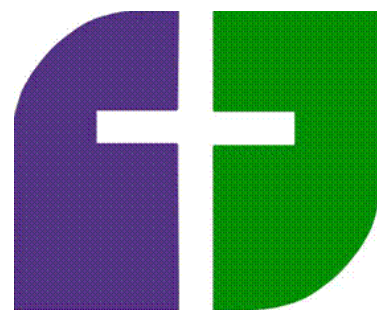


Wesleyan Reform Union of Churches
MINUTES OF CONFERENCE 2024



175th Anniversary



17-19th June 2024

The Hayes Conference Centre
Swanwick, Derbyshire

WRU Annual Conference 2024

LIST OF OFFICERS 2023-2024

PRESIDENT

Rev Michael Hedley

PAST PRESIDENT

Mr George Phillips

PRESIDENT-DESIGNATE

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 Anne-Marie Wilcock

REPRESENTATIVE OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND SOCIAL ACTION

Mr Graham Johnson

REPRESENTATIVE OF WOMEN OF ACTION

Mrs Sandra Fall

REPRESENTATIVE OF E2S (LOCAL PREACHER'S FELLOWSHIP)

Mr David Tuckett

CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES TO THE CONFERENCE

Alderman's Green	Mr	David	Lee
Attleborough	Mr	Matthew	Halladay
Beacon Community	Mrs	Ann	Goodwin
Bethel Community	Mrs	Cassie	Biggin
Bozeat TLC	Mr	Tom	Partridge-Underwood
Church on the Rock	Mrs	Jackie	Clarke
Cliffe Bridge	Mrs	Ann	Hewitt
Coal Aston	Mrs	Muriel	Stonehewer
Cornerstone	Mr	John	Houghton
Bowbroom	Mrs	Christine	Houghton
Curbar	Mr	Stuart	Allen
Dodworth	Mr	Philip	Hartshorn
Dorrington	Mrs	Kathy	Kinnard
Ellistown	Rev	John	Langford
Griffydham	Mrs	Judith	Darby
Ibstock	Mr	Cliff	Darby
Hampden View	Mrs	Carole	Parkinson
Hazlemere	Mr	Tony	Child
Heath End	Mrs	Lisa	Macbeth
Hough Lane	Mr	Graham	Evans
Jump	Mr	Ian	Sykes
Newhill	Miss	Jean	Sykes
Mexborough Life	Dr	Steven	Jenkins
New Swannington	Mr	Jim	Rossell
Old Hill - St. James	Mrs	Elaine	Heathcock
Owlerton	Miss	Maureen	Robinson
Richmond Church	Mr	Martin	Ludbrook
Rushden High Street	Rev	Phil	Hearson
Rushden Mission	Rev	David	Bracken
Ruskington Church	Mr	George	Phillips
Stoney Middleton	Mrs	Beth	Ely
Worsbrough Community	Mrs	Tracey	Hamby
Wymington	Mr	Bob	Major

UNION DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE CONFERENCE

Christian Ethics and Social Action	Mr	Graham	Johnson
Home Missions & YPD	Rev	Peter	Norton
E2S (Local Preachers Fellowship)	Mr	David	Tuckett
Ministerial	Rev	Sharon	Hollamby
Overseas Missions	Mrs	Anne-Marie	Wilcock
Women of Action	Mrs	Natalie	Johnson

VISITORS AND GUESTS

Mrs	Linda	Ashton	Mrs	Helen	Lee
Mr	Gavin	Calver	Mrs	Ellie	Minney
Mr	Howard	Copley	Mrs	Sue	Norton
Rev	Ian	Fall	Mrs	Sue	Partridge-Underwood
Mr	Alan	Goodwin	Mr	Douglas	Reid
Rev	Phil	Harris	Mrs	Stella	Reid
Mrs	Ruth	Harris	Mrs	Sandra	Rooksby
Mrs	Suan	Hartshorn	Mr	Richard	Saunders-Hindley
Rev	Tony	Hodkinson	Mr	Anthony	Taylor
Mrs	Julia	Hodson	Mrs	Elaine	Tuckett
Mr	Hugh	Kinnard	Mrs	Sue	Woods

MINUTES OF BUSINESS

For The 175th Annual Conference of the Wesleyan Reform Union of Churches

Please note: Due to illness, the President (Rev Michael Hedley) was unable to attend Conference. In his absence, the Past-President, Mr George Phillips, Chaired the initial business session.

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 PAST-PRESIDENT
THE PRESIDENT
THE W.A. REPRESENTATIVE

Mr George Phillips
Mr George Phillips
Mrs Beth Ely

Monday, June 17th 2024

Opening Devotions

In the absence of the President, devotions were led by the Past-President, Mr George Phillips, who read from Genesis 28:10-22 and commented. He led in prayer followed by a time of open prayer. We sang "Oh for a thousand tongues to sing".

1. **Names of Representatives**

The names of those attending were taken "as read" as per the list above. The list was moved and accepted.

2. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Michael & Lindsay Hedley who also sent their greetings to Conference.

At this point, the Past-President reported on the health issues involved with the President, who had indicated that he would be unable to fulfil his full term of office. The Trustees had discussed this possibility and recommended to Conference that the Past-President (Mr George Phillips) serve as President for this coming connexional year. This was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.

3. **Appointment of:**

Secretary to Conference: Mrs Alina Taylor

Recorders of Minutes: Rev Colin Braithwaite

Letter Writers: Mrs Daphne Hodgkinson & Mrs Carole Parkinson

Decide as to the admission of representatives of the Press and Visitors – Agreed

4. **Obituaries**

Conference stood to remember the lives of John Goulder, Faith Sharp, Cynthia Bryant, David Allcock, Paul Brown and Brian Kay. The President led us in prayer giving thanks for their lives and witness. We remember their loved ones in their loss.

5. **Read Correspondence for Conference**

There was no correspondence to bring before Conference.

6. **Conference Dates**

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

The date was noted and approved

7. **General Meetings Dates**

2024 Sat 19th October (3rd Saturday in October), Jump & Zoom

2025 Sat 8th March (2nd Saturday in March), Rushden Mission Church & Zoom

These dates were noted and approved.

The President further clarified a couple of issues from the new constitution – particularly that E2S (the former Local Preachers Fellowship) could not constitutionally use their new title until after Conference 2025 – they could, however, continue to use it informally.

8. **Nomination of President Designate**

The name of Mrs Sandra Fall had been presented to the last General Meeting and approved for the role of President-Designate. Sandra had subsequently withdrawn her name and shared with Conference her reasons for doing so:-

She reported that, after accepting the nomination, she did not have a peace about taking on the role. She had three dreams suggesting that it might not be right to pursue things further. She said she was convinced that this was from God. Advice from trusted spiritually-aware friends was also that the role of President was not for her. She was led to prayerfully consider the role of President and the role of the Union in general. Over the last 175 years the Union has changed, and we must change too – we are the Union!. She asked, “what is God’s heart for the Union”? We need to consider these things seriously.

Sandra’s full explanation is attached at the end of this document.

Sandra’s comments would be fed into the time of discussion on the Tuesday evening.

The Trustees are to meet for a day of prayer and reflection about the future of the Union

9. Women of Action Report

Report by Mrs S Fall

It is so good to be able to share with you all that the Women of Action have been doing since last years conference. We held our last **'He Restores My Soul'** event at Syresham in September. This was a great morning together with the ladies from that area, and many said how blessed they had been, there was also some challenges through the teaching about the state of their souls and what they would be doing in response to allow God to restore them, and to be more aware of this important aspect of themselves in the future.

In March we launched our new teaching series called **'Solid foundation'** at Dorrington Chapel in Lincolnshire. The ladies were very responsive as we explored God being our Rock and made sure that we were all standing on Jesus as we work out our faith, and journey through life with all it's waves and storms. There was time for discussion and prayer and we also shared bread and wine together. By the time you read this we will also have met at Stoney Middleton but you will still be able to drop into **Bozeat Chapel on Saturday 21st September** to be a part of the event. We will start at 10:30 am (doors open from 10 for refreshments) and finish with lunch so please do contact me if you would like to book your places.

We are in discussions at the moment with two other churches to host events in March and June next year. We are also aware that there are some areas within the union that the WA have not been to yet, so we would like to invite those churches to pray and consider hosting one of the ladies mornings in the Autumn 2025 and to get in touch with us if you would like to explore this possibility with us.

I do hope you have been following our monthly devotions on the Women of Action page on the Union website. Jo who writes them is one of our ladies from Hampden View church. She is a very talented lady who has an incredible gift of writing. We are very grateful to her for her contributions, they are very relevant, thought provoking and sometimes challenging too and I know they have blessed many people.

Prayer is still an important part of our journey, and we have met several times over Zoom and once in person to pray for the work of the Women of Action, the ladies in our churches are also seeking God for the way He is leading us. We will be continuing to do this so do join with us if you can, these times are always a blessing.

Zoom: **Monday 3rd June, Thursday 12th September, at 6:30 pm.**

In person prayer will be on **Saturday 8th February 10:30am at Griffydam.**

The AGM next year will be at Hampden View on **Saturday 26th April 2025.** We are looking to do something different in our morning session so further details will follow when finalised.

All ladies are welcome to join us for any of our gatherings. We value the diversity and different gifts and insight that we each have and believe that God joins us together for a purpose and uses us as we step forward to further His Kingdom in the power of Holy Spirit. We thank God and give glory to Jesus as we see him touch the hearts and lives of the ladies around our union of churches.

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	Natalie Johnson

The above report was presented, seconded and unanimously approved. Sandra was thanked for all her hard work.

Additional comments:

- Two new events – “Solid foundations” had been well received
- Another such event is planned for Bozeat
- Monthly devotions for Contact magazine and the Union web site continue to be a blessing
- There are still a number of pens left for purchase – first come, first served
- Emphasised the last paragraph of her report

From the floor

- It was commented by some of the ladies that the stones used in the away-days had made a big impact on lives

10. Union Trustees Report & Statistics

Report by Mr George Phillips

The Trustees have met five times during the year. The National Spiritual Coordinator (NSC), Administration Manager and Administration Assistant has been invited to the meetings. The ill health of the NSC has limited his attendance to three of the meetings

During the year the submission to the Charity Commission to become a CIO has been accepted and we have a new charity number. However, there is still work to be done in transferring all assets and properties into the CIO. We are aiming for a completion date of 31st March 2025.

The property portfolio is likely to increase during the current year by taking ownership of the former Deddington manse although some refurbishment will be necessary before it can be rented. Rental income from the four current 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, Brant Broughton and Deddington sales have been completed and progress has been made on Grimesthorpe, Lowestoft and Smithies with a possibility of all being on the market by the end of 2024.

The Trustees have taken the first steps to have the theology course prepared by Geoffrey Lee accredited with a national body but that is ‘on hold’ at present due to resource availability. We have continued to have meetings with other smaller denominations with a Wesleyan background under a move to form a grouping for mutual support called ‘Association of Wesleyan Evangelicals (AWE) with an initial aim of providing and sharing a greater portfolio of training resources.

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. A new database to aid administration is in the process of being introduced.

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 Meetings (Inc.)	WA Members	Average Attendance
Aldermans Green		39		8	3			1		33
<i>ASHBY CIRCUIT</i>										
Ellistown		4						1	3	18
Ibstock		2								25
Moira		8						1		10
New Swannington		4						1		14
	0	18	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	67
Ashington (Word of Life)	13	35		13	6			3	4	60
Attleborough		10	2					1	12	14
Beaconsfield		10								8
<i>BAKEWELL CIRCUIT</i>										
Bonsall		12								12
Curbar		6	3					1		15
Stoney Middleton		4	1					1		8
Winstar		4								10
Youlgrave		6						1		12
	0	32	4	0	0	0	0	3	0	57
<i>BARNSLEY CIRCUIT</i>										
Cliffe Bridge		5	1					2		20
Dodworth		8	2							12
Hunningley		11								10
Staincross	2	6	2							12
Worsbrough		4						2		5
	2	34	5	0	0	0	0	4	0	59
Bedworth		18	1					1		13
Birds Edge		9	2							8

Name of Church	Junior Members	Senior Members	Preachers Full & Trial	Scholars	Teachers	Children: Primary School	Young People: Senior School	Devotional Meetings (Inc.	WA Members	Average Attendance
<i>BRADFORD CIRCUIT</i>										
Addingham		13						2		16
Beacon Community Fellowship		39	1	3	2					38
Bethel Community Church		10	2					2		50
Muff Field		14	1					2		11
	0	76	4	3	2	0	0	6	0	115
Choppington		8	1							13
Church on the Rock		14	2	6	1	1	2	1		10
Clydebank Central	2	11	1	6	2		2		8	21
Denby Dale		6	1					1		18
Dorrington		6	1		1			2		20
Fritwell		8								12
Glasgow Abundant Life and Liberty Centre	2	6	2				2			20
Griffydam		14		3	2		8	4		27
Hazlemere		27	1					2		35
Heath End		23		12	3	21	6	6		44
Heckington		4						2		7
Old Hill - St James		23	2					2	9	20
<i>ROTHERHAM, MEXBOROUGH AND DONCASTER CIRCUIT</i>										
Bowbroom		24						2		20
Cornerstone		5								5
Hough Lane	1	23	2				25			27
Jump		23						1		22
Mexborough Life Church and Centre	15	55	1	16	5		4	2	11	70
Newhill		20						1		25
	16	150	3	16	5	0	29	6	11	169

Name of Church	Junior Members	Senior Members	Preachers Full & Trial	Scholars	Teachers	Children: Primary School	Young People: Senior School	Devotional Meetings (Inc. WA)	WA Members	Average Attendance
<i>SHEFFIELD CIRCUIT</i>										
Coal Aston		2								8
Greenhead		6								5
Hampden View		14	5	3		5	1	2	10	20
Mayfield		10	2					1		14
Oughtibridge		12								
Owlerton		16						4	7	27
Philadelphia		4								7
Richmond		26	3	8	4	7	6	1	10	60
St Mary's		3						1		25
Woodseats		3						2		12
	0	96	10	11	4	12	7	11	27	178
<i>SLEAFORD CIRCUIT</i>										
Ruskington		10	1							17
	0	10	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	17
St Just (Free Church)		8						1		15
Syresham		11						1		18
<i>WELLINGBOROUGH CIRCUIT</i>										
Alma Street		2								9
Bozeat TLC		14								18
Finedon		31							16	20
Isham		2								11
Rushden High Street		39	2	6	3	10	10	2		42
Rushden Mission		32	1	18	9	5	3	3		50
Wymington		8						1		14
	0	128	3	24	12	15	13	6	16	164
SUMMARY OF STATISTICS										
TOTALS FOR 2023	37	830	51	97	35	39	76	69	69	1183
TOTALS FOR 2024	35	834	46	102	41	49	69	67	90	1242
INCREASE		4		5	6	10			21	59
DECREASE	2		5				7	2		

The above reports (Trustees & Statistics) were presented, seconded and unanimously approved. With regard to the statistics the following comments were made:

Additional comments on the statistics:

- There had been a decrease in churches
- There had been an increase in membership
- Numbers now seem to have stabilised post-covid

Comments from the floor:

- Churches need to know where their deeds are kept
- It was confirmed that Brant Broughton Fife Street & Over Haddon had been sold
- One or two of our smaller churches had increased in membership – that is particularly encouraging

The Trustees further presented to Conference a “Memorandum of Resolution” to enable the assets of the original charity to the new CIO. After being proposed and seconded, it was unanimously passed.

Tuesday, June 18th 2024

Opening Devotions

Our Devotions were led by the President, Mr George Phillips, who read from John 1:43-51, commented and led in prayer. We sang “My hope is built on nothing less”

11. Resolution of Loyalty

to be moved by President, George Phillips

It is with great pleasure that the members of the 175th 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.

We recognise the difficulties with your health and that of other members of your family and assure you of our continued prayers for recovery. We give thanks to almighty God for your service to our nation and commonwealth and pledge our continued support as you faithfully carry out your duties.

We pray that that God will sustain you and your family as you reign over us under His divine guidance and authority.

The resolution of loyalty was read then Conference rose to sing the National Anthem.

12. Safeguarding Report

Report by Mr S Sykes

Since my last report the government have brought in lots of changes within early years and childcare so my workload in my job has increased dramatically in the last few months and will probably continue to remain high moving forward for a while. I am still available for support if churches need me, but I may struggle to fit in as much as I would like in the coming months.

I have managed to complete the WRU Safeguarding standards that I mentioned at the general meeting in March and they should be sent out to all churches shortly for you.

We still have the new Basic Safeguarding course that I have put together that can be used within our churches, this is a very easy to understand PowerPoint presentation that is suitable to share with whole congregations to strengthen their knowledge on safeguarding. I am in the process of writing a user guide to go with the course that explains to whoever will be delivering it how it works and how to prepare before delivering it to congregations. If anyone needs a copy of the course sending just drop me an email and I can send it on to you.

I am still trying to organise a full safeguarding training day and have been approached by a couple of churches who are interested, I am hoping to run this over the next month or so but am trying to sort out suitable dates when I am available. As this goes to print, I am trying to sort a date to run a course at Mexborough Life Church.

A couple of Safeguarding issues that are currently being circulated and we should be aware of are County lines and sexual extortion and blackmail.

County lines is used in reference to a form of criminal activity in which drug dealers in major cities establish networks for the supply and sale of drugs to users in towns and rural areas, using other people – typically those who are young or otherwise vulnerable, to carry, store and sell the drugs.

The 'county line' is in reference to the mobile phone line used to take orders for the drugs.

Police are asking people to look out for signs of county lines drug dealing. This could be a young person making frequent trips to other towns usually alone and late at night or during school hours, a young person looking lost or in unfamiliar surroundings, looking anxious, frightened or angry or displaying other behaviours that make you worried about them.

Sexual Extortion – The national crime agency has recently reported a large rise in reports of this crime. This is a type of online blackmail often known in the media as Sextortion. Children and young people are being targeted, it involves the perpetrators, sometimes posing as young people or children, forming online relationships with other young people in order to gain explicit content, these individuals when they have this content then threaten to release nude images or videos of the child or young person unless they pay money or agree to meet some other financial demand such as purchasing prepaid gift cards (which are harder to trace)

Victims of any age and gender can be targets but a large proportion of recent cases have involved male victims aged 14 – 18.

A child or young person is never to blame if they have been a victim, offenders will have tricked, groomed or manipulated them into sharing an image. It is important to have open and non-judgemental conversations with our children about online relationships to build trust and support them if something goes wrong, including the importance of never sharing explicit images online.

Please keep safeguarding on your church agenda's and remember that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, the more we talk about it and share information the better prepared we will all be to protect those we come into contact with on a daily basis in our churches and communities.

In the absence of the Safeguarding Officer, the above report was presented "as read" by the President. It was proposed, seconded and unanimously approved.

Comments from the floor:

- Churches were urged to ensure that all leaders should be DBS checked
- Safeguarding is not solely about young people - elderly people have issues too

13. Home Missions and YPD Report

a. Report by Pastor Andy Wilcock

It is really encouraging to hear of churches baptising new believers and to know that the Gospel is being preached faithfully. I am writing this in the week between the Ascension and Pentecost. We can be assured that Christ is on the throne, with all authority in heaven and on earth given to Him and the promise of His Holy Spirit working in our lives. We pray for power from on high, as we together seek to fulfil the great commission.

Earlier this year I and many others had the privilege of attending the “Growing Disciples, Growing Churches” day at Jump, led by Richard Saunders-Hindley from our Cliffe Bridge Church. Understanding and being reminded afresh of our calling is so vital.

I would encourage us all to

- read books on evangelism.
- regularly pray with others in your church
- attend course like the one mentioned above.
- **but most of all** – take opportunities to speak to non-Christians about our Saviour. Some examples of this could be...
 - Get involved in evangelism or supporting a discipleship course.
 - Go on a mission either at a beach, Holiday Club, or other form of outreach.
 - There is no better training in evangelism than just doing it.

We would love to hear regularly about what your church is doing, what resources you’re using and what long term initiatives you’re taking up. It would be such an encouragement to find out what’s happening around the country.

Can the WRU support your work? I am sure we can, and we want to. Please talk to us about the opportunities in your area. As a committee we can support you in looking at what can be done and sharing resources you can use, both for evangelism and discipleship.

Several of our churches are actively involved in running weekly Toddler Groups, Kids Clubs and teenage work, as well as initiatives such as Messy Church and family meals. Maybe you could contact a church near you that has such a work and see if you can support them, either setting up, providing refreshments, helping with admin and most importantly praying for them.

We meet as a committee to seek to encourage evangelism and outreach. If you are interested, we’d love you to join us on a Zoom meeting to pray and discuss how we can support our churches. We’d also like to set up local meetings where we can meet churches and leaders to hear about the challenges you’re facing, what is happening and what new things could be done to make Jesus known.

The report was presented, seconded and approved.

Additional comments:

- We need to keep our eyes on Jesus
- People may come to us from other denominations – we should be teaching & discipling them
- “Life” magazine was recommended for use in evangelism
- Mission & Evangelism need to be high on our church prayer meetings

Comments from the floor:

- Home Missions financial help (and visits) has been appreciated by churches.
- We need to be pro-active in our mission and evangelism.
- Bozeat had started a men's meeting (but women welcome) – group is growing (from 12-20) in six months).
- Never underestimate the power of prayer.
- Financial assistance is available from Union and outside agencies.
- Men's groups can be especially useful
- Coffee & Cake mornings have been helpful – especially in August when everything is closed.
- We need to be “light fingered” with our property, fabric etc – willing to make them available to others
- “Talking Jesus” resources were recommended
- Sharing of food together is a good, non-threatening way of attracting people.
- Prayer must be the starting point for all outreach

14. Union Treasurer's Report

Report by Mr G Phillips

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH 2024

		2023/2024	2022/2023
Employment of Funds			
LAND AND BUILDINGS		760,000	760,000
FURNITURE AND FITTINGS COST		28,801	26,581
Less: Depreciation to date		16,408	11,597
		12,393	14,984
INVESTMENTS		1,009,874	1,007,010
LOANS TO CHURCHES			
Chapel Extension Fund		60,750	60,750
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors:	Union	897	619
	Year Books	21	13
	National Westminster Bank plc		
	Deposit Account	237,292	88,405
	Current Account	7,901	6,800
Cash in Hand		1,368	1,391
		<u>247,479</u>	<u>97,228</u>
		2,090,496	1,939,972
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Creditors:	Union Expenses, etc.	1,128	1,128
	Actuarial Fees	3,800	3,100
		<u>4,928</u>	<u>4,228</u>
		<u>2,085,568</u>	<u>1,935,744</u>
REPRESENTED BY:			
Property Fund		760,000	760,000
Chapel Extension Fund		574,765	491,238
Ellis Crossley Training & Pastoral Aid Fund		4,026	4,275
Home Missions Account		854	770
Overseas Missions	General Fund	2,294	403
	Training Fund	2,367	2,367
	Project Fund	2,227	1,525
Young People's Department Account		9,095	8,786
Christian Ethics and Social Action		1,209	448
Ministers Provident Society		11,472	15,238
Local Preachers Fellowship		2,644	2,899
Women of Action		820	898
General Reserve		182,056	178,720
Holdback Policy Capital Account		531,739	468,177
		<u>2,085,568</u>	<u>1,935,744</u>

UNION EXPENSES ACCOUNT

		2023/2024		2022/2023
Income				
Assessment		30,608		30,949
Investment income		21,984		8,052
Year Books sales		442		419
Conference income		11,037		10,358
Sundries		414		399
From General Reserve		<u>17,111</u>		<u>27,027</u>
		<u>81,596</u>		<u>77,204</u>
 Expenditure				
Salaries etc		39,300		36,498
Pension		7,451		6,558
Head Office Expenses		3,483		3,087
Year Books costs		476		422
Conference costs		10,003		13,568
Administration -	Telephone	1,313	1,351	
	Postage	314	78	
	Stationery	3,222	2,169	
	Insurance	<u>443</u>	5,292	<u>786</u>
				4,384
Travelling -	Conference	387	387	
	General Meetings	1,193	1,104	
	Committees	<u>1,416</u>	2,996	<u>737</u>
				2,228
Sundry Expenses-	Subscriptions	1,968	778	
	Bank charges	551	463	
	Sundries	<u>72</u>	2,591	<u>74</u>
				1,315
Depreciation		4,811		4,454
Accountants		1,128		1,128
Actuaries		<u>4,065</u>		<u>3,562</u>
		<u>81,596</u>		<u>77,204</u>

GENERAL RESERVE

	2023/2024		2022/2023	
Balance 1st April 2023		178,720		181,991
Collections				
Rent from Cardwell Avenue	8,470		7,751	
Less costs	<u>3,585</u>	4,885	<u>685</u>	7,066
Rent from Thornbrook Close	9,920		9,700	
Less costs	<u>913</u>	9,007	<u>1,945</u>	7,755
Rent from Willow Walk	9,360		8,580	
Less costs	<u>115</u>	9,245		8,580
Rent from Windsor Road	11,473		3,766	
Less costs	<u>470</u>	11,003		3,766
		<u>212,860</u>		<u>209,158</u>
Legal advice		10,261		2,403
Database		3,432		
Union Expenses		17,111		27,027
Sundries				1,008
Balance 31st March 2024		<u>182,056</u>		<u>178,720</u>
		<u>212,860</u>		<u>209,158</u>

			2023/2024	2022/2023
HOME MISSIONS				
Balance 1st April 2023			770	946
Donations			2,769	3,445
Interest			17	8
Transfer from Chapel Extension Fund			<u>121,000</u>	<u>107,500</u>
			<u>124,556</u>	<u>111,899</u>
Cost of Development and Outreach Consultant			19,456	17,720
Car			2,603	3,202
Travel			332	284
Cost of National Spiritual Coordinator			40,808	28,782
Car			4,533	3,738
Travel			985	1,599
Accommodation			368	1,122
Grants				
	New Swan/Ellistown	3,600		
	Rushden Mission	5,000		
	Glasgow	20,892		
	Bedworth	12,000		
	Richmond	5,000		
	Bethel, Bierley	8,125	<u>54,617</u>	<u>54,512</u>
Training				170
Balance 31st March 2024			<u>854</u>	<u>770</u>
			<u>124,556</u>	<u>111,899</u>
YOUNG PEOPLES DEPARTMENT				
Balance 1st April 2023			8,786	8,467
Donations			110	250
Interest			<u>199</u>	<u>69</u>
			<u>9,095</u>	<u>8,786</u>
Salary, etc.				
Travel				
Balance 31st March 2024			<u>9,095</u>	<u>8,786</u>
			<u>9,095</u>	<u>8,786</u>
CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND SOCIAL ACTION				
Balance 1st April 2023			449	406
Donations			950	1,225
Interest			<u>10</u>	<u>3</u>
			<u>1,409</u>	<u>1,634</u>
Grants				
	Caring for Life	(350)		450
	Christian Institute	(350)		450
	Day One	(100)		100
	(Paid after year end)			
Conference fees			200	185
Sundries				
Balance 31st March 2024			<u>1,209</u>	<u>449</u>
			<u>1,409</u>	<u>1,634</u>

2023/2024**2022/2023****LOCAL PREACHERS FELLOWSHIP**

Balance 1st April 2023		2,899		3,067
Ministry Day				312
Interest		65		25
		<u>2,964</u>		<u>3,404</u>
Ministry Day		120		320
Conference		200		185
Sundries				
Balance 31st March 2024	General Fund	997	1,252	
	Trust Fund	1,647	1,647	2,899
		<u>2,964</u>		<u>3,404</u>

ELLIS CROSSLEY TRAINING & PASTORAL AID FUND

Balance 1st April 2023		4,275		4,536
Donations		1,025		1,035
Fees				15
Ministers/Pastors donations				55
Interest		97		37
Transfer from Chapel Extension Fund		4,000		3,000
		<u>9,397</u>		<u>8,678</u>
Tutor Salary etc.		99		128
Pastoral Salary etc		3,556		3,343
Service Increments		310		310
Travel				247
Removal fees				275
CPD Accreditation		714		
Training		542		
Ministers & Pastors speaker		150		100
Balance 31st March 2024		4,026		4,275
		<u>9,397</u>		<u>8,678</u>

WOMEN OF ACTION

Balance 1st April 2023		898		893
Donations		152		183
Interest		20		7
		<u>1,070</u>		<u>1,083</u>
Conference		200		185
Coordinator Gift		50		
Balance 31st March 2024		820		898
		<u>1,070</u>		<u>1,083</u>

MINISTERS PROVIDENT SOCIETY

Balance 1st April 2023		15,238		19,405
Donations		1,990		1,660
Subscriptions				
Interest		344		173
		<u>17,572</u>		<u>21,238</u>
Gifts		5,100		6,000
Funeral contributions		1,000		
Balance 31st March 2024		11,472		15,238
		<u>17,572</u>		<u>21,238</u>

	2023/2024	2022/2023
OVERSEAS MISSIONS		
General Fund		
Balance 1st April 2023	403	695
Donations	2,028	2,833
Interest	63	25
Sundries	<u>2,494</u>	<u>3,553</u>
Conference fees	200	
Postage		
Grants		250
People International		500
Christian Aid Ukraine		800
Arab World Missions	(700)	800
Friends of Mandritsara	(700)	800
Flame International	(700)	800
(Paid after year end)	<u>0</u>	<u>3,150</u>
Sundries		
Balance 31st March 2024	<u>2,294</u>	<u>403</u>
	<u>2,494</u>	<u>3,553</u>
Training Fund		
Balance 1st April 2023	2,367	2,367
Sundries		
Balance 31st March 2024	<u>2,367</u>	<u>2,367</u>
Safe Haven Project		
Balance 1st April 2023	1,525	
Donations	<u>6,685</u>	<u>3,453</u>
	8,210	3,453
Grant	5,983	1,928
Balance 31st March 2024	<u>2,227</u>	<u>1,525</u>
	8,210	3,453

CHAPEL EXTENSION FUND		2023/2024	2022/2023
Balance 1st April 2023		491,238	699,101
Sales	Nuneaton	243,388	
	Grimesthorpe	182	7,501
	Cudworth		74,725
Transfer - Loan Fund		<u>139,185</u>	<u>139,185</u>
		<u>734,808</u>	<u>920,512</u>
Transfer to Home Missions		121,000	107,500
Transfer to Training & Past Aid		4,000	3,000
Grants	Ellistown	3,491	17,556
	Beacon		50,000
Ashington car park			
Willow Walk, Hazlemere			232,000
Costs	Smithies	8,428	
	Grimesthorpe	14,950	
	Lowestoft	5,103	
	Nuneaton	1,175	
	Over Haddon	624	
	Brant		
	Broughton	<u>1,272</u>	<u>19,218</u>
		31,552	19,218
Balance 31st March 2024	Investments	514,015	430,488
	Loans	<u>60,750</u>	<u>60,750</u>
		574,765	491,238
		<u>734,808</u>	<u>920,512</u>

CHAPEL EXTENSION FUND - LOANS OUTSTANDING

Description	Original Loan	New Loans Year to 31/03/24	Balance 31/03/23	Repaid Year to 31/03/24	Balance 31/03/24	Collection Received 31/03/24
2018 St Just	30,000		23,250		23,250	
2009 Clydebank	60,000		37,500		37,500	
		0	60,750	0	60,750	0

		2023/2024	2022/2023
HOLDBACK POLICY CAPITAL ACCOUNT			
Balance 1st April 2023		468,177	482,407
Sales	Nuneaton	100,000	
	Cudworth		70,770
		<u>568,177</u>	<u>553,177</u>
Grants	Dodworth	5,113	
	Hough Lane	11,625	
	Jump	3,500	
	Cliffe Bridge	4,200	
	Attleborough	<u>12,000</u>	<u>36,438</u>
			85,000
Balance 31st March 2024	Bakewell Circuit	119,976	119,976
	Barnsley Circuit	43,957	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	72,328	87,453
	Sleaford Circuit	40,171	40,171
	Coventry/Nuneaton	88,000	
	Wellingboro Circuit	<u>3,851</u>	<u>3,851</u>
		531,739	468,177
		<u>568,177</u>	<u>553,177</u>

INVESTMENT DISTRIBUTION

Interest from Investments	22,799	8,399
Less Retained by Union Expenses Account	<u>21,984</u>	<u>8,052</u>
	<u>815</u>	<u>347</u>

Distribution:

Home Missions	17	8
Overseas Missions	63	25
Young People's Department	199	69
Ellis Crossley Training & Past Aid	97	37
Ministers Provident Society	344	173
Christian Ethics and Social Action	10	3
Women of Action	20	7
Local Preachers Fellowship	<u>65</u>	<u>25</u>
	<u>815</u>	<u>347</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 above report was presented to Conference and seconded. Discussion (noted below) followed, and the report was unanimously approved.

Additional comments:

- General Expenses account - investment income increased by £10,000 so less was transferred from Reserve fund
- Conference costs appear to have made a “profit” – this is due to the Conference centre not requiring a deposit this year.
- Reserve & General Fund – the legal costs are high due to change to CIO
- No need to increase assessment
- Home Mission fund is high– due to this being the first full year of supporting NSC
- MPS – funds are gradually decreasing – possibly two years support remaining – may need Union support
- Balance sheet: Support for grants etc this year is £178,000
- Since 2010 total has been £1.9 million
- Balance sheet increased approx. £150,000 over the year, mainly due to sale of Fife Street
- Thanks were given to Alina & Debbie

Points raised from the floor regarding the financial report:

- The use of Holdback funds was questioned, and the Treasurer clarified the situation
- Holdback would be available for legal imperatives
- If churches are not in a circuit, holdback would be available to other “local” churches.
- Union insurance does not seem to have gone up (as might have been expected) but has reduced due to an overlap in payments
- George was thanked from the floor

15. 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.

b. Accounts by Mr G Phillips

	2024	2023
	£	£
<u>Receipt</u>		
Interest Virgin Money	754.76	239.04
Donations	<u>1,570.00</u>	<u>1,515.00</u>
	2,324.76	1,754.04
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Grant	<u>235.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>

Net Incoming Resources	2,089.76	18,311.67
Building Society Balance at 31 st March 2023	<u>92,640.16</u>	<u>90,886.12</u>
Building Society Balance at 31 st March 2024	<u>94,729.92</u>	<u>92,640.16</u>
<u>Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31st March 2024</u>		
Building Society Account		
Virgin Money	94,729.92	92,640.16

The above report was presented, seconded and unanimously approved.

16. Overseas Missions Department Report

a. Report prepared by OM secretary Anne-Marie Wilcock

Lindsey Hedley stepped down in March as Overseas Missions Secretary after faithfully serving in this post for 5 years. The OM Team are very grateful for all she has done in this role.

After some prayer and consideration, I agreed to take on the role of Overseas Missions Team Coordinator. Lindsey has helped me understand the role whilst also encouraging me to do things my way. Hence, the new title and the anticipation that everyone in the OM Team will take on responsibilities.

The Team are very grateful for your financial gifts to our general fund which helps us financially support some of our mission personnel. Please can I ask for your continued prayer support for them too?

We are also very grateful for the monies raised for our special project for the last two years. which has helped to provide 100s of hot meals to children at Safe Haven in Lebanon. We have sent the money in instalments in order to offer ongoing support. Please continue to pray for Safe Haven as they continue without our support in the future.

We are pleased to announce that our project for 2024/2025 is "Hope for Children" Latvia. Ian Sykes has been involved with helping this charity for the last 25 years and has very kindly volunteered to be our Project Lead. He has produced resources for each church in the WRU to use to promote and raise valuable funds for the project.

Our team is small and we would like to appeal for your help in supporting us in addition to PRAYER and FINANCES.

Here are three additional ways you could help that we would like you to consider please.

1. SUGGEST ideas for future projects that we can consider supporting.
2. JOIN our team! We meet several times a year on Zoom to discuss and pray for the progress of the project, pray for our mission personnel and plan for the future.
3. LEARN more about how God is moving in the world and be inspired to live out your place in God's story by enrolling on a free 6 week online course I will be running in the Autumn. It's called Momentum Yes!

Finally, a reminder that there are funds available for long and short term overseas missions work so please speak to me if there is someone or something that comes to mind.

c. List of Missions Personnel

2003	Helen AWM Arab World Ministries of Pioneers, PO Box 51 Loughborough Leicestershire LE11 3WQ www.awm-pioneers.org	2023	Ian Fall Flame International, PO Box 424, Aldershot, Hampshire, GU11 9ER www.flameinternational.org
2016	Dr Lesley Notghi Friends of Mandritsara Trust, 29, Priory Road, Needingworth, Cambridgeshire, PE27 4SD www.mandritsara.org.uk	1995	Mark and Angie WEC International, PO Box 6461. Coventry, CV3 9NR www.wec-uk.org
1995	Phil & Diane Benstead People International Ltd, PO Box 310, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 1WT www.peopleintl.org.uk		

The above report was presented, seconded and unanimously approved

Additional comments:

- Lindsey Hedley was thanked (in her absence) for all her work
- Anne-Marie Wilcock had taken over as Team Coordinator
- OMF (formerly China Inland Mission) had started from within the Union – Hudson Taylor, its founder, had been a member at our Salem church in Barnsley
- Leslie Notghi had provided an update
- Attention brought to the bullet points at the end of the report
- “Momentum Yes” was commended to the Union – it particularly concentrates on unreached people groups.
- The 2022-2024 project “Safe Havens” has been well supported to the sum of around £11,200
- The new project for the next two years will be the “Hope for Children” in Latvia - namely, the “Family Centre Renovation Project” under the slogan of “Practical giving for a practical project”
- Ian Sykes introduced the project and commended it to the Union
- Suggestions for giving were shared – 20p per member per week would raise £20,000 over two years.
- Over £885 had been donated by the end of Conference

Additional comments from the floor

- When are funds required – as soon as it is convenient – possibly every three months
- Could the Union match church donations? – Would the Trustees consider this at their next meeting?

Wednesday, June 19th 2024

Opening Devotions

Devotions were led by the WA representative, Mrs Beth Ely, who read from Jeremiah 29:10-14, commented and led in prayer. We sang “I do not know what lies ahead”.

Following the devotions, a presentation was made to Sandra Fall in recognition of all the work she does for the Women of Action.

17. **Ministers' Provident Society Report**

Report by Rev P Hearson

It is our pleasure to be able to report on the work of the Ministers' Provident Society. The department supports ministers and their spouses in retirement and also provides a gift on the death of either the minister or spouse to help towards funeral expenses. We want to say a big thank you to individuals and churches who have supported us financially and in prayer.

At Conference 1923, agenda item no. 33 was concerning the formation of a Ministers' Provident Society, and the following resolution was passed unanimously, 'That we commend the scheme of a Ministers' Provident Society to the hearty support of all our Churches and Circuits...'. Interestingly, that was passed in Rushden where Conference was held. At the following Half-Yearly Meetings it was agreed to date the Society as from April 1st 1924. That means of course that the Society in its current format (one had been in existence earlier) celebrates its centenary this year. Over those 100 years, many retired ministers and spouses will have been blessed by its existence.

Since Conference 2023 two of those we were supporting have passed to glory. Rev. John Goulder was a great supporter of the Scheme and was for quite a number of years its Secretary. Mrs. Pat Gordon, widow of Rev. Gordon Gordon also passed this year. I also want to mark the passing of Mrs. Faith Sharp who served faithfully as the Treasurer.

Currently we are supporting 6 retired ministers and 3 widows.

Thank you for partnering with us in this work. 100 years after our formation, the resolution still holds, 'we commend the scheme of a Ministers' Provident Society to the hearty support of all our Churches and Circuits.'

Sharon Hollamby – Chair

Phil Hearson – Secretary

David Rooksby – Treasurer

Board members – Peter Norton, Phil Hartshorn, Colin Braithwaite, Cliff Darby

The above report was presented, seconded and unanimously approved.

Additional Comments

- Great that this is their 100th year in its present format
- Many, many ministers and spouses have been helped
- George Phillips joined us for a meeting the previous evening
- John Goulder & Faith Sharp (both deceased during the last year) had served faithfully for many years
- There had been increase in donations coming in and so it was agreed that we increase gifts to £160 per annuitant & £550 for funeral expenses

18. **Equip to Serve (LPF) Report**

Report by Mr D Tuckett

As a committee we met to hold our AGM at last year's Conference, and agreed to change our name to **E 2 S – Equip to Serve** to ensure we are fulfilling the calling we have to encourage not only preachers but all church members in their ministry of the Gospel.

We then held a very worthwhile Day of Ministry on 16th September at Church on the Rock with about 25 attendees. Our speaker Paul Mallard who led the day spoke to us on "Suffering – A Christian Perspective". Do you know someone who is suffering? Perhaps a better question is to ask if any of us **don't** know

someone who is suffering! The sessions were recorded and are available to view in the “links” section of the Union Website.

We have since met as a committee on Zoom on the 12th October last year and on 12th February this year. We held our AGM during this Conference but, of course, this hadn't happened at the time of writing this report.

We are holding the annual Day of Ministry on **Saturday 5th October 2024**. This will be led by Cassie Biggin and her team at our Bethel Community Church, Bradford.

“Bringing Community into Church” will be a day of interactive workshops exploring different ways of bringing our communities closer to Jesus, led by Cassie.

You may want to think if there are teenagers or young leaders in your church who would benefit from this. We consider it is a proper use of our funds not to charge to attend, but there will be an opportunity to make a donation towards the cost on the day.

You can take home a copy of the poster from the display in the hall, and Alina will also be sending publicity out to you after Conference so that you can book places.

We have some suggestions for possible speakers for 2025 and beyond which we are still working on, but we are always open to further “leads” as we often find that the people we approach are already booked up. We would also welcome anyone who would wish to join our committee – we meet on Zoom during the year and hold our AGM at Conference.

I recently had the privilege of presenting certificates for long service as local preachers to Martin Drake and Barry Kimber at a service at Muff Field church in Bradford. We want to honour our local preachers for their faithful service and present them with a certificate when they reach a milestone year in their ministry. Please do let me (the secretary) know if you have someone in your congregation or circuit who should receive a certificate (they may be too modest to do this for themselves!). We can then prepare a certificate which can be presented to them either at Conference or in their own church or circuit.

The above report was presented, seconded and unanimously approved.

Additional Comments:

- Day of Ministry will be a different approach – led by Cassie Biggin at Bierley Church
- The AGM had been held earlier in Conference – we questioned how to encourage local preachers
- We are now awarding certificates to long serving preachers
- The officers have changed with David Tucket becoming Chairman and Jackie Clarke becoming Secretary
- LWPT (Leaders of Worship & Preachers Trust) have funds available if needed

19. Ministerial Committee Report

Report by Rev. Sharon Hollamby

Since last year's Conference much of what I shared is coming to fruition.

Geoffrey Lee's Theology Course, as many know it, has now been registered for CPD accreditation, and all accompanying documents completed; however, this will be put on hold until Rev Michael Hedley's health improves. As recommended by Michael, the Committee successfully interviewed Richard Saunders-Hindley, a member at Cliff Bridge Church, and Steven Jenkins, a member at Mexborough Church, who are both keen to provide their skills in marking and assisting students completing the course. With all this in place we can now accept students to commence the course in its basic state, in the hope that the accreditation will follow in the future. Please make yourselves known to myself and Alina if you are one of those who have shown an interest.

We continue to review Ministerial vacancies within our churches, and can provide support in their search, contact myself and Alina if you require assistance. Rev Peter Norton, Pastor to the Pastors, continues to

contact and visit as many Ministers, Pastors, and leaders as he can. We are thankful for his care and prayer support. The diversity shown in our churches as they support their own individual communities is encouraging, and we can all share and support one another.

We continue to evaluate the service this Committee offers to our churches in encouraging them in growing, not only leaders, but in pastoring, and spiritual growth. We will be reviewing how we can support our churches moving forward in training, mentoring, and equipping the next generation of leaders, with focus on their spiritual gifts. Please pray for us as we seek God's wisdom.

Having submitted an Application for Ordination within our denomination, Graham Johnson is now well into Part 3 of the theology course, and is keen to finish it. Having met with Graham and confirming next steps, it will be my pleasure to present Graham to Conference 2024 with a view to ordination in 2025, after the final interview with our Committee when his studies are completed.

Please continue to pray for all those who lead our churches and seek to do our Lord's will. It is a real privilege, and we are blessed to be held in prayer by you all.

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 (16)
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 & LIBERTY, GLASGOW (RESIGNED APRIL 2024)
2016	Sharon Hollamby BA 2 Willow Walk, Hazlemere, HP15 7UJ Tel: 01494 815858 Email: ministerhfmchurch@hotmail.com HAZLEMERE CHURCH (6)

- 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 (1)
- 1971 Anthony E Hodkinson**
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

Retired Ministers

Ministers and pastors independently appointed by churches

Michael & Lindsey Hedley **ASHINGTON (WORD OF LIFE CHURCH)**
69-71 North Seaton Road, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 0AG
Tel: 07879 253 072 (Michael), 07854 820 012 (Lindsey)
Email: wordoflifechurch@hotmail.co.uk

Graham Johnson **BEDWORTH (THE LITTLE CHAPEL)**
37 Regent Street, Bedworth, Warwickshire, CV12 9BN
Tel: 02476 319710 Email: tlcbedworth@gmail.com

Cassie Biggin

49 Denbrook Avenue, Tong, Bradford, BD4 0QJ

Tel: 07814 041901

BETHEL COMMUNITY CHURCH

Email: cassiebiggin@gmail.com

Ruth Jukes

74 Wellesley Road, Oldbury, Birmingham, B68 8SA

Tel: 0121 511 2169

CHURCH ON THE ROCK

Email: ruthjukes@btinternet.com

Ishaku Bitrus

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

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NEW SWANNINGTON & ELLISTOWN CHURCHES

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The above report (including the list of Ministers) was presented, seconded and unanimously approved. Following approval of the report, Graham Johnson gave testimony of his call to ministry which was warmly received. He would now appear in the Year Book as a “minister awaiting ordination”

Additional Comments:

- Nine names had already been received as possible students on the new Union course
- We provide a co-ordinating service between Ministers and churches
- Edison Mubengo had resigned as a Minister at our Glasgow church

From the floor

- Are studies available to non-WRU members – answer: yes
- Can the studies be available via Zoon – answer: yes
- Is there an age limit for the courses – answer: no
- From Hough Lane – their Minister is now Rachelle Corbett alone

20. Christian Ethics and Social Action

Report by Mr Graham Johnson

Firstly, I'd like to thank the members of CESA Committee for covering for me last year when I wasn't well enough to attend Conference and General Meetings. And thank you to everyone for your prayers during that time. They were all valued and appreciated. I am a lot better than I was this time last year.

It's good to be here in person to present this report.

Since last year's report we have seen the new conflict between Israel and Gaza, with the media seemingly siding with Gaza, and a rise in anti-Semitism. The war between Russia and Ukraine continues and Putin has recently been re-elected for a fifth term of office as Russia's President.

We reported last year on 'political turmoil' in our own government. Little has changed. The Rwanda Bill is set to become law and yet there are still boat loads of immigrants crossing the English Channel often with tragic loss of life. At the time of writing the date of the General Election has not been announced but we expect it to be sooner rather than later. If the local elections are anything to go by, there is potential for a major change in government

The amendments to the Public Order Act, preventing people from praying silently outside abortion clinics are yet to be implemented but if they eventually are, this may criminalise praying in public.

We would encourage everyone to lobby their local MP about this and other issues that affect our Christian freedoms. And also to pray for Christians in government at local and national levels.

Our Royal family have been in the news recently with the King, the Princess of Wales and the Duchess of York all being treated for cancer.

We would like to thank everyone who has donated to our funds this year. We continue to financially support the work of Caring For Life, The Christian Institute, and Day One Publications. If you would like to know more about these organisations, please ask one of the committee members.

The committee would like to thank Dr Leslie Nohtgi for her work on the Freedom of Speech, and also Andy Wilcock for compiling a worship resource that churches could use. We apologise for the delay in sending it out.

We already have plans for next year's Values Day and are looking at different ways in which to deliver future Values Day resources.

We will end this report with a question. Do you have a passion for seeing Christian values upheld in this country? If you do, then CESA needs you! Please speak to any of the current committee members if you are interested in getting involved.

CESA Committee:

Chairperson: Stuart Allen

Secretary: Graham Johnson

Committee Members: Andy Wilcock, Rev Phil Hearson, Phil Hartshorn, Jim Rossell.

The above report was presented, seconded and unanimously approved.

Additional comments

- General Election offers opportunities to question candidates on their beliefs
- In scripture we are commanded to pray for those in authority over us
- We would welcome new members of the committee

Comments from the floor

- The Christian Institute was recommended – they would be willing to visit churches

21. Approval of Union Committees for 2024-2025

UNION DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEES FOR 2024-2025				
Union Trustees	Home Missions / YPD	Overseas Missions	CESA	Ministerial
President	Andy Wilcock – Chair	Muriel Stonehewer	Stuart Allen – Chair	President
Admin Manager	Michael Hedley	Ann-Marie Wilcock – S	Graham Johnson – Sec	Admin Manager
Union Treasurer -Chair	Adam Shepherd	Graham Evans	Phil Hearson	Sharon Hollamby – C
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 McBeth	Phil Hearson		George Phillips
Phil Hearson				David Rooksby
Sharon Hollamby				
Muriel Stonehewer				
LPF	MPS	WA	Conference	Magazine
Jackie Clark – Chair	Sharon Hollamby – Chr	Sandra Fall – Co-ord	President – Chair	Admin Manager – C
David Tucket – Sec	Phil Hearson – Sec	Ellie Miney	Admin Manager	Andy Wilcock
Brian Hyde	David Rooksby	Natalie Johnson	Admin Assistant	Daphne Hodkinson
Howard Copley	Colin Braithwaite	Anne-Marie Wilcock	Sandra Fall	Cliff Darby
Daphne Hodkinson	Peter Norton	Daphne Hodkinson	Muriel Stonehewer	Muriel Stonehewer
Cliff Darby	Cliff Darby			Marie Nichols
Phil Hartshorn	Phil Hartshorn			
James Rossell				
Michael Hedley				

The Union Committees for 2024-2025 (as above) were approved

22. Any Other Business

There was no further business for Conference

23. Vote of Thanks

The Administration Manager gave thanks to everyone who had served in any role during Conference. She, herself, was thanked for all her hard work by the President.

**MEMORANDUM OF RESOLUTION
OF THE MEMBERS OF THE
WESLEYAN REFORM UNION OF CHURCHES
("the WRU-CUA")**

(a charitable unincorporated association registered charity number 250315)

At a meeting of the Annual Conference of the Members of the WRU-CUA on seventeenth day of June 2024

The members were reminded:

- that the WRU-CUA is currently established as a charitable unincorporated association registered charity number 250315 and governed by a Constitution as amended at the 2016 Annual Conference
- that a charitable incorporated organisation (registered charity number 1203983) ("the CIO") has been established to govern the WRU in the future
- that the Charity Trustees of the WRU-CUA believe it to be in the best interests of the charity that all the assets of the WRU-CUA should be transferred to the CIO accordingly
- that the Members have power to make such a transfer in furtherance of the charitable purposes of the WRU-CUA
- that where property is held on separate charitable trusts to the WRU-CUA itself that the Charity Trustees of the WRU-CUA believe it to be in the best interests of those charitable trusts for the property to be transferred to the CIO, whether to hold as part of its corporate property or as trustee (as applicable, taking into account the powers available to transfer the property in accordance with the existing trusts).

The members noted that the properties to be transferred to the CIO will include the following:

- The leasehold land and buildings at 1 Thornbrook Close registered with the Land Registry under title number SYK281978
- The leasehold land and buildings at 58 Cardwell Avenue, Sheffield registered at the Land Registry under title number SYK353305
- The freehold land and buildings at 73 North Seaton Road, Ashington registered at the Land Registry under title number ND171878
- The freehold land comprising a car park west of 75-77 North Seaton Road registered at the Land Registry under title number ND167128

Subject to legal advice that the Charity Trustees receive and any consent of the Charity Commission that may be required, the members RESOLVED:

1. That the Charity Trustees should transfer all of the assets of the WRU-CUA to the CIO and that following such transfer the WRU-CUA should be dissolved and shall close on whatever date the trustees shall specify in a closure certificate.

2. That where property is held on separate charitable trusts, the trustees of that property should transfer the property to the CIO to hold as part of its corporate property or as the trustee (as applicable, taking into account the powers available to transfer the property in accordance with the existing trusts.)
3. To delegate to the Charity Trustees of the WRU-CUA and the property trustees of any property held in connection with the WRU-CUA but on separate trusts to complete the transfer of assets, subject to legal advice that the Charity Trustees receive and any consent of the Charity Commission that may be required.

My wrestle with the President role

At the beginning of February God spoke very clearly to me **'Forget the former things, be ready for the new, It will happen, it is coming, I have told you it would.'** this also related back to a previous prophecy God had given me.

Then 13 days later George rang and asked if I would consider putting my name forward for the role of President. I prayed about it a lot but did not get a clear yes, but neither was there a definite no, and God is in the habit of asking me to do things that are out of my comfort zone.

So knowing George needed an answer, I accepted thinking this was what God had meant when he had spoken to me 4 weeks earlier.

The next day after I accepted, I started to feel really concerned and had no peace. I spoke with 3 older wise friends who all had a disquiet in their spirit about me taking on the role.

I was in a real quandary then and felt so churned inside. I prayed that night as I went to bed and asked God to show me clearly.

I don't have many dreams and when I do, I don't remember them, but that night I had a dream and it stuck with me. I was going down a road and there was a turning on the left, but I didn't take it and carried on, and a little bit further down the road it was all blocked.

I could not shake this dream; it was so clear and strong. Was God really saying I had made the wrong decision? I didn't really want to accept it.

I then had 2 other dreams that week.

The second was that I was on my own swimming around in a pool that was filled with dirty, dark, horrible, thick, liquid and on the edge of the pool were 2 dragons waiting to pick me off.

The third was where a couple had had a baby and left it for dead as they were told it would not survive. I could see that there was a glimmer of life in the baby, so I stayed with it, to help it. Some time passed and when I looked at the baby again it had grown in size physically, but it was still a baby and had not developed or changed at all.

I wrestled with these dreams for quite a while, thinking of their relevance to the role of President and the wider union. I prayed so much, but they would not leave me, I knew there was something significant about them.

I wanted to honour the decision I had made, but all the time I had no peace about it, there was such a disquiet inside me, like a battle.

I was also very aware that I would be doing this on my own while Ian was doing his work. We would be going in different directions, and I had a sense that the gap would not be good or honouring.

And ultimately, I knew it was no good doing it if it wasn't what God wanted for me.

I sought further counsel from my friends who have prayed with me in the past. They both felt in their spirit that it was not right for me to take on the President role.

Again, I spent time praying and wrestling with all of this, but knew I had to make the decision to withdraw my nomination. So, in April I rang George and since that time I have been at complete peace.

I cannot ignore these dreams, they are very vivid in my mind and I know it was God speaking to me personally, but are they pertinent to us as a union?

As trustees we have discussed this and are asking questions about the role of president and also the role of the Union with the churches.

And I have also mused as to whether God's intention in this whole episode, was to bring us to this point of questioning our future.

We won't change for change's sake, and we don't have the answers at the moment.
But we can't just continue the way we have for 175 years, if God is calling us into something new.

When I was praying about this recently, I was reminded of the verses about **not putting new wine in to old wine skins.**

Over the years our churches, and even you representatives here have changed.
Should our structures and traditions change too?

When I was praying about the Union on Saturday, I felt these 3 questions were important to consider:

What is God's heart for the WRU?

What is the enemy doing to distract us? Our focus should always be Jesus.

What is the attitude of our hearts in regard to the Union?

If there is division or disunity - we give the devil a foothold.

We all need to be in unity together: **Ps 133:1&3 'How good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell together in unity. For there the Lord bestows his blessing.'**

We are going to be making a date to meet for a day as trustees to pray. We know we need to be before God as representatives of the WRU and seek His will and purpose for the way forward.

We would ask that you be in prayer with us.

We are one body and our desire is to walk in to the future God's way.