

ST GEORGE'S URC, MORPETH
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 15th April 2018

1. OPENING DEVOTIONS

These were led by Teresa Benkhabebe-House, Church Secretary. The meeting was chaired by Lorna Anderson, Elder, who welcomed 42 members to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from: Carol Dixon, Donald Dixon, Penny Oxley, Linda Glascott, Margaret Brock, Stuart Brock, Barbara Pringle, Patricia Gatherum, Gillian Irvine, Ken Irvine, Christine Richardson, Vivien Bennett, Pam Anderson, Ken Anderson, Freda Pagan, Alison Mills, Ian Mills, Derek Anderson, Susan Sanderson, David Grosch-Miller, Moria Mann, Cynthia Lilburn, Madeline Cleverley, Pat Hills, Adele Elkin, and Elizabeth Rowlands.

3. AOB

There were two items: one from Jared Johnson and one from Carla Grosch-Miller

4. NEWS OF FRIENDS AND FAMILIES

The recent death of Robert Hudson was recorded.

News was exchanged about Pat Clow, James – Margery Tate's brother, Pat and Chris Hills, Freda Pagan, Andy Cleverley's mother. All these members and their families were remembered in prayer.

5. MINUTES OF THE LAST AGM HELD ON 21st May 2017

The minutes of the last AGM held on 21st May 2017 were agreed and signed.

6. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

7. REPORTS

Questions were invited for each report.

Church Secretary	No comments.
Managers' Report	<p>Andrew Hamnett, Clerk, updated the Managers' Report by saying that Joann Evans has decided to continue to be the Lettings Manager, with support from the Elders.</p> <p>He also reported that work has been carried out at the Manse, including replacement of damp proof course and re-plastering in some of the rooms. This work has been paid for by SENEA.</p> <p>He also said that the Christmas Tree Festival will take place again this year, from 5th to 8th December.</p> <p>The managers were thanked for all the work that they do.</p>
Church Lettings Report	No comments. Joann thanked the Elders for their support in

	continuing with this role.
Social Convenor's Report	No comments.
Junior Church Report	Sue Elliott, Junior Church Leader, thanked all the leaders for their work throughout the year, and especially thanked the new leaders who are now part of the team.
Cradle Roll Report	No comments.
Bible Fellowship	No comments.
Midweek Service	Sue Elliott encouraged people to come along to the Midweek Services. She thanked those who attend and lead the services, and Andrew Hamnett who plays the piano.
St George's Church Orchestra Report	Thanks were expressed to the Orchestra who enhance the services with their playing.
Ladies Coffee Club	No comments.
Lunchtime Concerts	No comments.
Knitter, Knatter, Craft and Chatter	No comments.
St George's URC Ceilidh Band	No comments.
Tea Time Talks	No comments.
Country Dance Club	No comments.
Badminton Reports	All groups need more players.
Morpeth and Mitford Churches Together	No comments.
Afternoon Bowls Club	The group needs more members.
Evening Bowls Club	The group needs more members.
Christian Aid Representative Report	No comments.
4 th Morpeth St George's Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers	No comments.
Morpeth Baden Powell Scout Group	No comments.
St George's Community Players	No comments.

Jared Johnson asked if it is necessary for groups to include their financial accounts in their reports when that information is provided within the Treasurers Report. He explained that if this information were to be excluded the AGM booklet would be reduced in size, therefore taking less time to produce and costing slightly less in terms of the amount of paper used and photocopying costs.

The Chair proposed that groups continue to do their annual accounts and pass them to the Treasurer to keep on file, but not to include their annual accounts in their annual report.

25 voted in favour, 5 against and 7 abstained. The proposal was carried.

The annual reports were formally agreed by the meeting.

Stephanie Robson was thanked for her work collating the reports and producing the AGM booklet.

8. TREASURER'S REPORT

In addition to the report in the AGM booklet, David Calcraft, Treasurer, spoke about last year's financial results, looked at some simplified accounts and reported on the first two months of 2018.

The final year results (2017) was £59,090 excess of expenditure over income. Subtracting the Meg Burdon legacy expenditure for 2017 (£39,357) from this figure a normal business figure of £19,733 excess of expenditure is arrived at. Overall reserves were £134,431 of which £13,000 is reserved in the Church Music Fund. This figure also includes the balance of the legacy from Meg Burdon unspent at year end. Our reserves available for normal use at year end were £74,237 (down £30,000 from a high point in 2013).

David highlighted some of the trends in 2017:

- Payments to SENEA were increasing,
- Giving increased last year but is basically decreasing,
- Reserves available for normal use are decreasing,
- Church Fair income decreased,
- Hall lettings are increasing, and fundraising income is increasing.

David provided some simple accounts for 2017 to show how the annual finances are balanced or not. Most of the elements vary relatively little year on year, so the three things that influence whether we spend more than we receive or vice versa are Giving (£50,000), Legacies (£0) and Repairs/Refurbishment (£3,000). Looking at 2017, Giving was £1,400 less than the £50,000 estimate, and repairs were £23,000 more than £3,000 estimate, this gives a combined downside of £24,400. There were no legacies. So, the model would predict a loss of £24,400 last year, but we lost only £19,700. The reasons for this discrepancy were better than expected income from fundraising and hall lettings, inexplicably reduced electricity costs and a missed payment to SENEA by the bank. This model will be used to look at 2018 results to date at the next Church meeting. At the end of the year, David will use both years results to see whether the model needs fine tuning. Already it is known that this year payments to SENEA will be over budget by £947 and Church insurance will be over budget by £466.

For the first two months of 2018 there is a total excess of expenditure over income of £4,851. At the end of February reserves available for normal use are £69,384. Of note are the late receipt of the annual evening bowls club donation of £630 and the payment of the missed standing order to SENEА for £1,072. In February Annual Church Insurance of £3,466 was paid.

The following highlights for March are: receipt of annual Community Players donation of £1,250. Receipt of £1,896 towards the Lift Door Appeal. Payment of £8,922 for the new lift doors, payment of the first quarter electricity bill for £2,763 (about £500 more than for last year). Based on this there is likely to be an excess of expenditure over income for the month of about £8,000.

David reported that he had received 16 donations resulting from the Lift Door Appeal, giving a total of £4,000.

Margery Tate asked whether during the vacancy the Manse could be let out. Andrew Hamnett explained that it would be difficult to say whether it could be as it would depend on how soon a new minister is in place. The Manse would be let through an agency, and the likely rental period would be six months minimum. The Manse is owned by the Northern Synod Trust, so permission would need to be sought from the Trust to rent it out. However, any work that is required on the property is overseen by SENEА.

Thanks were expressed to David his work as Treasurer.

The accounts were unanimously accepted by the meeting.

9. GENERAL MATTERS

9.1 Vacancy

Teresa Benkhabeб-House, Church Secretary, reported that the Vacancy Committee has met several times since the last Church Meeting in January. Their main task was to produce a Summary Profile for the three-church pastorate of St George's, Widdrington and Great Bavington URСs. The Summary Profile and the Pastorate Profiles from each church have been considered by the Northern Synod Pastoral Committee and have been passed to the Moderator's Meeting. The Summary Profile is posted on the Eastern Synod website, although the Pastorate has not yet been officially declared vacant and Ministers will not be able to see the full profiles until the Moderators have considered it at their next meeting in April. Copies of the Summary Profile and the Pastorate Profile are available from the Church Secretary.

9.2 General Data Protection Regulations

New data protection legislation is coming in to force on 25th May 2018. This legislation builds on the Data Protection Act 1998 and applies to paper and electronic records. This legislation applies to all organisations, including churches, because the church holds personal details and processes that information for church use. The church must draw up a Data Privacy Statement by 25th May. Teresa Benkhabeб-House and Lorna Anderson are taking the lead on this requirement and will update church members in due course.

10. APPOINTMENTS

These are listed below. The following Elders to be re inducted were proposed by the Chairman, having been endorsed at the Elders Meeting held on 20 February 2018: Andy Cleverley, Joyce Calcraft and Sue Elliott. These nominations were accepted and carried by the meeting.

Other appointments, as follows, were agreed.

Appointment	Officer
Elders	Re inducted for a further term: Andy Cleverley Joyce Calcraft Sue Elliott
Church Secretary	Teresa Benkhabebe-House
Treasurer	David Calcraft
Clerk to Managers	Andrew Hamnett
Social Convenor	Gillian Irvine
Catering Team	Joan Cooper, Stephanie Robson, Patricia Gatherum and Sarah Cleverley
Gift Aid Secretary	Linda Glascott
Freewill Offering	Linda Glascott
Property Manager	Neil Robson
Stewarding Rota	Andy and Sarah Cleverley
Hall Lettings Officer	Joann Evans
Heating Officers	Robin Cooper, Andy Cleverley, George Brown
Liaison Rep to Managers	Andy Cleverley
Auditor	Linda Glascott
Junior Church Leader	Sue Elliott
Crèche Organisers – ad hoc basis	Patricia Gatherum and Margaret Brock
Sunday Tea and Coffee Rota	Laurence and Teresa Benkhabebe-House
Flower Committee Convenor	Dorothy Luke
Orchestra Co-ordinators	Christine Oakes and Andrew Hamnett
Ceilidh Band Co-ordinators	Jared Johnson and Gillian Armstrong

Transport Officer	Vivien Bennett
Organists	Ken Irvine and Andrew Hamnett
Newsletter Editor	Stephanie Robson
Church Fair Organisers	Lorna Anderson and Patricia Gatherum
Health and Safety Consultant	Ken Anderson
Christian Aid	Margaret Johnson
Commitment for Life	Sarah Cleverley
Prayer Handbook	Sarah Cleverley
Housekeepers	Joan Cooper, Sarah Cleverley and Mary Kelly

Property Manager – Neil Robson, the current Property Manager, is reducing the amount of work that he does. One or two people are needed to take over some of the tasks which he has previously overseen: the annual checks on fire extinguishers, PAT tests, smoke alarm tests, emergency lighting batteries, lightning conductor, and clock in church tower. If anyone is interested in taking on these tasks or has a suggestion for a way forward, please see the Church Secretary.

11. A.O.B.

12.

11.1 LGBT Pride Event, 2 June 2018

Carla Grosch-Miller gave information about a new initiative in Northumberland, an LGBT Pride March and Gathering taking place on 2 June 2018 in Alnwick and at Alnwick Rugby Club. There will be a Christian presence at the event, in the Health and Well Being Zone, for LGBT, friends and allies. Carla asked for people to help by making cards to give out, and for volunteers on the day. She also asked if members were willing for St George's to be listed on the OneBodyOneFaith website as a 'Visible Congregation', an inclusive church at which LGBT people are welcomed and feel at home. Members voted unanimously to be listed on the website.

Joyce Calcraft said that in 2015 the church voted "to allow the minister of the church to conduct same sex marriages where s/he thought it appropriate." The next step for the church to be able to conduct same sex marriages is to register the church/the building to do so. This requires a church meeting to pass a resolution to do so. This will be done at the next Church meeting on 8th July.

11.2 Christian Aid

Margaret Johnson gave information about Christian Aid's Big Shift petition, urging the banks to shift from investing in fossil fuels to renewable energy. Margaret had copies of the petition if anyone would like to sign it.

There being no further business the meeting closed with prayer at 12.50pm.

Date of next meeting: 8th July 2018

CHURCH SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 2017

At 31st December 2018 the Annual Return to Synod showed our membership to be 111. There were three losses during the year, made up of two deaths and one member who moved away. The following deaths were recorded: Robert Hudson and David Baldie. The death of Ena Stewart, an Adherent of St George's, was also recorded. Thanks were given for their lives and witness. Kelly Anderson has moved away from the area.

Junior Church has six children who regularly attend; their ages range from 5 to 17. During the year there were two infant baptisms: Emeline Elizabeth Slater and Jayson Winn.

There are 96 children and young people across all age groups in the uniformed organisations i.e. Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Baden Powell Scouts.

The number of serving Elders is 15. At last year's AGM Andy Cleverley, Joyce Calcraft and Sue Elliott were re-inducted for a further term.

St George's has been in vacancy for all of 2018. I would like to take this opportunity to record my thanks to all who have helped in any way, small or large, to ensure that St George's has continued as a place of worship for its members and the community of Morpeth and surrounding area.

***Teresa Benkhaleb-House
Church***

Secretary

CHURCH LETTINGS REPORT

The Church remains busy throughout the year, with both Church and non-Church activities. There was a moment of worry when the current Yoga teacher retired, but luckily Felicity has managed to find a new teacher. Please continue to contact me to book a room - email is best (as I am at work through the day), and please don't rely on the printed version of the diary as this is not a definitive record of the Church activities.

Joann Evans

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MANAGERS 2018

As always, the Managers have had a busy year: looking after the needs of two buildings and their users, ensuring that the organisations using the church are in a safe environment and working without a minister have all contributed to a workload that shows little sign of diminishing. In addition, the Bequest Committee, on which two managers sit, has met a number of times to look at projects that would both benefit the church and which would not have been possible without the Burdon bequest. The Clerk would like to thank all our managers for their hard work this last year; we look forward to the arrival of a new minister later in the year, but I believe that we can present to him a church that has an active and capable group of managers.

Church Property: A substantial old building requires a lot of attention and Neil Robson, Robin Cooper and Ian Mills have done a great job in ensuring that we continue to be able to occupy a building that is secure against the weather (of which we have had a great deal!) and which is (for the most part) warm and welcoming.

Of the major projects this year, without question the most important was the replacement of the folding doors in the lift. The lift is crucial to the operation of the church hall; without the lift access to the hall is impossible for those unable to climb the stairs and a substantial sum had to be raised by the church. On this occasion the church was able to call on all the users of the hall to help with a wide variety of fund-raising activities which, with the 2018 Gift Day appeal, raised pretty well all the money we needed. This was a genuine community effort, and all involved should be congratulated on a superb achievement.

On other matters, the Quinquennial building survey revealed a catalogue of repair work, and Neil has overseen the more urgent items in the course of the last two years. The church stonework will require continual attention: the most damaged areas have been addressed but inevitably other areas will need to be watched as well. Damaged and blocked guttering is a continual problem in this regard, since unless problems in this area are addressed, considerable damage can result. Water ingress around the Rose window is also a cause for concern; this is an area that is not easy of access and Neil is keeping a careful eye on the window.

The manse has now been empty for 18 months and the Elders asked that background heating be maintained to ensure that there were no problems with damp. Neil worked with the plumber to devise a scheme that did not involve having the water reconnected, whilst the clerk wrestled with Cooperative Energy over the bills. These bills varied from the ludicrous to the obscure, but at least, once they are agreed by myself and Jeff Owen, they are paid by SENEA. The urgent repairs to the manse, mainly the installation of a new damp-course, were completed this year, and the opportunity taken to effect some other smaller jobs. The manse will certainly need comprehensive re-decoration before it is re-occupied and there are several other quite substantial jobs that will need to be carried out if the decision is made to retain the manse.

Heating the church remains a pre-occupation for the managers, with Andy Cleverley attempting to square the circle in matching demand and availability. After an analysis over the Summer and early Autumn period, a solution was proposed by the small group mentioned above, and new convactor heaters have now been installed in the transept areas and on the sanctuary walls near the transepts. The managers await the results with interest, though the fact that the installation of these new heaters coincided with a quite extraordinary warm spell has rendered any statistical analysis otiose for the moment. In addition, Robin has been in intense negotiation with nPower over the bills that we have been getting; I gather that the negotiations have now borne some fruit.

Amongst the activities that recur on a regular basis, one that has caused some heartburn is the servicing of our fire-extinguishers. After an unexpectedly large bill was received, we have now asked a rather more reasonable company to undertake this work. The Lime Tree in the church garden has also been causing problems shedding branches on users of the car-park area. Little can be done here until the Spring, but permission will be sought to prune the upper levels of the tree once Spring has arrived. The managers agreed that the large storage box in the North Transept should be removed: it is permanently damp and now serves little purpose. It has been replaced by a music cupboard to the immense satisfaction of the organists. Finally the renovation of the kitchen and vestry area at the back of the church was undertaken by a small group using money from the Burdon Bequest. Both rooms have now had a facelift and whilst there have been one or two snags, the overall impression looks good.

Housekeeping: The installation of the new chairs in the Sanctuary has had some minor consequences; the managers decided to purchase a new hand-held cordless vacuum cleaner which would make the job of cleaning the floor under the chairs easier. Joann very kindly offered to pay for this. Moving the chairs is not an easy task; they are (deliberately) quite substantial and Suzanne Hamnett has purchased a small trolley which can also be used for moving tables upstairs. The Ladies Coffee Club has also gifted two carpet sweepers.

Social Activities: The church has an astonishing number of social activities that help cement its position in the community of Morpeth. These activities include concerts, coffee mornings, the annual fair, the new Christmas Tree festival, Heritage Day, evening events such as the Christmas Social, the murder-mystery evening and the domino drive, and much else beside. Gillian Irvine does a tremendous job in putting this programme together, but the success of these events depends on a host of people being prepared to lend a hand in a vast variety of ways. To all of these people the church owes a great deal of gratitude.

Hall Lettings: The managers were very pleased that Joann, following discussions with the Secretary, felt able to continue her work as lettings manager. As we said last year, this is no sinecure, but we hope that some of the more time-consuming aspects of the post have been ameliorated. The managers did ask that letters be written to those users who were not making regular use of their "slots", since this wastes heating and prevents Joann from offering these slots to others. Matters seem to have been improved in this area as well, and revisions have been carried out to the hiring document to clarify areas of responsibility, particularly concerning personal indemnity insurance cover for commercial hiring, and the provision of safeguarding policies for all users.

The Website: This has been extremely busy over the last year, with regularly more than 500 hits a week; albeit small compared to Amazon, this is pretty big for us, and the webmaster has wondered whether curious ministers might be behind it. It will be interesting to see whether this number falls once news of our new minister becomes widely known. The managers have discussed whether to revive the church's Facebook page, which is in a catatonic state at the moment. Should there be anyone in the church willing to take this on, the Clerk would be delighted to hear from them.

Other Matters: The dreaded introduction of the new GDPR regulations has necessitated the church carefully considering what information it needs to keep and what policies it should follow. We have had a great deal of help from Muckle LLP, with whom I have been in contact regarding the use of cookies on the church website. The church now has a policy on this area, but there is no doubt that the whole process has been far from straightforward.

Andrew Hamnett

SOCIAL CONVENOR'S REPORT

Once again St. George's has enjoyed a very varied programme of events during 2018. This has helped us to maintain our community profile within Morpeth. Many of these events are flagged up in the reports of the church groups that organised them but I have endeavoured to give a flavour of our outreach in the community plus details of some of our charity support which, with the help of numerous volunteers, I have been involved with. I have also included, where possible, financial details.

Please see other reports for further details of activities and fund raising events including the Ladies Coffee Club Domino Drive and Supper and the Ladies Flower Club Annual Coffee Morning. Apologies to anyone I may have inadvertently omitted to mention.

As well as the eight Tea Time Talks and nine Lunchtime Concerts, see other reports, the following took place.

In **January** we held our annual Managers' Coffee Morning raising £506 for church funds plus £65 from card sales.

March saw the Community Players Spring Production and the Prize Winners' Concert of the Wansbeck Music Festival.

A Soiree Evening with cheese and wine in **April** given by young opera singers raised £200 for the church and, after their expenses, the artists donated £807 to Henry Dancer Days, their chosen children's cancer charity.

In **May** we held the annual Plant Sale raising £1,523 for church funds. This was an increase of £273 on 2017.

An early evening concert with hot drinks and cake in **July** featuring Bradley Creswick, Leader of Royal Northern Sinfonia, raised £503 for the church.

A 'Strawberry Tea' which took place in **August** raised, after expenses, £413 of which £73 was donated to the church and £340 was used for the financing of charity events within the church later in the year.

In **September** we once again opened our doors for Morpeth's Heritage day which this year was overseen by the Elders.

In **October** we had our annual Coffee Morning with Charity Card and Gift Sale. This was another popular event much appreciated by local and national charities and raising £215 for the church by the sale of refreshments and greetings cards. We also had the Church Annual Fair which raised the amazing sum of £1,938. A Concert by the Bewick Orchestra featuring Iona Brown of Royal Northern Sinfonia and partially financed by the Strawberry Tea raised, after expenses, the sanctuary hire charge plus a donation to the church, £1,000 for Henry Dancer Days, the Orchestra's chosen charity.

November saw the St George's Community Players Production take place. This was followed by the ever popular Church Social which raised £981 - another excellent 'home-grown' effort. St George's also hosted the second Christmas Tree Festival which built on and proved even more popular than last year's. This was a two day event when 160 children from local nurseries visited the church on the Friday enjoying a programme of stories, games and songs followed by a day for the general public on the Saturday. This was described by one visitor as 'quiet evangelism within the community'. The event raised £1,820 for the

Multiple Sclerosis Research and Relief Fund. The hire of the sanctuary was financially supported by our Strawberry Tea.

During 2018 the Church Library raised £284 and the sale of greetings cards £264. These two initiatives have to date raised over £6,100 for the church. Please keep supporting and donating paperbacks and jigsaws.

Gillian Irvine

JUNIOR CHURCH REPORT 2019

After having three new leaders join us from September 2017 we have been able to offer our children and young people more age appropriate lessons. We still join together at the start of our session and share our news, good and bad, from the previous week and then take it to God in prayer. We also continue to join up on the first Sunday of each month to share communion while the congregation are doing the same in Church. Last year we started having the older boys, Joshua and Martin, leading the younger group once a month. This meant that the boys had to look at the Roots material for the week in question and plan what they were going to do. This has worked really well but has been put on hold as Martin is preparing for his GCSE examinations this year. It is worth mentioning that during these monthly sessions Martin has shown a real gift for taking the good and bad news and turning them into beautifully moving prayers.

A lot of the congregation will remember our end of year presentation in July 2018. We showed the bicycle wheel used at the Northumberland Pride service march and on our Christian stall at Alnwick in June last year. Junior Church younger children showed the wheel with ribbons weaved in-between the spokes, the ribbons represented hopes and dreams for a new world of love and total equality. We had agreed that Martin and I would talk in Church about the day of the march; he was there with the police cadets. Unfortunately his brother Joshua and Mum Teresa were away at a Riding for the Disabled event so they missed Martin speaking from his heart about being brought up by his Mums, this was not what we had planned but speaking from the heart does not require planning. The phrase 'not a dry eye in the house' springs to mind, it was a truly lovely moment, one to be cherished.

The younger group in Junior Church is made up of Daniel and Emily, Heidi and Molly and is led by Janet, Barbara and Christine. Joan, Julie and I look after the two older boys, Joshua and Martin.

Currently, the younger group is working on the Junior Church presentation for Easter Sunday, on that subject I can say no more, you will all know on the day.

The older group, Joshua and Martin, are being prepared for Confirmation and becoming full Church members, this is also to take place at Easter.

We have been so fortunate that Rev'd Dr. Carla Grosch-Miller has taken on the task of preparing the boys, they are so blessed to be taught by Carla and we are so grateful to her. Thank you Carla.

So things are changing in Junior Church, moving forward, because our children and young folk are growing up and moving forward with their lives.

My thanks go to my wonderful colleagues, Janet, Barbara, Christine, Julie and Joan for all their hard work and commitment. Thanks to our Junior Church members for continuing to attend and their willingness to learn and be involved with whatever project is ongoing.

Finally, thanks to all of you, the Church congregation for your continued support of our Junior Church children and leaders.

Sue Elliott, Junior Church Lead Leader.

CRECHE REPORT

Although a crèche is not routinely provided since it is not often needed, it will be put on whenever there are young children or babies in church.

CRADLE ROLL REPORT 2018

In 2018 we had two baptisms at St George's.

Jayson Ross Winn was baptised on 29th July by Carol Dixon. Poor Carol was suffering a lot at the time of this service, soon after she had an operation which has greatly lessened her pain and improved her mobility, thank goodness. That said, Carol managed this situation admirably, using furniture on the dias as support and involving members of our Church family to help with various parts of the service and it was much appreciated by Jayson's parents, grandparents and many other members of their family. The baptismal party and guests swelled our congregation by almost 100 people. This can pose problems for our stewards, Crèche and Junior Church leaders but everyone coped so well under pressure.

September 16th saw the return of old friends and Church family members Annie and Roy Boulton and family with the baptism of Emily Elizabeth Lucy Foster Slater the second daughter of Beccy (nee Wailes) and Jono Slater. Margery Tate performed the baptism which pleased the family so much as Margery had taught Beccy in Junior Church. The family live in Hertfordshire but were married at St. George's and their elder daughter, Charlotte, was also baptised here in 2013. There was a bit of a problem with the caterer running late, the reception was held in our hall upstairs to which we were all invited. Thanks to Laurence, Joshua, Martin and Patricia for all their help with this situation.

Cradle Roll services continue four times a year. Attendances vary but even if only two children turn up we are happy to continue to provide these services. Thanks to all who help with the services, Margery, Vivien, Adele and to Susan Sanderson and Ace Oldroyd who provide the music on piano and flute. Thank you all.

Sue Elliott, Cradle Roll Secretary

MIDWEEK SERVICE REPORT

Our services have continued every Wednesday, except when there was a midweek concert, with pretty much the same attendees each week. Our numbers can range from three to eight with six being fairly frequent congregation size. It is really good to know that folk still want to come midweek to worship together. We do have occasional visitors, sometimes visitors, sometimes Church members. As ever, all are welcome. One of our newer regulars is Roy Barrel who usually worships at MMC on Sundays, it is so good to see him coming along to us on a Wednesday, we value his company.

In July and August 2018 we experimented with opening the Church from 10.30 am on Wednesdays, two people stewarded each week, tea and coffee were offered and we ran from there straight into our service at 12.30. There were two or three weeks when no-one came to visit but apart from those weeks we had folk coming in from shopping or visiting the town to look around or just sit and soak up the atmosphere. We felt it was worth it and I will take it to the Elders again this year to see if we can repeat Open Door Wednesdays.

We do have a suggestion for a name change for the midweek services, [www.com\(e\)on](http://www.com(e)on) in.

The three w's stand for Welcome Wednesday Worship, now we just have to work out a good way of displaying this on a poster! Whatever we are called we are still surviving and that's a good thing.

My thanks go to the lovely folk who are willing to lead services, Margery, Carol, Janet, Suzanne and Laurence (before she started working on Wednesdays!), without them we wouldn't be able to offer a service each week. Thanks also to our loyal attendees; it'd be a bit of a waste planning services if no-one came. Andrew deserves my thanks for playing piano for us as often as he can, which is frequently, and for putting up with me choosing hymns and then not having a clue about the tunes and sometimes changing my selection last minute.

Thank you one and all.

Sue Elliott

SGURC ORCHESTRA REPORT

The St George's Orchestra or the Elastic Band has had a regular turnout of 12 to 14 players each time we have played for Sunday Morning Worship each month.

We are so lucky to have such a great number of players. We have a pool of 19 who play a wonderful variety of instruments. Four flutes, 4 violins, 1/2 violas, 3 clarinets, 1 alto saxophone, 1 bassoon, 2 trombones, 1 tuba and 1 guitar. Some of our members are versatile and also double on recorders, flute and tenor saxophones.

We rehearse from 9.30am on Sunday morning before the start of the service at 10.30 am. We rehearse the chosen hymns and play other items both before and after worship and during the offering. We are usually accompanied by our pianists, Ken and Andrew who keep us together!

This autumn we played one extra service in the absence of both our organists and became a proper "grown up" band as one of our members put it!

On a snowy March Friday in 2018 a noble SGURC group of players braved difficult conditions to take part in the annual Women's World Day of Prayer at St. James' Church organised by Mitford Church. We look forward again this year to taking part in the service written by the women of Slovenia in Morpeth Methodist church on March 1st accompanying the singers and helping to add a bit of colour with our music making.

A small group organised by Shirley again enjoyed playing for events at Bavington in the summer and Hauxley at Christmas. These special occasions are very much appreciated by the players who receive a very warm welcome in such lovely small church communities.

The Annual Church Social this year "The Wrong Pantomime" also saw our band members extending their repertoire by accompanying the singing and action on stage playing in somewhat different styles of music from usual! A great fun night produced by Joann Evans.

In December we accompanied the lively joint Nativity service held this year at Morpeth Methodist Church.

If you play an instrument and would like to join us please get in touch! It would be lovely to recruit some young players.

Although we only meet for one hour before the service I try to have the music available a number of days in advance for those who like to practice beforehand! I am reliant on ministers taking the service giving me good notice so that I can prepare the appropriate music for each player as it does require some time. Penny has been wonderful at prompting an early response from our visiting preachers!

Thanks to all our friends from the Cobweb Orchestra, Society of Recorder Players, St. Robert's RC, Morpeth Methodist Church and elsewhere who come and play with us.

Thanks also to Susan Sanderson for organising and catering for our Summer Playalong sessions. We have fun exploring music from our music cupboard and finding appropriate music for whoever comes with whatever combination of instruments from an ensemble of nine players to two duettists. Also thanks to Gill Armstrong for organising our visit to the Sun Inn after January's service where we enjoyed lunch out with family and friends.

Christine Oakes SGURC Music Coordinator

LADIES COFFEE CLUB CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT 2018/19

This has been yet another happy year for the St. George's Ladies Coffee Club.

Paid-up membership presently stands at 36. Our membership tends to fluctuate for a variety of reasons – frailty, illness and bereavement being among them. We are happy to welcome several new members, from Ashington and Morpeth.

In September we opened our new session with an interesting talk by Freda Thompson on the history of the Grainger Market. Freda had brought along a variety of photos including the Opening Banquet to which ladies were invited to buy tickets, to watch the gentlemen eat! Much history of Newcastle was revealed and many memories were sparked among the membership. The Club Co-ordinator had not yet arrived in Morpeth when most of this history had taken place, but she enjoyed hearing the stories of the members.

October saw the Club participating again in the Autumn Fair, where their responsibilities ranged from the Home Baking, and Jams and Preserves stalls to providing refreshments from the kitchen. Both selling and catering teams were their usual skilled and professional selves. Many thanks to all who participated, including the enthusiastic bakers and jam and preserve makers. Later that same month, we had a visit and talk by Jill Watkin about the charity "Changing Lives". This charity helps particularly the homeless and rough sleepers to change the circumstances of their lives. Help with addressing mental illness and addictions, and finding accommodation and employment is offered. The Club were invited to bring along gifts of toiletries and underwear, as these are given to clients who are usually in need of both.

In November, Mike Johnson and a colleague came to tell us of the work of the Street Pastors. These volunteers are to be found in many major cities around Britain. They work in co-operation with the Northumbria Police and St. John's Ambulance to keep vulnerable folk safe at night on the streets of Downtown Newcastle. Their supplies consist mainly of bottles of water, foil blankets and flipflops.

Our Christmas Lunch was this session transformed into a New Year's Lunch. We met at Barluga for a buffet lunch which included quite a variety of food. Those who attended seemed to enjoy themselves. It was agreed by most that having it in January relieved considerable pre-Christmas stress. Earlier in December, our annual Christmas Coffee Morning was held in conjunction with the Christmas Tree Festival taking place in the Church. Sample floral decorations that had been created for the occasion, were as popular as ever and orders were taken for them. We also had a wonderful selection of non-floral decorations on sale. Many of these had been created by the members of the Knit and Natter Club.

In January, Joan Howard came to tell us about her year as Mayoress. It seems that both Mayor and Mayoress do a lot of eating for Morpeth, in addition to opening things and being present on special occasions. She had thoroughly enjoyed the experience, but her doctor was less impressed with the expansion of her waistline. That is an occurrence which befalls many folk in public office.

February brought us a talk from Mr. Peter Brannon about Entertainment at Newcastle City Hall. He brought with him some very significant mementos including original tickets for concerts and shows from years gone by. Once again happy memories were sparked on the part of many of the members.

Our annual Domino Drive was another roaring success. One hundred folk gathered for an enjoyable meal, provided by the Catering Group, with delicious desserts provided by the ladies of the Coffee Club. Jared Johnson did his efficient and entertaining role as Master of Ceremonies with his usual aplomb.

March will bring us a return visit from Kath and Harry Gilbert who impressed us with their tales and pictures of Butan last year. We are looking forward to another afternoon of learning and entertainment as they share with us their tales of a trip to Botswana.

April will bring the AGM where we will make decisions on how to spend our funds. Last year's funds were spent on 2 Carpet sweepers. Since the new chairs have been installed downstairs in the church, new cleaning challenges have arisen. We were able, also to make contributions of £200.00 to the Lift Fund and £1200 to Church funds.

In May, we will finish the session with our Spring Luncheon, as soon as we decide where to go.

A very big thank you for all the continued support, in so many practical ways for our many events. The ongoing friendship is greatly appreciated. I wish to thank Sarah for her 'above and beyond the call of duty' assistance which has enabled the smooth running of the club this year.

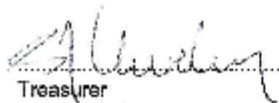
Suzanne Hamnett (Co-ordinator)

St GEORGE'S LADIES COFFEE CLUB

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 1 JANUARY 2018 to 31 DECEMBER 2018

2017	INCOME	2018	2017	EXPENDITURE	2018
£		£	£		£
150.00	Annual Subscriptions	175.00		Speakers	
22.00	Guests	6.00	37.98	- Expenses	55.00
212.00	Coffees	280.00	80.00	- Donations (in lieu of fee)	
				K Gilbert	30.00
				Changing Lives	30.00
				Street Pastors	30.00
976.00	Domino Drive	1072.00	148.08	Domino Drive	133.48
215.00	Christmas Lunch		240.00	Christmas Lunch	0.00
500.45	Coffee Morning	850.15	43.28	Coffee Morning	57.91
215.00	50th Anniversary Tea	0.00	343.31	50th Anniversary Tea	0.00
			0.00	Autumn Fair	0.00
			13.04	AGM	12.89
			38.19	Miscellaneous Exps	56.37
				Donations:-	
			1200.00	Church Funds	1400.00
			51.97	Church Equipment	54.97
			100.00	Flower Committee	0.00
<u>2290.45</u>	Total Income for Year	<u>2383.15</u>	<u>2295.86</u>	Total Expenditure for Year	<u>1860.62</u>
	Opening Balances			Closing Balances	
1209.66	Barclays Bank	1206.33	1206.33	Barclays Bank	1725.86
6.41	Cash	4.33	4.33	Cash	7.33
<u>3506.52</u>	Total	<u>3593.81</u>	<u>3506.52</u>		<u>3593.81</u>

This Financial Statement has been audited and found correct and in accordance with the vouchers and bank statements presented.


Treasurer
January 2019


Auditor
January 2019

LUNCHTIME CONCERTS REPORT

There were nine Lunchtime Concerts in 2018 with audience numbers continuing to increase with an average attendance of 120 peaking at 140

Once again we have endeavoured to provide a varied and interesting programme of music.

Highlights this year have included visits by:-

The Bottle Bank Folk Fiddle Group,

Students of KEVI who perform for us just before their final music exams at school.

A Royal Northern Sinfonia Ensemble,

An oboe and piano duo from Durham University School of Music,

The Da Vinci Quartet from Royal Northern Sinfonia,

An organ and violin concert,

Alistair Anderson and Sophy Ball, folk musicians,

Advanced pupils of David and Jennifer Murray – piano, voice and clarinet,

Graeme Danby and Valerie Reid of English National Opera after which complimentary drinks, mulled wine, shortbread and mince pies were served

The number of sponsors rose to 40 and many of our audience took advantage of the special offer price of 4 tickets for £10. This ensures that there are finances in place at the beginning of each series.

Total admissions income and sponsorship from concerts **£3,489**

Expenses	Payment to Artists	£2690
	Piano tuning x 3	£165
	Hire of church	£400
	Total	£3,255

Tea and coffee sales were £298 all of which went to church funds.

The Lunchtime concerts also contributed £300 to the Lift Fund.

Overall the Church received in excess of £2,200 from the Lunchtime Concerts and associated events that they underwrote.

We continue to be indebted to all the volunteers from our church who ensure that these events run smoothly. We couldn't function without them. Our continued thanks to Brian Priestley for his excellent critiques for the Morpeth Herald which help to promote the concerts.

Thank you also to the strong men who assist each month to put the piano on and off the dais and to everyone who supports these concerts.

Gillian and Ken Irvine

ST GEORGE'S KNITTER, NATTER CRAFT & CHATTER GROUP FOR 2018

We have had a very busy but fun year; our membership remains about the same at 15-20. Our activities continue to be focussed on helping others. Our members are generous, particularly with their time.

Our first fundraiser was a pancake lunch for the lift appeal, then back to knitting and crocheting beautiful blankets of every colour for needy families, refugees, asylum seekers and new babies.

The Teddies for Trauma appeal came to our attention and we had lots of generously donated wool, so decided to help. The Chief Commissioner Dame Vera Baird came to collect them and we were in a National magazine "My Weekly". We are still knitting and passing on the Teddies.

We agreed to have a stand in the Town Hall for the Morpeth Gathering; the members of our group took turns to "Man" the stall. It was interesting talking to the public about charity knitting, to share patterns and to teach children to knit. Once again "Greenbelt" a URC family weekend asked us to knit for them – this time flowers instead of food. Boxes of flowers were duly delivered to Synod office.

We knitted and crocheted poppies for the British Legion and also for Morpeth Antiquarian Society for their display in remembrance of the local men whose names are on the Cenotaph in Morpeth. This was made into an article for the national magazine "Peoples Friend".

We knitted hats, scarves and gloves for the Shoe Box appeal as Christmas approached. The lead up to Christmas was a busy time as we had decided to make a knitted Nativity for outside our Church, having been to visit the knitted bible at Widdrington URC, as a group we admired the display. All the figures in our Nativity were knitted by different members of our group.

We enjoyed a Soup and Pud lunch, the profits went to Church funds.

Our knitted, crocheted and crafted tree decorations as part of the Christmas tree Festival were interesting to make and popular with the folks who supported the coffee club morning. Then came the angels, a heavenly host and so special.

2019 has new as well as old projects planned – details are in the Church Newsletter. All are welcome to knit them.

Thank-you to all the group for their enthusiasm and support.

Joan Cooper – Coordinator and coffee maker

SGURC**St George's URC Ceilidh Band 2018**

The ceilidh band has played for monthly meetings of the Country Dance Club in the church hall. Dancers of all ages, (the youngest is 4), are welcome to join in and are guided through the dances by our caller, Jared, who persuades everyone to take an active part.

Band members arrive an hour before the dancers so that we can try out new music and experiment with different combinations of tunes from the evening's programme. Sometimes band members come up with new tunes or make arrangements of tunes we already play.

At the end of 2018 there were 22 players on the band list playing a variety of instruments; some play several instruments which means that a tune can sound quite different depending on the combination of instruments being played and the players available on the night.

The band has had a busy year, as in addition to the usual Country Dance Club sessions we have played for a number of outside bookings: a Scottish evening for Widdrington URC, a fundraiser for 4th Morpeth Scout Group, 2 Birthday parties, a Family Ceilidh to raise money for the Lift Appeal, a 10th Birthday Celebration for Widdrington Women's Institute, a family Wedding Celebration and the annual Christian Aid Ceilidh at St George's. We received very generous donations from outside bookings, totalling £1,128, and these were gift aided to St George's Church Fund, the Lift Appeal, and Christian Aid.

Over the year there has been a change in the organisation of the band. The music is now stored alphabetically rather than numerically, and a programme is sent out a few days in advance so that players know which music is needed for each ceilidh and can arrange it in order in their own files. Players are responsible for keeping their own music, and this seems to work well to make for more relaxed sessions.

New band members and dancers are always welcome to come along and join us at the Country Dance Club; whenever possible we are now trying to hold these sessions on the 2nd Saturdays of the months of January, February, March, May, September, October and November.

Gill Armstrong, Ceilidh Band Coordinator.

TEA TIME TALKS

2018 was the 10th year of these talks which are still popular with an average attendance of around 25 –40 people. This is somewhat down on the past few years, so can I encourage you to bring along a few friends to these events throughout 2019?

Our thanks to EVERYONE involved in this venture, in whatever capacity - without your continued support we would be unable to continue. Entry is by donation of around £2.50 - £3 (for which you also get the best-value cream tea in Morpeth!) and this year we were able to Gift Aid £575 to church funds and £25 to Henry Dancer Days – this represents an overall drop in our charitable giving of £165 compared to last year, reflecting smaller attendances.

Over the 10 years of running these talks, we have now given a total of £5790 (cash) to church funds, £635 (equipment) to church, and £375 to various charitable organisations

For further details of this year's schedule of talks, or to volunteer to give us a talk, please contact Jared on 01670 514610 or jared-marg@hotmail.com.

Margaret Johnson, Jared Johnson & Christine Richardson

WEDNESDAY MORNING BADMINTON CLUB

We continue to meet every Wednesday morning at 9.30 until about 11. We play most weeks as long as we have 4 players! We had a rest in August and also, we don't play when the stage is up for the players. Our numbers have remained the same this year to a core group of seven players. We usually go for a coffee after the game to the Chantry Tea Rooms so non-players know where to find us at 11. We have a yearly subscription of £5 and pay £2 a session. The money from this is donated to church funds and this year the group donated £488 to the church.

New members are always welcome and even if you have never played badminton before or it is a number of years since you last played come and join us at 9.30am on a Wednesday morning in the church hall and afterwards for coffee.

Sarah Cleverley (January 2019)

EVENING BADMINTON

We play on Thursday evening at 7.30 pm. We have about 8 or 9 regular players from a wide age range. We play throughout the year but occasionally have to cancel when too many folk are unavailable for whatever reason. It is a fun evening enjoyed by all, so if you, or anyone you know, can already play and would like to join us, please let me know (01670 514610 or jared-marg@hotmail.com).

We only charge £1 for each session, which usually lasts until around 9 pm.

Margaret Johnson 11/02/19

MORNING BADMINTON

It is sad to start this Report by recording the death of Sheila Anderson early in 2019 – although unable to play for the past 2 or 3 years, Sheila was formerly a regular and enthusiastic member of the Club.

During 2018 we welcomed a couple of new members which meant we generally had enough folk available to avoid many cancellations. It also meant that our annual donation to church funds was up £50 on last year's figure.

We could still do with another 2 or 3 "regulars" coming along so that we might have a good idea of numbers likely to be there every week. It would also mean that we could all play slightly fewer games during a session and so lessen the chance of injuries to increasingly ageing bodies! SO – if you have played in the past and fancy taking it up again in a very friendly and sociable group, please contact either Margaret or Jared Johnson on 01670 514610 or jared-marg@hotmail.com

Jared Johnson 11/02/19

TABLE TENNIS CLUB

This has now been running for 12 months with about 10-12 "regulars" attending. We all have great fun playing (and also enjoy what seems to have become a "mandatory coffee- break" at around 11 am!). Sessions are held on most Saturday mornings throughout the year from 10am – noon and we charge just £1 per session (children half-price). Despite this very modest charge we managed to give £300 to church funds during 2018.

The Club was originally set up for church members (and their families). Since we have 2 tables, we could easily accommodate a few more players without folk having to sit-out for very long between games (as we tend to just play the best of 3 sets at a time – up to only 11 points – so the games are pretty quick!). If you would like to join us please ring Jared on 01670 514610 or email jared-marg@hotmail.com

Jared Johnson 11/02/19

AFTERNOON BOWLS CLUB

Our indoor Afternoon Bowls Club meets in the Hall from 2 – 4 pm every Wednesday from Jan – April and Sept – Dec. We started 2018 with 20 members but by September this had gone down to 18.

We rarely, if ever, get everyone on any particular Wednesday, and our 2 rinks can accommodate 16 players so members rarely have to sit out.

Once every year the Evening Bowls folk join us for a competition between joint teams of 3 for the George Elliott Trophy. 2018's winners were Margaret Johnson, David Calcraft and Andy Cleverley.

No previous experience is necessary, so if you fancy an afternoon of sport which is no strain on the body and includes a refreshment break when we sit and chat, come along and give it a try!

We have an Annual Fee of £10 and a weekly £1 donation. You are welcome to come and join us.

Please get in touch with me on 01670 514610 or email me at jared-marg@hotmail.com

Margaret Johnson 21/02/19

ST GEORGE'S EVENING BOWLS CLUB 2018**General Account**

2018 INCOME		2018 EXPENSES	
Balance from Previous Year	593.79	Fees to other Organisations	20.00
Annual Subscriptions	410.00	Trophy Engraving	26.85
Weekly Subscriptions	288.00	Dinner / Presentation Evening	646.45
Dinner / Presentation Evening	591.35	Donation to St. George's URC	630.00
Donations Received	10.00	Miscellaneous	2.99
Other Items	0.00	Total Expenses	1326.29
Total	1982.96	Balance Carried Forward	556.85

Equipment Account

Balance from Previous Year	1500.33	St George's Lift Appeal	500.00
Total	1500.33	Balance Carried Forward	1000.33

At the end of 2018 the Club had 21 members though several are now unable to play regularly so we were pleased to welcome new members, Don Potts and Ron Staines. Nevertheless we still find it difficult to make up numbers for matches and so would be delighted if more people would come and join us. We must report the sad loss of Robert Hudson, a stalwart of both indoor and outdoor bowls and whose team was runner-up in the Triples only 2 days before he died.

The results of our Club Competitions were – Triples (2016/17 season) won by Blanche Cole, Alan Hyde & Ted Phizacklea; Singles won by Cliff Thompson; Two-Ball Pairs won by Ted LeGrice & Cliff Thompson; Four-Ball Pairs won by Alan Hyde & Ted LeGrice. The George Elliott Competition, in which we join with our friends from the Afternoon Bowls, was won by David Calcraft, Andrew Cleverley & Margaret Johnson.

During the year we played our regular friendly matches against, mainly, other URC churches. These matches are always very competitive but also foster good fellowship between our churches.

They were against Robert Stuart Memorial Church (away – won 45/38); Bomarsund (at home – won 45/35); Whalton (away – won 64/41); Warkworth URC (away – lost 45/55); the match against Newbiggin had to be cancelled due to our inability even to raise 12 players; the matches against Alnwick were both cancelled, firstly because the wind brought down a tree across the road at Alnwick and then because neither of us could raise a team due to illness; Warkworth (at home – won 35/26); Forest Hall (away – lost 25/47); Robert Stuart Memorial (at home – won 55/32).

Although the Club continues to have a healthy bank balance (see above), it is gradually declining due to the low numbers attending, however we were again able to pass £630 to St George's. When the Church approached the various organisations for help with the Lift Repairs, the members spontaneously decided to donate £500 from the Equipment Fund without any prompting from the Chairman or the Church Treasurer. The balance in the Equipment Fund is now £1000.

Andrew Cleverley

Refugees and Asylum Seekers Support

Morpeth and Mitford Churches Together

Asylum Seekers Support Group 2018

The churches in Morpeth and Mitford have continued collecting for the **West End Refugee Service (WERS)** and for the **Justice and Peace Refugee Project (J&P Refugee Project)**.

Churches in the area have continued to collect food and toiletries for the J&P Refugee Project. This continues to be their priority as they are now supporting well over 600 clients and the numbers are increasing steadily. Clothes, bedding and small household goods are collected for WERS. All these goods are housed in Joy Wight's garage and transported by a group of volunteers to the two projects in Newcastle.

December saw the end of Lindsay Cross' time as Director at WERS and the handover to a new Director. Unfortunately he has decided for personal reasons to move on. This transitional time for WERS will obviously bring its challenges.

Ruhi Acktar is a local Muslim young woman who has been doing excellent work with refugees in the Greek islands where thousands arrive daily from Syria. Joy Wight has links with her and has been publicising her work and has been able to provide some support to her.

There are now over 100 refugees and asylum seekers, including families with children and young single people who have been placed in Northumberland, especially in the Ashington area. These are being well supported by Lilian Nelson and the volunteers of the Red Cross, the Northumberland County of Sanctuary and some of the churches in Ashington. There is a women's group on a Monday and a drop in support group on a Tuesday which provides help with daily living and immigration support. On a Thursday the Church of England runs a "Let's Learn English Together" group.

Thanks go to Joy, Lilian, all the volunteer drivers for their work and all who regularly contribute. Please continue to remember all these activities in your prayers.

Margaret Brock

Morpeth Justice and Peace

For the past few years there has been a Morpeth Justice and Peace Group which having outgrown its original location in a house now meets in St George's. It comprises people from most of the churches in Morpeth and is a good example of interchurch working.

We have looked at various issues of concern to us as individuals and have tried to inform ourselves and others where relevant on current issues. These have included the Real Living Wage, Funeral Poverty, End Hunger and Environmental concerns. We have met with several refugees/asylum seekers to learn about their experiences both before coming to the UK and since. We have been involved in litter picks and had a stall at the Party in the Park. We are seeking to support Traidcraft as it reorganises its focus and looking to see if we can work towards making Morpeth a Fair Trade Town again. We are trying to support the Make Morpeth Dementia Friendly initiative and have also reinstated a regular monthly Peace Vigil in the Market Square.

We are keen not just to talk but to make a difference.

We do not have a regular slot for our meetings as people have different availability. We therefore tend to vary times and days to get the best fit. Anyone who is interested in joining us please ask either Linda Glascott or me for details.

Margaret Brock

Dementia Awareness and Memory Café

In spring/early summer 2018 St George's hosted two Dementia Awareness courses put on by Guy Kirk on behalf of the Alzheimer's Society. These were well attended and very favourably received.

Following on from this, discussions took place in Elders and there was a desire to do something positive. We considered setting up a Memory Café or similar at St George's and decided that it was worth consulting with our colleagues at Morpeth Methodist Church (MMC) who have been running such a café for several years.

After visiting the MMC Memory Café and further discussions in Elders it was decided that it made more sense to support the Café that already existed at MMC rather than start up one of our own. This seemed especially timely since Tony and Anne Woods, two of the founders of the MMC Memory Café, were on the point of moving to Durham.

MMC Memory Café meets on the first and third Thursdays of every month from 10-30 – 12.00. Since about November we have been providing at least two helpers every fortnight to support this venture on a rota basis. Our support has been welcomed and those of us who have attended have found it an interesting and worthwhile experience. Anyone who is interested in this please see me or sign up and go along.

We are aware that as a church we need to think about how to make our church dementia friendly. There is also a move in Morpeth to Make Morpeth Dementia Friendly and we are hoping to be involved in this.

Margaret Brock

CHRISTIAN AID

During the year Christian Aid held its usual regular annual events. These started with the Spring Evening in March which raised £284 – less than usual, but there was a lot going on at the same time, probably due to an early Easter.

Christian Aid Week is always the best event of the year and starts with plant and book stalls in the Market Place which raised £187. This was followed by the house-to-house collection which raised £6113, of which £1795 was collected by St George's volunteers. Our street collection in September -(fortunately done in sunshine) - raised £676.

The Christian Aid Ceilidh was held in St George's as usual, with our Ceilidh Band playing and Jared calling - it raised £365, in part due to a very generous donation.

We gave a donation of £63 at Christmas; we also donated the profits from the weekly Fair Trade stall, the annual Christmas Card stall and from the sale of fruit and veg – together these raised another £180.

In 2018 Morpeth raised a total of £8598 – with over £2400 raised by St George's, so many thanks to you all.

Margaret Johnson 21/02/19
(Christian Aid Committee member for St George's)

4th Morpeth St George's Brownies **2018 Annual Report**

2018 has been an exciting time for the Brownies. We have expanded our leadership team and have welcomed Megan Bell as Young Leader and Charlotte Conroy as Unit Helper. We now have 24 girls on the books with more due to start early 2019.

A Division thinking day event was held in February to celebrate people around the world and this year's theme was a Mexican Fiesta. Girls participated in a number of Mexican themed activities such as decorating a poncho and making maracas.

The Brownies took part in the annual Lions Swim at the Morpeth Leisure Centre. They did extremely well, swimming over 90 lengths and raising £185 shared between the Lion's charities and the Brownie unit. We were extremely proud of them.

To celebrate Mother's Day, Brownies decorated a ceramic plate to give as a gift to their loved ones and in May, the girls were lucky to receive a visit from a group of lady Morris Dancers from Tyneside, who taught them a few steps in true May Day tradition.

Over the summer a group of the Brownies spent a day visiting the scout camp Pirate MARRA. This was an exciting opportunity for them to experience a true Scout and Guide camp and they had the opportunity to participate in activities such as Quad Bikes, Trampolines, Grass Sledging, Archery and Backwoods Cooking.

September saw the exciting rollout of the new Girl Guiding programme which delivers the fun and varied range of activities that you expect from guiding and of course, there are still plenty of badges to earn. There are new topics, new skills and new ways for girls to broaden their horizons. Throughout September to December the Brownies have been working on the Express Myself theme, completing challenges with regard to communication, e.g. sign language, mime and movement and storytelling.

2018 was rounded off with the usual Christmas celebrations. We enjoyed our annual trip to the pantomime in Gateshead. This year it was Aladdin and the Brownies had fun joining in with the singing and frivolities. We also had a disco party to round off the year with Rainbows and Mr Disco Man.

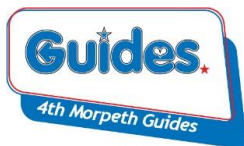
The Brownies like to be involved in the church community as much as possible and throughout the year have been involved in the church harvest festival and toy services and raised money for the church at the Autumn Fair. At Easter the Brownies took decorated an Easter Tree, which was displayed in the Church.

The girls were involved in the Remembrance Day parade, marching up to the Cenotaph and participating in the service and at the end of the year they took part in the Girl Guiding Christingle service, where Rainbows, Brownies and Guides from across the Division came together in St George's Church to celebrate.

2018 has seen the Brownies complete a number of interest badges including the Switzerland Badge, Writers Badge (when we wrote to a group of Canadian Brownies), Artist Badge and the World Guiding Badge.

Thank you to all members of St George's URC for all your support throughout the year and we look forward to the exciting adventures in store for us in 2019.

Linda (Brown Owl), Sharon (Assistant Leader), Susan (Leader in training), Charlotte (Unit Helper) and Megan (Young Leader).



Another year has flown past with the girls having a great year in 2018. In January we started with sessions on web safety through the World Association of Girl Guiding and Girl Scout (WAGGGS) initiative. We looked at our digital footprint, our online time, a perfect password and made an internet promise. This was concluded by a visit to the Apple Store in the Metro Centre where the girls made a video of staying safe online.

We celebrated Thinking Day in February thinking about Girl Guides in Mexico. We came together for a Division event and had our own Mexican Fiesta for all Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers. Over 100 girls too part. During the year, we went around the world and the girls organised their own international evenings. We visited Africa, Spain, America, Italy and New Zealand. We learnt about their culture, created various crafts, played some games and always tried a variety of food.

The girls were on parade in St George's for Palm Sunday and Advent. They also enjoyed serving refreshments after the service. Thank you to everyone who support the girls by buying cakes. Later in the year they were part of the Town Parade on Remembrance Sunday.

The girls had the opportunity to take part in the Scout Pirate Marra Camp. We had 4 days of fun and excitement camping at Causey Park. There was lots of activities and entertainment, all with a pirate theme. In the summer, the girls built their bivvy's outdoors and slept in their shelters overnight. We had a walk around Morpeth visiting all the places connected to Emily Davidson, ending up at her new statue where ten new Guides made their promise. In October we celebrated International Day of the Girls with Team Girl activities from WAGGGS. As part of UK Parliament Week the girls learnt about voting and we held our own elections about where to have our next camp.

The Guides spend a lot of time helping in the community and fundraising. We have some very keen swimmer in the unit who took part in the Lions Swim completing a high number of lengths in their time allowed raising money for the Morpeth Lions. They have served refreshments at the Morpeth Gathering and during the Christmas tea provided by the Lions for the residents of Morpeth. There was some great dancing this year!! At the end of the year, we had a fantastic turn out for the Christingle service in St George's followed by a Christmas market. The girls planned their own stalls. It was a great success. From the evening, they donated the money to Riding for the Disabled locally and some of our girls to help with their fundraising, who have been selected for international camps.

Thank you to all our helpers who give the girls some amazing experiences, and to the congregation and Elders of St George's for all their support.

Liz and Amy

Mobile - 077 1448 1089

Email - liz.kelly@jcpce.com

4th Morpeth Guides

St George's Church Hall, Tuesday evening, 7.00 pm – 8.30 pm



2018 has seen a lot of change for these girls. They changed their names from Senior Section to Rangers. The age range was changed from 14 to 26 to 14 to 18. The uniform colour was given an overhaul and after many months of consultation up and down the country and they have gone for similar teal colours. The final change was the introduction of a new programme.

The girls took part in the testing pool for many of the new activities. They were able to give their feedback on what worked well, what needed tweaking and what definitely needed a revamp. There are 6 theme awards and they have spent the autumn term working through the skills builder on the innovate section. They have unlocked their creative side with experiments and problem solving activities.

Another major part of their programme has been the Duke of Edinburgh Award. The girls have completed a first aid course, visit Morrisons to look at suitable expedition food and had a practice cook on a trianga. They have looked at their kit, route planning, completed expeditions and carried out a presentation to the Guides on all they have done. This has inspired the younger girls for the future.

The Rangers are growing from strength to strength. The majority of them are connected with Rainbow and Brownie units as Young Leaders, giving those opportunities to develop their leadership skills.

Thank you to all our helpers who assist the girls in their Girlguiding journey, and to the congregation and Elders of St George's for all their support.

Liz, Charlotte and Anne

Mobile - 077 1448 1089

Email - liz.kelly@jcpce.com

Morpeth Rangers

St George's Church Hall, Tuesday evening, 7.00 pm – 9.00 pm

Morpeth Baden-Powell Scouts

A small group of Senior Scouts aged 15 – 16 years has continued to meet each Friday at St George's Church following a varied Scouting programme. All joined the Troop in Autumn 2017 with no previous history of Scouting, and each has successfully completed their First Class badge in order to be successfully invested into the Baden-Powell Scout's Association. This investiture ceremony was undertaken at the conclusion of the Remembrance Sunday parade in November 2018.

The programme has included weekend hikes along the Northumberland Coast in May 2018 and in the countryside west of Morpeth in September 2018, with camps at Druridge and Stanton. These allowed Scouts to put their newfound navigational, teamwork, hiking and camping skills to good use.

Scouts have also regularly participated in Sunday orienteering events aimed at improving their fitness, map reading and compass skills.

Cook-outs on open fires remain a regular activity, both at Bluebell Woods where the food is invariably breadsticks or at Hepscott Park with sausages. Gradually firelighting and outdoor cooking skills have improved.

First Aid skills have also featured, with Guest Speakers including training on the use of Defibrilators.

The use of St George's Church Hall for other Friday activities remains an opportunity to travel afar, with trips to the Climbing facilities at Cramlington, Pantomime at Kings Edward VI school, and also to see Newcastle Falcons rugby team at Kingston Park, Newcastle.

Former Scouts also continue to achieve Duke of Edinburgh Award Gold level with three attending Ceremonies at St James' Palace, London and Holyrood Castle, Edinburgh during the last year.

Unfortunately, numbers and attendance of Senior Scouts has recently dwindled, and the Leadership team reduced to two adults, Stewart McKay, a founding Leader of Morpeth Baden-Powell Scout Group in 2010 having now stepped down. It is hoped that by the time the St George's Church congregation reads this Report, the Scout Group has not reduced to unsustainable levels and ceased to be viable.

As always, the Scouts are fully appreciative of the hospitality and welcome from St George's Church and the use of the excellent Church Hall facilities each Friday evening. Thank you all.

Peter Rowbottom and Paul MacDonald (Scout Leaders)

Annual Report January 2019 – St George's Community Players

2018 was a busy and successful year for the Community Players, with two very different plays being performed in March and November.

Co-producers David Kiely and Brenda Joy produced 'It's on -It's off', a modern comedy of manners, in March. Rehearsals were held up by 'The Beast from the East', but the cast worked very hard and got there in the end. The producer of the November play, Anne-Marie Cairns had never produced a play before. She enjoyed the experience and would like to repeat it in the future. Her play 'Entertaining Angels' was very well received by most people, we had almost full houses for the three nights. Both plays introduced the audience to our new younger members who we hope we shall see more of in the future.

We have a new stage manager and the sets have been amazing.

One of our producers recently said, "there is a lovely sense of friendship in the Players and it's always evident in the team work. It includes members who aren't acting in the current play, and family and friends of members who come to help on performance nights with front of house and help to put away the stage"

Dismantling the stage and set is a problem facing the Players. It is hard physical work and must be done straight after the Saturday performance, so that the church hall is ready to be used on Sunday. Members are having to stay till well after midnight to put away the stage.

In July, Sue Elliott produced a coffee bar theatre for our patrons. This is a chance for us to thank our patrons for their support. It was entitled 'Brush up your Shakespeare, and was a hilarious celebration of the great bard. It brought members together and gave people a chance to be on stage who perhaps hadn't been involved for a while.

Our social secretary organised, with the help of a small group of members, a charity event in aid of Parkinson's UK. 'A Trip Through the Decades' was a wonderful evening of music and dancing. Not only did it raise funds for the charity but also it managed to raise awareness of this awful condition.

Pamela Cassells organised the annual Players attendance at the Picnic in the Park in the summer

Our social secretaries have been busy arranging events to bring everyone together and to keep members interested in the group.

We have a full schedule for 2019. It is the Community Players 90th anniversary so there will be celebrations to be organised, and Eileen Clark has a new Murder Mystery which the Players will be performing at St. Georges for church members and friends, and for the local WI groups in the area.

We would like to thank all the loyal church members who regularly support us, and thank you to our liaison elder, Patricia Gatherum.

Heather Robinson – Secretary

BIBLE FELLOWSHIP GROUP

Fellowship Group now meets in the minister's vestry in church. For many years the group met in each other's homes so this is a new venture and members are happily meeting up with the very inspiring Knit and Natter Group for coffee beforehand. We begin our time together in the vestry at 11.00am for an hour. Meeting in church means that we are more accessible to anyone who would like to join us and also makes it easier for those staying on for the Midweek Service. The Fellowship Group have recently been exploring the themes in a book Margery found at the Retreat House Holy Rood House, Thirsk, several years ago called Making Sacred by Betty McConville (subtitled Spirituality for the Lay Person). It has proven to be a great source of spiritual wisdom and inspiration and been the focus of our thoughts for the past two months. Each time we have met it has provided fresh insights and, although published in 1992, proven to be very relevant to our life of faith. The worship section at the end of each chapter has been very enriching. A quote from the book "We are fellow workers with God, co – creators in everything we do" (Meister Eckhart)

(There have been periods of time during the last year when Margery was unable to lead the group and so it would be good to find a volunteer who could step in when needed to ensure the Fellowship Group are able to meet. Do get in touch with Margery if you feel you could help.)

4th St Georges Rainbows Annual Report 2018

It has been another fun packed and busy year in Rainbows this year. We said goodbye and thank you to our Leader in training, Amy, who left us at the end of July to start her training to be a teacher. Emma, our Young Leader successfully completed her Young Leader qualification this year . In the Spring Term the girls joined in the celebrations for Thinking Day and joined in the Mexican Fiesta at Tritlington First School. The girls also worked upon activities to gain their Roundabout Healthy Badge. Other activities in this term included a Chinese New Year evening, pancakes in our Daffodil Cafe, Easter activities, and a visit from Rainbow Pottery to make a Mother's Day gift. In the summer term we planned our activities around the Woodland. We learned about the wildlife in the wood as well as the plants. We visited the park and Bluebell wood. In the Autumn Term we worked on the new Rainbow Programme and completed activities towards the 'Know Myself' theme award and we successfully completed the Reflect Stage 1 badge. Activities included bringing in a favourite toy and talking about it, making friendship flowers, quizzes and games. Unfortunately, our traditional Glowstick trail through the woods in the dark had to be cancelled due to the poor weather. We attended Harvest Festival and the Toy Service at St. George's Church which the girls enjoyed. In December, we joined the Brownies and Guides on a trip to the pantomime at Gateshead to see Aladdin. To finish the year we had a joint Christmas Party with the Brownies and Mr Discoman who organised lots of games and dancing. We ended the term with the annual Christingle Service, which was held at St George's Church this year. In December, after seven years, Hayleigh my Assistant Leader and myself stood down from running 4th St Georges Rainbows. We have had great fun running Rainbows and wish Amy and Liz all the best as they take over from us.

Judith Leja (Unit Leader), Hayleigh Pearson (Assistant Leader)

