward to being able to see how others have set up and what resources are available.

We then discussed how the work as a part time youth pastor is and can be funded. The Union through Circuit holdback may be a way forward with this. However, we need not look at purely the Union as a means of funding Youth Provision in our Churches, because there are many external Christian funders who will fund youth provision, including match funding salaries via the church, the union and another funding body, but we need good solid ideas as to how we take forward youth provision in our Churches. If we can come up with good initiatives and ideas, then I am confident that we can attract funding to support this provision. In many of our Churches, where there is solid growth, we can surely share resources and banks of resources with each other if we learn to communicate better.

A question was asked if we need a youth group before we recruit or buy resources. The simple answer to this is no. Some funders will provide funding to develop new provision as long as they are gospel focussed. In some cases you can contact the local Youth for Christ Offices and they can supply a youth leader, which can be paid for, or we can look at ways to get funding to develop future youth leaders from within our churches. This ties in with the NSC vision of developing the next generation of leaders including youth leaders, administrators, treasurers, pastors, worship teams, etc and funding is also available to develop these things.

The HM & YPD Team then held a further meeting on the 23rd of May to discuss further the outcomes of the forum meeting. We mainly focussed on what is happening in the churches represented there and how we may develop provision further by looking at securing funding to source youth workers in some format.

Rev Michael Hedley stated that he will be leaving the role of Chair and Secretary to focus on NSC and Presidential duties in the next two years and Andy Wilcock was voted and accepted to take over the role of Chair and Secretary as he no longer reports to HM but to Michael as his line manager. Andy will take over the role after conference.

The above report was presented and seconded. Additional comments were made by the Development & Outreach Consultant (DOC).

The NSC made additional comments:

- He was standing down as Chairman of the Home Missions Committee and will be replaced by Andy Wilcock

After discussion, the report was accepted.

19. **Ministers' Provident Society Report**

Report by Rev P Hearson

The most important part of this report is to thank all those churches and individuals who have supported the work of the Society over the last year, either by praying or by giving financially.

The MPS supports retired ministers and widows – currently we have 7 ministers and 4 widows who receive a gift each quarter. This is the same as the previous year. In addition, a funeral gift is sent to help financially when our ministers, their spouses, or widows are called home by the Lord.

It is important that we keep in touch with our beneficiaries as in some cases they move from the area and are not in membership with a Wesleyan Reform Church. This is done each quarter by letter. Many replies are received – emails, cards, telephone calls, expressing their thanks – it is a blessing to hear how the gift arrives at the right time to meet a particular need.

Last year we reported that Rev, Ian Fall would be standing down from his position of Chairman. While we continue to remember Ian with his work with Flame International, we are pleased that he is now recognised on the list of Overseas Missions Personnel. Rev. Sharon Hollamby took over the role of Chair of the MPS at Conference 2022.

Do please keep the Ministers' Provident Society in your prayers – the Officers, Board Members and of course the beneficiaries.

Rev. Sharon Hollamby – Chair
Mr. David Rooksby – Treasurer
Rev. Phillip Hearson – Secretary

Additional comment was made:

- The Board consisted of Peter Norton, Cliff Derby, Phil Hartshorn & Colin Braithwaite
- The gifts would remain the same as this year - £150 quarterly and £500 funeral grant.

The above report was presented, seconded, and accepted.

20. **Local Preachers' Fellowship Report**

Report by Mr D Tuckett

Our last Day of Ministry took place on 15th October last year at Jump Church when Tim Montgomery was our speaker. The sessions were recorded and are available in the "links" section of the Union Website if you wish to view them.

Tim is Missional Leadership Development Officer for Liverpool Diocese, helping leaders and teams engage in the challenges and opportunities of leading mission and growth. He currently heads up a variety

of transformational projects focused on the post-industrial towns of Wigan, St Helens, Warrington and Widnes as well as in the City of Liverpool itself.

Tim lead us through a series of sessions with the theme “Transform your mind – and set your heart on fire!” He started with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, with their heads down, wondering what had happened to their Master and Saviour. Their hearts “burnt within them” when they realised that Jesus was with them and their whole attitude was transformed as they hurried back to Jerusalem to tell the others.

He asked us to open our minds and hearts in a similar way and led us in a prayer of openness and willingness to hear God saying something and being willing to do something about it.

The sessions were based upon the first four chapters of John’s gospel. John makes it clear in Chapter one that Jesus came to “that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him”.

We looked at “Renewed Faith” in John Chapters 1 and 2, particularly at the calling of Nathaniel and the wedding in Cana. “Reformed Religion” focused on Nicodemus and how this learned man needed Jesus to teach him that he had to be born from above by the Spirit. We then had a session called the “The Big Questions” where we split into small groups to consider questions like “What does God want?”; “Who’s going to go out there?”; “What will our church look like in 10 years?”. We also discussed whether there was future for small churches when the mega churches seem to continue to grow? Tim was sure that if we continue to pray and to seek to reach out to the people around us that God will honour and bless that and we should let the mega churches get on with what they are doing and focus on where God has placed us. The final session was “Revived Hope” which focused on the Samaritan woman at the well. Jesus went “out of His way” to speak to her and used water in a powerful way to explain what He was offering her – transforming both her life and the life of the villagers who asked Him to stay and explain more about the Kingdom of God.

We may be called to go out of our way to introduce somebody to Jesus. Tim asked us what our “Big Takeaway” from the day would be. There were 25 of us on the day (an increase over 2021 when we had 18) and we had some useful discussion times.

Jump Church provided excellent food and facilities for which we are very thankful.

In the last year we our Committee has met a number of times on Zoom. We have spent some time discussing what we consider our role to be within the Union, as well as the Day of Ministry 2023.

Our focus is on encouraging and equipping the next generation of preachers and leaders that our churches need in order both to survive and to be a witness to Jesus. We don’t want to duplicate the work of other Union Committees but to complement it.

We revised our “Statement of Purpose” a few years ago, part of which states;

“To help preachers in churches and circuits of the Union to develop their skills and gifts by providing appropriate training days where required.”

We feel we are in a time of change, not change for its own sake or to be trendy or fashionable but to ensure that we are fulfilling the calling we have to preach the Gospel. We want to spend some more time as a Committee discussing this and would welcome a wider discussion within the Union.

We considered changing our name – one suggestion was “E2M” – “Equip to Minister” or E2S - “Equip to Serve” to better reflect what we are there for.

We are always open to suggestions for speakers for 2024 and beyond.

I am pleased to announce that Paul Mallard has agreed to be the speaker at our Day of Ministry 2023. Paul is FIEC’s Director for the West Midlands and the Chair of FIEC’s Theology Team. He has written a

number of books including “Invest Your Suffering” and the sessions will focus on this subject. The event is on Saturday 16th September at Church on the Rock, Oldbury.

There will no charge for the day, as we want to encourage as many people as possible to attend, so please book early as there will be a limit on numbers.

So please note the date in your diaries and watch out for the publicity and booking details which will follow soon after Conference. We need to approach some possible speakers for 2024 and beyond and pray that they will accept the invitation to inspire and encourage us as local preachers.

The above report was presented with the following additional comments:

- Time had been spent considering what we are and what we do?
- The new title was to be “E2S” – Equipped to serve.
- New members would always be welcomed – Phil Hartshorn & Jim Rossell joined the committee.
- The date of the next “away day” is 16th September and the speaker will be Paul Mallard
- Finances were in a good place.

Further comments were made from the floor:

- The question was raised about the suitability of a Speaker (Paul Mallard) from the FIEC who take a firm stand on the fact the women should not be in ministry in the church. It was confirmed by the Secretary that this would not present a problem.
- Appreciation for Paul Mallards ministry was made from the floor.
- The Chair of the Ministerial Committee commented on Ministerial training.

After discussion, it was proposed, seconded and adopted.

21. Ministerial Committee Report

Report by Rev. Sharon Hollamby

Since I succeeded Ian Fall at Conference 2022, our committee met in early September on Zoom. It was encouraging to share and hear what is going on within the churches of our denomination and how we can equip and pray for our Ministers, Pastors and future leaders.

Having received an application for ordination from Andy Wade (Ashington fellowship), we were expecting to meet with him in January, but the situation became non-viable, and so his application will not be pursued. Please continue to pray for the fellowship at Word of Life as they adjust again, with support from Lindsey and Michael Hedley.

Graham Johnson is now two lessons into Part 3 of the theology course and continues to provide papers that are concise and articulate, and a pleasure to review; I continue to support him in these.

The Ministers & Pastors Group met in October at our Heath End Church. We enjoyed a time of fellowship, food and excellent teaching from Rev Mark Aldridge (New Wine).

We continue to review Ministerial vacancies within our churches, and Michael Hedley, in his role as National Spiritual Co-ordinator, is liaising with and assisting them in their search.

Having considered the possibility of a working relationship with Spurgeon’s as they had outlined and Ian explained in his Conference report 2022; it was decided that we couldn’t proceed at this time. A bespoke course would need a lot of resource, particularly time; but we agreed that some of their on-line courses may be suitable for Local Preachers. Michael Hedley has been endeavouring to get Geoffrey Lee’s

Theology Course accredited and has done a lot of work in producing Course Modules and Aims for all 3 parts. These have been circulated to our committee members for their review and feedback.

As Pastor to the Pastors, Peter Norton continues to contact and visit as many Ministers and Pastors as he can. His emails, advice and experience are an encouragement to us all.

Please continue to pray for all those who lead our churches and seek to do our Lord's will as we serve Him in carrying out His Kingdom work in the power of His Holy Spirit.

Ministers

Ministers ordained by the Union

(figures in brackets denote years in Present Charge)

**Year
Ordained**

Active Ministers

- 1998** **Phillip J Hearson**
11 South Park, Rushden, Northants. NN10 9LY
Tel: 01933 312392 Email: p-j.hearson@sky.com
RUSHDEN HIGH STREET (15)
- 2004** **Ian Fall**
6 Gallagher Road, Bedworth, Warwickshire, CV12 8SB
Tel: 07986 676876 Email: ian.fall@virgin.net
- 2013** **Stephen Blyth BA (Hons) JNC**
12 Rannoch Drive Nuneaton, Warwickshire, CV10 9DT
Tel: 07583 001679 Email: blyth.sa@gmail.com
- 2015** **Eddison Mubengo**
56 West Donnington Street, Darvel, KA17 0AP
Tel: 01560 673507 Email: mubengoe@yahoo.co.uk
ABUNDANT LIFE AND LIBERTY, GLASGOW (6)
- 2016** **Sharon Hollamby BA**
2 Willow Walk, Hazlemere, HP15 7UJ
Tel: 01494 815858 Email: ministerhfmchurch@hotmail.com
HAZLEMERE CHURCH (5)
- 2017** **Michael Hedley**
12 Warren Court, Ashington, Northumberland N63 8LL
Tel: 01670 814425 Email: nsc@thewru.co.uk
- 2021** **David Bracken**
161 Wellingborough Road, Rushden, Northants, NN10 9TA
Tel: 07900 615063 Email: revdbrkn.rushden81@gmail.com
RUSHDEN MISSION CHURCH

Retired Ministers

- 1960 John W Goulder Th M**
48 Jarvis Court, Burwell Hill, Brackley, Northants, NN13 7AU
Tel: 01280 841469 Email: jwg35d@gmail.com
- 1969 David Allcock**
23 Darrell Place, Norwich, Norfolk, NR5 8QW
Tel: 01603 501040 Email: allcock603@btinternet.com
- 1971 Anthony E Hodgkinson**
30 Beaumont Avenue, Ashby- de- la- Zouch, Leicester, LE65 2NF
Tel: 01530 416521 Email: daphton@sky.com
- 1974 Maurice Nicholls**
29 Willow Court, Uplands Drive, Markfield, Leicester, LE67 9WF
Tel: 01530 242422 Email: carolnicholls72@gmail.com
- 1988 Peter H Norton**
75 Upper George Street, Higham Ferrers, Northants, NN10 8JN
Tel: 01933 356104 Email: revsnorton@btinternet.com
- 1998 Michael G Alderson**
3 Link Road, Rushden, Northants, NN10 9LB
Tel: 01933 413136 Email: Malderson@btinternet.com
- 1980 Colin Braithwaite**
2 Hawthorn Court, 27 Keddleston Road, Derby, DE22 1FY
Email: colin.braithwaite@btinternet.com
- 1985 Stephen Griffiths**
34 Penfolds, Halton Brook, Runcorn, Halton, WA7 2DG
Tel: 01928 621080 Email: stephengriffiths@mypostoffice.co.uk

Ministers and pastors independently appointed by churches

Ishaku Bitrus

CLYDEBANK CHURCH

21 Dunmore Street, Whitecrook, Clydebank, West Dumbartonshire G81 1RJ

Tel: 0141 952 2293

Email: ajibauka@gmail.com

Paul Brown

BEACON COMMUNITY CHURCH

The Manse, 10 Thorncroft Road, Wibsey, Bradford, Yorkshire, BD6 3EP

Tel: 01274 670336

Email: pastorpaulbrown@ymail.com

Jackie Clarke

CHURCH ON THE ROCK

24 Century Road, Oldbury, West Midlands B69 4AS

Tel: 0121 552 7153

Email: dibleyj@btopenworld.com

Geoff Cottam

ST JUST CHURCH

Springfield, Trelyon Close, Rectory Road, St Buryan, Penzance, Cornwall, TR19 6BB

Tel: 01736 810077

Email: est.e.cott@gmail.com

James Fenton

MUFF FIELD CHURCH

12 Brodley Close, Hipperholme, Halifax, HX3 8LS

Tel: 01422 208028

Email: isaiah40v8@gmail.com

Graham Johnson

BEDWORTH (THE LITTLE CHAPEL)

37 Regent Street, Bedworth, Warwickshire, CV12 9BN

Tel: 02476 319710

Email: tlcbedworth@gmail.com

John Langford

NEW SWANNINGTON & ELLISTOWN CHURCHES

133 Loughborough Road, Whitwick, Leicestershire, LE67 5AS

Tel: 01530 451549

Email: jjjslangford@ntlworld.com

Steve & Lisa Macbeth

HEATH END CHURCH

14 Dorset Close, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, CV10 8EN

Tel: 02477 051943

Email: lisamarymac@gmail.com

Rogan McKechnie

STAINCROSS CHURCH

21 Castle Close, Monk Bretton, BARNESLEY, S71 2QR

Email: mckechnie31@btinternet.com

Andrew Wilcock

HAMPDEN VIEW CHURCH

29 Daniel Hill Street, Walkley, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S6 3JH

Tel: 0114 233 4852

Email: andymarkw@gmail.com

Jonathan & Susannah Youdan **MAYFIELD CHURCH**
159 Abbeyfield Road, Sheffield, S4 7AU
Tel: 0114 242 4639 Email: jyoudan06@aol.com or syoudan6@aol.com

Michael & Lindsey Hedley **ASHINGTON, WORD OF LIFE CHURCH**
69-71 North Seaton Road, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 0AG
Tel: 07879253072 (Michael) 07854820012 (Lindsey)
Email: wordoflifechurch@hotmail.co.uk

Cassie Biggin **BETHEL COMMUNITY CHURCH**
49 Lister Avenue, Bradford, BD4 7QP Email: cassiebiggin@gmail.com

C & R Corbett **HOUGH LANE (TOGETHER) CHURCH**
50 Riber Avenue, Barnsley, S71 3PU
Tel: 007703828936 Email: crippin0212@sky.com

The report was presented as above with the following additional comments:
Graham Johnson was continuing to do well in his theological studies.
Rev Canon Phil Harris (Old Hill) & Steve Jenkins (Mexborough) had requested to be added to the list of
“Ministers Independently appointed by Churches”.

Andy Wilcock asked that, as he had no longer got a landline, his new mobile number be noted as:
07792-944217.

The above report was presented, seconded and accepted.

22. **Christian Ethics and Social Action** Report by Mr Graham Johnson

As this is my first report as the new CESA Secretary, I would like to start by thanking everyone for your prayers, and encouragement. And also for your generosity over the past year.

The committee has once again considered a number of concerning issues which have threatened both our Christian freedoms, and the moral code of this country. We believe, however, that God is in control.

As reported last year, the horrors of war continue to be played out on our TV screens with the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Even as a number of Ukrainians were in Liverpool at the Eurovision Song Contest recently, Russia was bombarding the home towns of these people. And yet, in the midst of all this, we see people in the UK and Europe providing financial and material support, even risking their own lives to do so.

Here in the UK, we have witnessed political turmoil with a succession of Prime Ministers and other leading political figures being brought to task over irregularities in their finances, or their inability to lead the country. The Bible reminds us to pray for our national leaders (1 Timothy 2:1-2). Alarmingly, we have seen a number of Christian politicians and other high-profile figures being ousted from position due to their beliefs.

The death of Queen Elizabeth II last Autumn plunged the country into a time of national mourning, and there were concerns about whether King Charles III would lead as she had done. We thank God for the Queen’s life, and for her readiness to speak of her simple Christian faith. King Charles’ recent Coronation

service was in many ways different than that of his mother and we can only wait to see what differences he will make to the monarchy and to the way in which he will rule the country.

The Online Safety Bill has caused considerable concern in that videos posted on Social Media platforms, of Church sermons expressing mainstream Christian views could be caught by the vague wording of the Bill. This challenges our understanding of 'free speech'. Taking this a step further, we recall the case of the Christian lady arrested for silently praying outside an abortion clinic – which was closed at the time. Following her release on the grounds of insufficient evidence the lady was subsequently re-arrested because the clinic has an exclusion zone placed around it, forbidding anyone from protesting against its activities.

More recently we witnessed the Church of England's decision to bless same-sex couples who have been married in civil ceremonies or are in civil partnerships. We stand firm on the Biblical truth that marriage is between one man and one woman.

The efforts of the LGBTQ+ community for equality seems to have resulted in more of an inequality in that their opinion takes preference now. TV programming, and the adverts, are making their case prominent. There seems to have been a recent increase in the number of 'drag queens' on TV and appearing at theatres and public venues. This is seen as wholesome viewing for children!

And the transgender issue rumbles on. The Prime Minister has pledged to provide guidance on this for schools so they don't have to struggle with 'opposing views and beliefs'. A recent report stated that only 28% of the secondary schools were reliably informing parents as soon as a child questioned their gender. Some schools now have unisex toilets and changing facilities.

We need to keep up the pressure on our local MP's to speak out against these and other worrying issues. We support the work the Christian Institute which does just that. They produce regular newsletters, highlighting current issues, and send them out to supporters by email and by post. We were pleased to send them a donation of £450 this year.

Caring For Life continues to help those in need of housing and employment. They provide regular prayer pointers for followers, and we sent them a donation of £450 towards the valuable work they do. And we continue to support Day One Publications. They publish books on a number of Christian issues as well as providing diaries to prisoners. These are very popular and we were happy to send a donation of £100 in support of this valuable ministry.

Our topic for Values Day this year was Poverty. Andy Wilcock provided a comprehensive resource which has been well-received around our churches. Preparations for next year's Value's Day are already in hand. We have also provided articles for Contact this year and will continue to do so.

In the absence of the Secretary, the above report was presented by Stuart Allen.

From the floor, the stand of the Church of England on same sex marriage (paragraph 7) was clarified. No such decision had been made. A revised version of the appropriate paragraph (below) was offered and adopted.

Revised version of paragraph 7

"We witnessed the recent decision of the Church of England Synod to allow Bishops to develop prayers of blessing for individuals who are engaged in same sex relations. We agree with the Bishops of the Global South and Gafcon that it is impossible to bless that which God does not bless. We stand firm on the Biblical truth that marriage is between one man and one woman."

It was proposed, seconded and with above clarification of the Church of England stand, was accepted.

23. Approval of Union Committees for 2023-2024

Explanation of the new committee arrangements was made, The proposed committees (as below) for the coming year were approved. An appeal for new members was made by the Overseas Missions secretary. Clarification was made of the spelling of Marie Nichols.

UNION DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEES FOR 2023-2024				
UNION TRUSTEES	HOME MISSIONS/YPD	OVERSEAS MISSIONS	CESA	MINISTERIAL
The President	Andy Wilcock (DOC, Chair & Sec)	Muriel Stonehewer (Chair)	Stuart Allen (Chair)	The President
The Admin Manager	Michael Hedley	Lindsey Hedley (Sec)	Graham Johnson (Sec)	The Admin Manager
The Union Treasurer (Chair)	Adam Shepherd	Graham Evans	Phil Hearson	Sharon Hollamby (Chair)
Stuart Allen	Beth Ely	Stuart Allen	Phil Hartshorn	Colin Braithwaite
Daphne Hodkinson	Sandra Fall	Carole Parkinson	Andy Wilcock	Muriel Stonehewer
Graham Evans	David Bracken	Ellie Minney	James Rossell	Andy Wilcock
David Rooksby	Peter Norton	James Rossell		Peter Norton
Colin Braithwaite	Phil Hartshorn	David Tucket		Stuart Allen
Sandra Fall	Lisa Macbeth	Phil Hearson		George Phillips
Phil Hearson		Anne-Marie Wilcock	Plus, any co-options they may wish to make	David Rooksby
Sharon Hollamby				
Muriel Stonehewer				
LPF	MPS	WA	CONFERENCE	MAGAZINE
Jackie Clarke (Chair)	Sharon Hollamby (Chair)	Sandra Fall (Coordin/Sec)	President (Chair)	Admin Manager (Chair)
David Tuckett (Sec)	Phil Hearson (Sec)	Anne-Marie Wilcock (Rep)	Admin Manager	Andy Wilcock
Brian Hyde	David Rooksby	Daphne Hodkinson	Admin Assistant	Daphne Hodkinson
Howard Copley	Colin Braithwaite	Ellie Minney	Sandra Fall	Cliff Darby
Daphne Hodkinson	Peter Norton		Muriel Stonehewer	Muriel Stonehewer
Cliff Darby	Cliff Darby			Marie Nickols
Phil Hartshorn	Phil Hartshorn			
James Rossell				
Note: The President and Administration Manager are ex-officio members of all committees.				

24. Any Other Business

There was no further business for Conference.

25. Vote of Thanks

A vote of thanks to all who had helped during Conference was given by the Administration Manager, who, herself, was thanked for her work throughout the year by the President.

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Conference closed with a service of Holy Communion which was a fitting end to an excellent Conference.