



Annual General Meeting Report

At our AGM after the service on 7th November, the first ever on Zoom, we had the opportunity to give our thanks to the Trustees who had worked so hard especially over the past year during the challenges of our Restoration Project. Ann Baeppler (Chair) and Riena Jackson (Secretary) retired from the Trustees for a well-earned rest. Andrew Gibbs (Treasurer) will be staying in post until the finances for the Restoration are complete. Phil Chatfield will also continue as Property Manager throughout the project with his expert skills and knowledge of the building. We are grateful to them all for their extra commitment to our congregation and Meeting House.

We also thank Karen Tricker for preparing the Annual Report, Carol Gibbs for her work as Membership Secretary and Rosemary Hamilton for her support as Warden. We value everyone's support without which the Meeting House would struggle to exist.

Contents –

- 1 – AGM Report; Trustees' Meeting
- 2 – Supporting Charity; Christmas Decorating; Poetry Group
- 3 – Restoration Update; Another Way to Fundraise; Supporting Independent Bookshops; Book Group
- 4 – Gardening; Moving On; Wedding Plans; Societies Day on Zoom
- 5 – Societies Day cont.; Services; Birthdays; Send a Child to Hucklow; XR Unitarian; Anglia Care Trust
- 6 – Regional U Gathering; Ipswich Museum; Leading Change; Contacts; Thought for the Month

Trustees Meeting

At the AGM two Trustees (Paulette Reed and Linda King) stayed on the committee and three more Trustees were elected – Robert Waller, John Stevens and Tessa Forsdike. The five held their first meeting on 20th November at which the officers were chosen –

Chair – Linda King (for one year only)

Secretary – Tessa Forsdike

Treasurer – Robert Waller to shadow Andrew Gibbs until the restoration is complete

Membership Secretary – Paulette Reed

Warden – Robert Waller

Pastoral Care – Ann Baeppler

Worship – Linda King

Newsletter – Tessa Forsdike

Hospitality, Publicity and Growth – Paulette Reed and Maggie Hodges

Safeguarding – Daniele Falcinelli and Tessa Forsdike

We hope to be able to hold our first service in person in the Meeting House after the beginning of February. The Trustees recognise the importance of maintaining contact with people who have joined our services online when we are able to return to the Meeting House in person and are exploring the possibilities of installing a telephone line and internet access.

The Trustees' next meeting will be on Friday 18th December when they hope to plan further for the future. If anyone has any concerns, questions or suggestions, please contact one of the Trustees – or email Tessa as Secretary to add an item to the agenda – tessa@tessajordan.co.uk

Supporting Charity

For some time now our fundraising has concentrated on the Meeting House Restoration Fund with causes involving people taking a very definite second place. As we go in to 2021 it is time for us to be thinking about reversing this, to put people first.

Already for 2021 we have two ongoing fundraisers which have been a bit on hold; Sandra and Malcolm's traditional Christmas drinks and Cake raffle for the St Elizabeth Hospice, which will take place when we return to the Meeting House and the raising of a further £20 to twin our 3rd toilet...and the £63 needed to twin the 4th when it is 'up & flushing'.

In previous years we have also chosen one main charity annually for our support. The Trustees welcome your suggestions. Each of us may have our own 'favourite' charity and so we ask that you write a short paragraph about it, giving your reasons for your choice, which we will publish in the January newsletter. The congregation will then have the chance to vote after one of the January services to choose one and we can broaden our money raising from bricks and mortar (or wood, lathe and plaster!) to other areas.

Christmas Decorating

It was 10 days after Halloween that the neighbours across the road put up their (sshhh) Christmas lights. The first on our road, and to date I haven't seen any others. Seeing those lights gave me the nudge to commit to paper this idea I've had and pose the question: what's atop your Christmas tree?

Over the years I have seen star, fairy, twisted ball of tinsel, angel, and even a cross. Our Christmas tree is decorated each year with a 'theme': minimalist, old, new, or colour. If the tree is of a particularly good shape then less is more. Another year the old decorations get an airing which include the little things the boys made at playgroup and primary school. Why throw them out if they are still useful and beautiful? It was William Morris who said "*Have nothing in your*



home that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful". Well, those things are useful and beautiful and hold a lot of sentiment for me (unlike tinsel which has no place on any Christmas tree!) This year we will bring out the 'old' and it will be especially poignant seeing that we will not be able to have our family gathering as in past years due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

When all the decorations are up I love to walk the neighbourhood and look at all the different decorations. I resist appearing too nosy, I do not press my nose up to any window! I often wonder as to why a particular dwelling has no decoration. I suppose the answer may well be as varied as for those that do.

In response to the question posed earlier - our Christmas tree is adorned with a Pendle Witch acquired in October 1968 (Halloween): her head is made of cork from a champagne bottle, there is no 'body' as such and her legs are pipe cleaners fitted with triangular bits of leather for feet, and a black hat (see photo). So, dear readers, what's atop your Christmas tree?

Wishing you all good health, and a peaceful and happy Christmas time.

Paulette Reed

Poetry Group

There is no meeting in December, so plenty of time to read the work of the poet for January – U A Fanthorpe and to choose a poem to share and discuss on Thursday 28th January.

Restoration Update

Work on the restoration of the Meeting House is drawing to a close. The roof is now complete including some improvements to the lead gutters in the form of overflow pipes which will give early warning of leaf blockage or blockage by any other obstructions. The T-Pren gaskets installed in the 70's now have UV lead guards to minimise deterioration. Spare tiles will be left on site so that any repairs can be matched. See the photo below of roofing being completed at the ridge.

The external decoration of the building is also near completion and details of the special paints will be made available so that future decoration work is compatible. The Meeting House is looking great and all will be revealed when the scaffolding comes down at the beginning of December, after a final inspection by Historic England.

Once the scaffold has been dropped, preparations for lowering and relaying the forecourt can be made. This will give us level access to the Meeting House and prevent damp damage to the structure. This and the work to install a new toilet facility will take approximately six weeks so not being complete until mid-January 2021.

We can now look forward to a grand opening early next year.

Merry Christmas to All - Phil Chatfield



Another Way to Fund Raise

Back in August this year I was asked, by the family of a 91 year old neighbour, if I would consider walking their Mother 3 times a week to help get her confidence back after having hip replacement surgery last year following a fall. After a while this also included helping her with exercises after her visit to a Physiotherapist. For doing this they suggested giving a regular donation to our Meeting House Restoration Fund.

I have been doing this since Friday 14th August and to the end of this month will have raised £375.00.

Another neighbour filled in for me when I had a week's holiday in Norfolk in October to keep the fund going. She has also helped by doing once or twice a week so in that way she is also contributing to our fund by giving her time.

Maggie Hodges

Supporting Independent Bookshops

I've just discovered a way to avoid buying new books from Amazon (who seem to have their fingers in too many pies) and to support independent booksellers.

<https://uk.bookshop.org/> is the site to visit.

Independent bookshops register on the site and receive a proportion of the profits. When making an online book purchase, please will you consider doing so in this way and helping them survive?

Ann Baepler

Book Group

The book to read for the December Book Group meeting is 'News of the World' by Paulette Jiles. Tracy Chevalier describes it as '*A stunning story that tore at my heart and my gut. The relationship at its core between a grizzled old man and a lost young girl digs deep into what it means to care about someone and to find your place in the world.*' Join us on Wednesday 16th December from 7.30 to 8.30pm.

Gardening



Over the last couple of years we have planted more bulbs around the perimeter of our churchyard (above Tessa is weeding and clearing so they can come through again next Spring). Each year the bulbs make more bulbs and so we hope that as we reclaim our building and its surroundings, there will be a good display. There is always room for more ... so if you have any bulbs to donate, or other perennial plants which would suit the area, do let Tessa know. We already have daffodils, bluebells, grape hyacinths, forget-me-nots and foxgloves.

Moving on ...

Recently Adam Whybray, our website and IT supporter, shared the news that he and his partner Antonia will be moving to Maastricht in the Netherlands early in December. This is a personal decision in reaction to Brexit and although they do not yet have jobs to go to and will be living on their savings, Adam has contacted the local University where he hopes to find a niche relating to his expert area of film. He will stay in touch and will still join meetings of the Book Group amongst other Unitarian activities.

Wedding Plans

Luckily Claire Johnson and Henry, who were to be married on 14th November, have managed to rebook everything for no extra charge. They see the silver lining to this as giving them another five months to plan everything that they didn't manage to sort before - most notably, getting the rings! The new wedding date is 14th May 2021!
They coped with their disappointment by eating lots of cake!

Societies Day on Zoom

On the 21st November it was a marathon stint on the computer to indulge myself in a day of learning about some of the groups & fellowships which meet under the umbrella of the General Assembly of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches. Details of all the groups taking part can be found on their websites.

It is said 'variety is the spice of life', and in this case there was a lot of 'variety' and 'spirit'. First up, 'Findhorn Unitarian Network' (FUN) and their presentation as to the ethos of the group and their times spent in community. Riena, one of our members is involved and I'm sure would be happy to discuss with anyone who may be interested. I was particularly interested in a game which was mentioned called 'Transformation Game' *'a fun and complex board game which offers a playful yet substantial way of understanding and transforming key issues in your life'*. Please look it up on 'Google' and see whether you think this is something we can do in the congregation.

The Unitarian Renewal Group (URG) Looking at Unitarian Growth I found this most interesting and was impressed with the presentations by five of its members, all leaders of congregations with the exception of Stephen Lingwood who also has a pioneer ministry in Cardiff. Without going in to detail, there were many quotes in this session which I will share with you: Laura Dobson *'If God doesn't work for you, add an 'o' in the middle or an 's' on the end or whatever you conceive the mystery is'* : Stephen Lingwood, *'so much of spiritual practice is getting out of our mind and into our body'*: Bridget Spain, *'we have lost our sense of purpose; we talk about a movement, not going to church or chapel...why do we have difficulty using the word God?'* Ant Howe, *'find the common ground, the sweet spot...how can you define what is ultimately a mystery'*: and Christina Smith, *'growth, inclusiveness, questioning of historical*

Societies Day on Zoom – cont.

interpretation of scriptures.'

Earth Spirit Network (UESN) Introduced by Tony McNeile, who spoke of the Celtic seasons and the patterns of life. The presentation by Monica Strell, a nature based Interfaith Minister living in Assynt, Sutherland, a real far north wilderness outpost. Her talk & photos rekindled memories of the times my children and I spent at Sam Notcutt's cottage on the north coast of Sutherland! Unfortunately by this time, being in front of a screen for so long was exhausting and I failed to write down anything about the Peace Fellowship & National Unitarian Fellowship (NUF) and my recall, I'm sure, wouldn't give justice to the speakers from both groups. Fortunately, both have websites!

Linda King.

Societies Information -

Findhorn Unitarian Network

(FUN)<http://www.forresfindhornfellowship.org.uk/>

Meditation: ralpunitarian@gmail.com

To join Taizé email daviddinoz@gmail.com

Unitarian Renewal Group - Unfortunately don't have either a website or a Facebook presence.

Unitarian Earth Spirit Network (UESN)

<https://unitarianearthspiritnetworkandfile.wordpress.com/>

Unitarian Peace Fellowship

<https://www.ukunitarians.org.uk/peace/>

National Unitarian Fellowship

<https://www.nufonline.org.uk/NUF2015/index.htm>

Festival of Unitarians in the South

East – 21st and 22nd February 2021 – register at www.ldpaunitarians.org/booking-2021/fuse-2021-online-event

Services in December

6th – led by Stephen Crowther (Unitarian Lay Leader)

13th – led by Ali Mercer (member at Ipswich)

20th – Carol Service – co-ordinated by Robert Waller. As traditionally we will be including poems, readings, songs, music and carols. If you have a contribution, please let Robert know - bob.waller2255@gmail.com

25th – Christmas Day service led by Rev. Cliff Reed

27th led by Rev. Martin Whitell (LDPA District Minister)

Birthdays in December

Happy birthday to Ray Seal on 12th; Edward Shaw on 22nd; Carol Gibbs on 26th; John Hamilton and Liz Constable on 30th

Send a Child to Hucklow

This charity fund arranges holidays for disadvantaged children (without regard to religion, race or creed). In the annual report we learn that in a difficult year, £46,000 was raised and holidays were organised for five groups of children before the lockdown restrictions intervened. As published in the Inquirer, one child described their stay – *'The bed got me stuck in a cloud and the food took me to heaven. The adventures were the most amazing thing ever. When I looked at the views I was speechless.'*

To make a donation, send a cheque payable to 'The Send a Child to Hucklow Fund' to Mrs Ruth Taylor, c/o Mrs J Duffell, 19 Compton Mews, Ford, Shrewsbury, SY5 9NX or contact

donations_treasurer@sendachildtohucklow.org.uk

The fundraising aim for 2021 is £60,000.

XR Unitarian

The first Unitarian XR event took place via Zoom in October and was recorded. It can be downloaded at –

<https://tinyurl.com/UnitarianXR>

Anglia Care Trust

In partnership with Suffolk County Council, the Trust have just launched a free 24 hour Suffolk Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0800 977 5690

Regional Unitarian Gathering – EA Congregations ‘How are we doing?’

This online meeting took place at 7 o'clock on November 23rd 2020. It was arranged by the Rev Matthew Smith from Framlingham and Bury Edmunds Meetings. Paulette Robert and Sandra attended the from the Ipswich Meeting. It was designed to be fluid - there was no agenda and the aim was to find out how different congregations were coping during the Corona Virus epidemic.

Cambridge, Framlingham, Bury ST Edmund, Norwich, Yarmouth and Ipswich were represented. Each person attending introduced themselves. I particularly thanked Linda King for her hard work making sure we had a service each week and Paulette endorsed my appreciation.

Most congregations hope to continue Zoom services, if the logistics can be sorted out, for people who have appreciated the opportunity to join in when they cannot get to the service in person. Cambridge reported that it has been the young families that have not attended so Andrew has been keeping them in touch by phone.

Most groups have had some problems with the quality of music. An attender at Norwich has a friend who is a sound engineer and together they are going to see how they can help with this problem and will share their findings. Yarmouth being a very small group have sent out service ideas for families to have services at home. Framlingham and Bury have given their Chalice a separate screen so that it is there for the whole service, I don't know how this works but it seems a nice idea. There was some discussion about activities that different congregations arrange during the week, also how newsletters were being distributed, again I commented on the work Tessa does on our monthly newsletter. There are lots of people working hard to keep people connected at this difficult time. Sandra Hawes

Ipswich Museum

One of the gems of our local heritage is the Ipswich Museum which is hoping to open again when the current lockdown ends on 2nd December. With free entry, it is an ideal place to visit during the Christmas break – and our Meeting House is mentioned too (see photo) –



Leading Change in the Congregation

An online course January to April 2021 - Monday evenings, via Zoom, 6.30-7.30pm (with an optional extra 30 minute discussion) twice a month, starting 11th January 2021. (Dates: 11th and 25th Jan, 8th and 22nd Feb, 8th and 22nd Mar, 12th and 26th Apr). Organised by Essex Hall.

Disclaimer –

We welcome contributions from all members and friends of our congregation. Views expressed in the articles are those of the individual and not necessarily those of our congregation or of our Unitarian community

Contacts Contributions PLEASE for the next newsletter to Tessa before the deadline of Wednesday 30th December 2020 by email to ipswichunitarian@gmail.com or post to 48 Crabbe Street, Ipswich IP4 5HS

To contact our Secretary ring 01473 728498 email tessa@tessajordan.co.uk

Website – www.unitarianipswich.com

Happy Christmas!

Thought for the month

Christmas doesn't come from a store, maybe Christmas perhaps means a little bit more ...
Dr. Seuss