

Liverpool Road Methodist Church

**CHURCH REVIEW
REPORT**

**20
21**





The Methodist Church

A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Dear Friends

It is with great excitement that I commend to you the Church Review for Liverpool Road Methodist Church in the pages that follow.

The review has followed a process provided by the Liverpool District and recommended for use by all churches within the Circuit by the Circuit Leadership Team. The review will be the basis of a report that has been requested by the Circuit from every church during summer 2021.

The report affirms many of our current activities and has particularly recommended ways of engaging with the local community still further, remembering that in our mission...

We exist to proclaim the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the people of Birkdale, and beyond can come to know God and grow in his Love.

We have already begun to implement some of the recommendations of the report, and by the summer the report can be updated to reflect the progress that will have been made.

At our most recent Church Council, the Council members expressed their thanks to the Church Stewards who had led the review. Thanks is also extended to the whole church family, many of whom contributed to specific elements of the report, and to all of those who responded to the congregational survey.

**See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.
(Isaiah Ch 43 vs 19)**

Despite the challenges of the last year, it has been good that in the wilderness and wasteland of lockdowns and restrictions, we have been able perceive the heart of God for the people of Birkdale.

If having read the report you have any comments, questions, or wish to become involved further in the life of the church, please contact myself or any of the stewards.

God Bless.



Patrick Evans



The Methodist Church

INTRODUCTION

The Life, Worship and Mission

The Church Stewards took on the task of conducting a review of the life, worship, and mission of our church. It was agreed to follow the format shared by Rachel Deigh, Liverpool Methodist District Mission and Evangelism Facilitator, for this review which was in 4 parts, with feedback to the Church Council on the dates stated:

1. Perceptions of the Church: starting where we are (13th October 2020)
2. The Historical Perspective: telling the story of the church (13th October 2020)
3. The Church: the continuing story of God's work in and through this church (11th November 2020)
4. The Local Community: what is going on around the church (19th January 2021)

As a result of the review, the Church Stewards are including three further sections as part of their work and for consideration for the Church Council on the 19th January 2021:

5. Leadership Structure
6. Conclusions
7. Recommendations

The Church Council met on 19th January 2021 and confirmed the following
(Extract from the Council Meeting Minutes):

The feedback was one of acceptance of the report and Patrick then asked: Are we happy to return the report to the stewards, for them to continue to work on it, engage the rest of the congregation and to decide, based upon the feedback from this meeting and the engagement of the rest of the congregation, how we will continue to move the project forward.

The meeting was in full agreement and this was confirmed by a unanimous show of hands.

Pete proposed the we give dedicated authority to the stewards to proceed to work with the Birkdale Community Hub and Library charity to create a second library on our premises.

Seconded by Colin. Carried unanimously.

STEWARDS

RECOMMENDATIONS

Social Engagement

- Church Council Review the activities listed in the “Going Forward Activity Report”, to prioritise 3 activities for the Stewards to work on, to develop into reality.
- We continue to set up meetings that will give us more information on how we might be able to support families (Moira Reilly and Parenting 2000).
- We continue to raise awareness of the resources i.e. rooms and equipment, we have and explore the possibility of partnerships with other charities to provide much needed support in our neighbourhood.
- We consider any new ventures proposed by outside organisations in the light of our governance principles and ultimate desire for there to be no constraints to us having the opportunity to introduce discussions about faith.
- We give consideration to local small businesses who might be affected by the implementation of any initiatives e.g. hospitality. Equally, there may be interest in operating a business from our premises.

Mission and Evangelism

- The resumption of conversations with Jonny Gios of Cinnamon Network about community engagement strategies would be valuable to learn from his experiences and benefit from his resources.
- Development of existing and exploration of new faith exploration material and courses e.g. Alpha, Bereavement Journey

Finance

- We learn how to apply for grants by joining bid writing sessions and talking to people who have had this experience.
- Church Council approves us putting in bids for funding that is relevant to current activities that will be seen as beneficial after the pandemic.

Worship

Worship and strategies to address how we might be more relevant in our approach to this to be addressed via the Worship Consultation meetings.

Leadership and structure

- **Have the focus of the Church Council on Vision, Mission and Strategy.**
- **Establish a Leadership Team.**

Prayer

We continue to pray for guidance in the decisions we make, the direction we take and the fulfilment of our discipleship.



PERCEPTIONS OF THE CHURCH

See SWOT analyse on the following page.

As the period when this review was carried out was during the Covid-19 pandemic and people were not meeting each other in person, a written survey was prepared and distributed. This was sent out to 75 people by email and 15 by post. The questions were devised under the following headings:

What do you enjoy most about belonging to this church?

What are the key activities that take place here?

What impact does this church have on the local community?

People's skills and gifts

Public worship

Fellowship groups

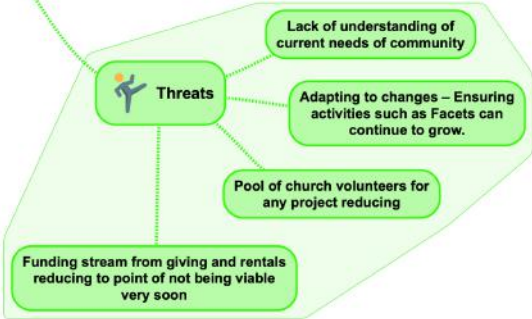
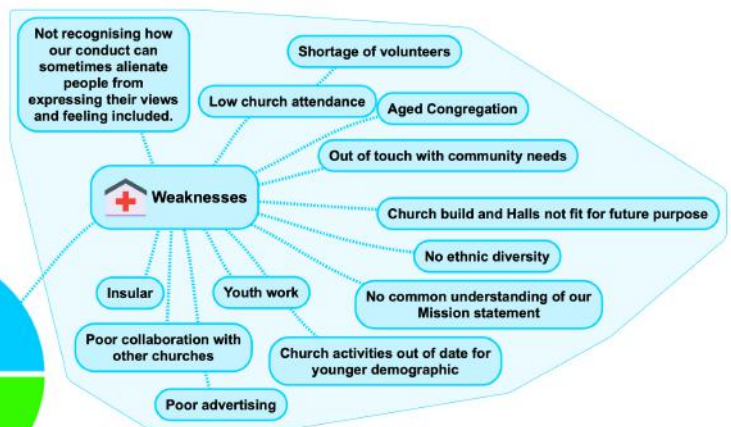
Caring for the spiritual and practical needs of our community

The impact of Covid-19 on church life and adapting to change

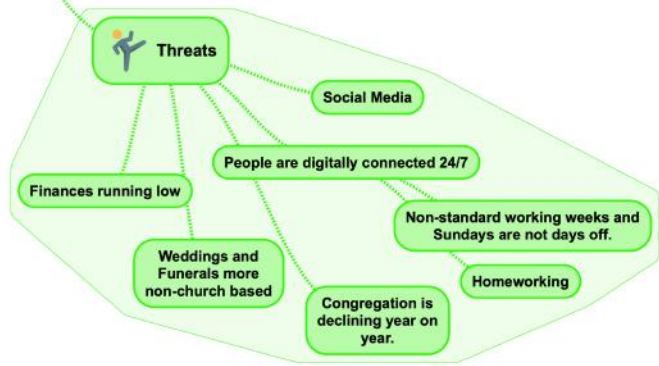
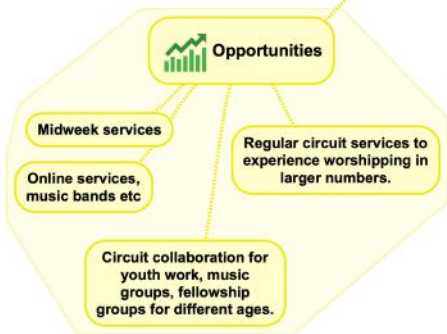
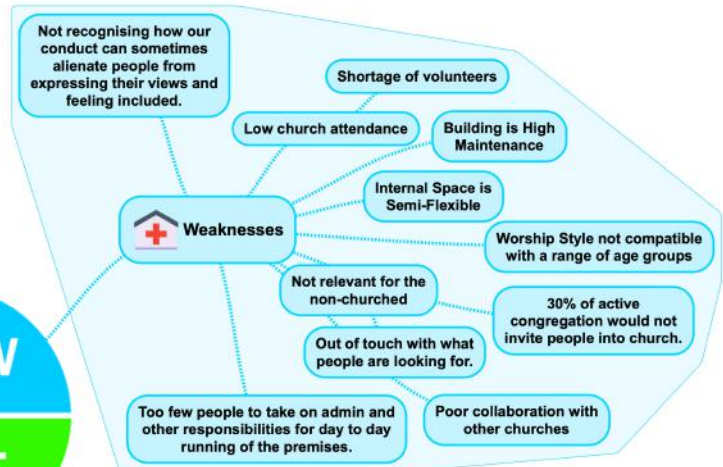
The 43 responses to the survey were collated and a summary of these, representative of the range of responses received, was shared via a zoom presentation. This led to two SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analyses being prepared, one on mission and one on worship and fellowship to concentrate our prayers and discussions about the future (see attachments). Being concise, the SWOT analyses were distributed to everyone by email or post and feedback encouraged as we begin to prioritise and prepare an action plan for the future.

The results of the survey were presented via Zoom and can be found here: Please click on the weblink or copy and paste into your browser: <https://youtu.be/AxFkzuYwUlg>

**SWOT Analysis:
Mission**



Worship and Fellowship



HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

We were struck by the way that the history of the area mirrored the history of the Church and how they are intertwined.

In appendix 1 is our history in the 60s and 70s from Colin Fyles (2 parts) which we found inspiring.

We think that knowing about the past of our church can inform our future. The presentation has been video recorded with commentary and is available via this link:

Please click on the weblink or copy and paste into your browser:

<https://vimeo.com/500561468>



THE CHURCH

The Presentation is available for you to watch.

Please click the weblink or copy and paste into your browser: <https://youtu.be/qS17RHfBzJg>

The minutes of the last 10 years Church Council and General Church Meetings were read through. Along with these, the last 10 years of financial accounts were also reviewed. The purpose was to see any trends over the years, membership and financial growth or decline, what activities were taken up and their success or failure and how long they remained active.

During this analysis, we became aware of funding that is possible, not just for projects but also ongoing running costs. This provided a boost for an optimistic view of the future, to plan a Way Forward for growth, rather than potentially putting the church into an 'end of life' scenario.

LOCAL COMMUNITY

Process

- In order to evaluate our potential to engage more effectively with the local community, the stewards and minister met, via zoom meetings, with organisations and professionals who work in Sefton to begin to appreciate the network of services that deliver 'low level' support to people.
- Initially contact was made with Sefton Community Voluntary Services (Sefton CVS), and through this, participation in a variety of zoom meetings including attendance at the Sefton CVS Annual Conference, grant funding streams and other service providers in the area. We took the opportunity to also set up zoom meetings with Local Councillors, Head Teachers of Farnborough Road Schools, Birkdale Library & Community Hub, Social Prescribers and Community Connectors. This enables us to obtain their understanding of people's needs from their contact with those living in our neighbourhood. We look in turn at each of these and the contacts made.

Sefton CVS General

Meeting held with Maggie Aslet, South Sefton Development Officer - through her, information on and access to 'Meet the Funders' sessions, Sefton Council Representatives, Training sessions, other key workers was obtained who may be able to link in with our objectives. Signed up to newsletter.

Sefton CVS Volunteer Centre

Mike Howlett operates a database of volunteers.

Sefton Parenting and Real Talk

Parenting 2000 contact Moira Reilly. Chief Exec is Janine Hyland

Sefton CVS Annual Conference 2020

This was attended by funders: PH Holt Foundation; John Moores Foundation; Steve Morgan Foundation; The National Lottery Community Fund; The Community Foundation for Merseyside.

Applications for grants can be submitted to these and other Funding Bodies, such as, All Churches Trusts. We have signed up to the Merseyside Funding Information Portal. Groundworks contact is Dan who administers Tesco Fund. Groundworks also administrating Comic Relief Fund focusing on children up to age 11. Food Funders Albert Gubay are funding food organisations and support churches. Anna at Morrisons Supermarket runs their charity activities. Emergency funders include Steve Morgan and cafonline. There is also the Hope Beyond Programme.

Some concerns were voiced in the meetings of the conference as follows.

- General concern was expressed over the risk to jobs from the economic shock as a result of Covid-19 and subsequent impact on mental health
- Digital exclusion limits access to the most vulnerable to give practical support at this time: This can increase likelihood of loneliness and isolation
- Recommend a campaign to raise awareness of mental health struggles which includes advice on how to access support and how to live well during lockdown
- Important role of Foodbanks emphasised but concern expressed about people getting wet in bad weather while queueing for food
- Poverty was highlighted as a feature of Covid-19 deaths and poor mental and physical health
- Concern expressed about access to free Wi-Fi. The poorest in the community don't have the resource to pay for Broadband contracts
- The lack of bereavement support available in the Borough was raised. Some families have experienced multiple bereavements

PH Holt Foundation

Meeting with PH Holt Foundation Administrator, Anne Edwards, outlined the type of projects they fund and the priority themes within these:

What they Fund: People; Communities i.e. groups (not geographical); Need; Problems.

Then need to demonstrate at least one of these themes in an application:

- **Creating opportunities for communities (this is an over-arching theme)**
- **Overcoming barriers e.g. marginalisation**
- **Widening access to education for all ages**
- **Increasing engagement in the arts**
- **Encouraging care of the environment**

Examples of activities:

- **Community programmes - all ages**
- **Advice and advocacy services**
- **Services for elderly, disabled and marginalised**
- **Outreach to support better mental health and women**
- **New and existing work**

**These criteria have been applied to some of our proposed projects to see how well they fit.
(See Appendix 2: Going Forward Activity Report)**

Sefton in Mind

Contact at Sefton CVS is Jan Campbell, Health and Social Care Officer with particular responsibility for Mental Health, and is Chair off Sefton in Mind. Attendance at the quarterly meeting of Sefton in Mind which was established as a subgroup of the Health and Social Care Forum.

It exists to bring together organisations with an interest in improving the experience of people living with mental health problems in Sefton. Members are representatives of voluntary, faith and community organisations, people with lived experience of mental health problems, representatives of statutory agencies directly involved in the commissioning or delivery of mental health and well-being services.

Toolkit for Promoting Well Being

CONNECT

Social relationships. Being valued by others is a fundamental human need to feel good and function well.

BE ACTIVE

Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety.

TAKE NOTICE

Being aware of what is going on around you helps in the making of positive choices based on your values and motivations. Learn to enjoy 'the moment'.

KEEP LEARNING

Life-long learning enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction.

GIVE

Participation in social and community life can help to make people feel happy (increases well-being). Volunteering or membership.

In submitting a bid for funding, it would seem helpful to justify the benefits of the project using not only the criteria set by the Funding Body but also components of the well-being toolkit.

These areas have been applied to some of our proposed projects to see how well they fit.

Local Councillors

Comments from meeting with Iain Brodie-Brown and Simon Shaw included:

- Catchment area includes people of vastly different socio-economic status: 12% Free School Meals; 28% children on Social Care Plan; 9% Benefits claimants.
- There are many large properties in Southport with single occupancy, but our neighbourhood has a lot of families.
- Connecting through activities, such as rambles, are very positive.
- FACETS seen as a great project.
- Concept of 'Men's Shed' to promote good mental health and well-being, particularly for men, seen as a good idea.
- Any support for those who have been bereaved would be helpful.
- The suggestion was to view our role as a Mental Health First Aider - providing ordinary activities to integrate into.

Head Teachers

Meeting with Jennifer Taylor, Head Teacher Farnborough Road Infant School and Adrian Antell, Head Teacher Farnborough Road Primary School. Greatest needs seem to be:

- Day to day living - some families are eligible for help but do not come forward.
- Socio-economic spread of families in the catchment area is massive but does lead to children mixing and being exposed to differences.
- Resources to support children's mental health are dire. Whilst they are seeing children who are displaying negative emotions, they recommend we focus on supporting the parents thereby helping them not to pass on anxiety to their children.
- Good relations exist between us and the Head Teachers and they will advertise anything we provide that is relevant to families via their communication tools.

Birkdale Community Hub and Library

Meeting with Tim Hall, Manger who confirmed the Birkdale Community Hub and Library is now ready to open offering a free book lending service, meeting rooms, IT training rooms. The library is quite small and is in Birkdale village centre.

They have a database of 70 volunteers and an overwhelming supply of donated books. Tim would like to look into the idea of setting up a similar 'small' library in our New Room which can be managed by their own trained volunteers as well as church volunteers.

The benefits of this arrangement are great in terms of community support, mental well-being, creating awareness of our church and mission. All costs to set this up and run it would be paid for by them.

Social Prescribers

Meeting held with Nadine Bevis, Social Prescriber (the role supports the lonely and isolated, providing telephone befriending at the moment).

- Nadine is the Link Worker for the Ainsdale and Birkdale area of Southport Primary Care Network Brighter Living Partnership. Her base is Southport Community Centre on Norwood Road but would, under normal circumstances, be having more face-to-face contact with people in carrying out her responsibilities.
- Nadine has links to 5 GP surgeries and referrals come to her via a GP. She describes the help she tries to provide as a 'social prescription' (rather than a medicinal one). Along with a couple of volunteers she offers personalized support to individuals or households, mainly the elderly, which could be help with shopping, getting a prescription, talking on the telephone, carrying out a home visit (Covid-permitting) which can sometimes highlight other needs.

Some people are only on her books for a short time. Nadine mentioned the increase in social isolation during the pandemic. One of her initiatives during the pandemic has been to compile a well-being pack of activities people might consider doing at home. She would be in a position to mention activities that are held at church to people she sees.

- As the first meeting with someone referred to her is at the GP surgery which has a medical connotation, she would be interested in a space that is 'open with no agenda' where she could meet with people who might not want, or be ready, to join an activity but just have an informal chat out of the home.
- This could also operate as a 'drop-in centre'. She is also aware of some adults with additional needs who could use such a space and currently have to travel to Bootle for such a resource.

Community Connector

Meeting held with Hannah Bland, Community Connector (the role provides mental health and well-being support as part of general well-being service) Hannah's base is Southport Community Centre on Norwood Road. Her remit overlaps a little with that of Nadine in trying to fill gaps in services e.g. telephone befriending, shopping. Her work is part of Living Well Sefton, a partner of Sefton CVS, which is a 'collaboration of various Sefton organisations that has the expertise and knowledge to share with individuals'.

Anyone can be referred, or refer themselves, to get support and the tools needed to make positive changes to their health and well-being. Some common components of Hannah's work:

- Building confidence
- Digital inclusion
- Signposting activities
- In considering how we might add value to that support network, the following were suggested:
- Providing a garden, a natural open space
- Internet access - help for those who want to learn how to use digital means to keep in touch with friends, family, order shopping, etc
- Community café - a place to meet with others on a casual basis

Urgent Need

From the various meetings the most commonly raised themes are:

- Improved mental health and well being (including loneliness and isolation, bereavement).
- Poverty.

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

Current Focus

- As we began to consider how to move forward and bring recommendations to the Church Council, we also gave thought to how we are structured as a church, and how we can use the flexibility within our structures most effectively.
- We noted that on occasions the Church Council has minor items referred to it that with more focused organisation could be better expedited elsewhere. Also, we questioned whether the Church Council has as its primary concern the responsibility for the vision and mission of the church, and whether delegated decision making is in place to implement the strategy of realising the vision and mission.

Vision, Mission and Strategy

- The Vision is WHY you want to accomplish something. Currently we have the following "We exist to proclaim the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the people of Birkdale, and beyond can come to know God and grow in his Love."
- The Mission is a general statement of WHAT needs to be achieved in order to make the vision a reality. Our mission can be whatever we decide. For illustrative purposes it could be something like "Engaging the local neighbourhood through creating a community based on Christian values and in so doing offer the love of God in Word, Prayer and Service".
- Strategy are a series of ways outlining HOW you will achieve the vision. Strategy, in short, bridges the gap between "where we are" and "where we want to be". Strategy deals with long term developments rather than routine operations and is a well defined roadmap.

Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church

The rules of the Methodist Church offer the following arrangements in terms of structure that allow for appropriate leadership.

Church Council

- The Church Council is constituted to unite those who hold responsibility in the church in one working community. It has the authority to take decisions for the church and to manage its affairs to this same end.
- The Church Council has authority and oversight over the whole area of the ministry of the church, including the management of its property. Aims and methods, the determination and pursuit of policy and the deployment of available resources are its proper responsibility. In many cases it will appoint committees which will have authority, in their own areas of responsibility, to initiate action, co-ordinate the work done in the church, advise the Church Council and report to it, being subject to its authority and oversight.
- The general oversight of the Local Church shall be undertaken by the Church Council, exercising leadership over the whole field of the church's concern.

Church Stewards and Presbyter (Minister)

- The church stewards are corporately responsible with the presbyter...for giving leadership and help over the whole range of the church's life and activity.
- They are particularly charged to hold together in unity the variety of concerns that are contained within the one ministry of the Church. To this end it is their responsibility to uphold and act upon the decisions and policies of the Church Council.

Leadership Team

- In the discharge of their responsibilities they are encouraged wherever possible to draw other members with appropriate gifts and skills into a leadership team to be appointed by the Church Council.

Future Focus

We recognise that if we are to begin to implement "The Way Forward" project the following should be in place.

- Church Council - focus should be on the Vision, Mission and Strategy of the Church.

- **Leadership Team** - would have responsibility for the delivery of the Strategy. It would be appointed and have delegated authority from the Church Council to make decisions between Church Council's, and be responsible for the delivery of the strategy to deliver the vision and mission of the Church. As well as the Church Stewards and Presbyter, the Leadership Team should include the Treasurer and the Section Outreach Worker and any other roles the Church Council deem appropriate. The Church Stewards should be able to co-opt people onto the Leadership Team, if required, between Church Council's, to be confirmed at the next available Church Council.
- **Other committees/groups** - have responsibility for supporting various aspects strategy delivery as well as the necessary and important operational routines of the Church e.g. Property Committee, Worship Consultation, Pastoral Visitors etc.

CONCLUSIONS

Social Engagement

- Liverpool Road Methodist Church has a heritage of being an important focal point in the local community for worship, Christian ministry and social engagement but in more recent times, we have not considered significant changes in culture and day-to-day living. There is also, nowadays, a lack of openness to explore the Christian faith. For those who are unchurched, our building and practices for worship are quite alien.
- Through social engagement by providing opportunities and encouraging people to meet up and be involved in everyday things on church premises, the aim is to build a trusting relationship that will foster openings for mission, evangelism and an interest in investing something of themselves in the outreach work that is being carried out.

Mission and Evangelism

Alongside social engagement would be the opportunity to be invitational towards people so that they can, if they wish explore faith. This can be through specific faith programmes such as Alpha course, Bereavement Journey, or through engaging with the existing aspects of Church life, and being collaborators in new venture and ways of worship. Through befriending there is the opportunity to develop friendship evangelism.

Worship

Taking on board feedback from the existing congregation through the congregational survey, and considering how younger generations absorb information and interact, our styles of worship are unlikely to engage those who are de-churched and unchurched.

Finance

- From the experiences of taking part in meetings and conversations with the people and groups above, we began to consider how our objective to be more effective in outreach could develop. It became clear that, initially, some of the projects already established at Liverpool Road met the criteria to apply for grant funding. Evidence of need could be provided to justify an application.
- Funders do understand the challenges facing groups due to the pandemic:
 - Loss of income streams (room hire)
 - Less fundraising activity
 - Change in funder activity - transition through this period by modifying strategy.
- We could apply for funding to develop/improve facilities for existing projects for which a need is already demonstrated and the criteria is met for helping to improve mental health and wellbeing, for example:
 - FACETS - apply for a grant to decorate big hall/improve flooring/car park
 - FOOD PANTRY - any shortfall in setting this up?
 - BEREAVEMENT - extension of The Bereavement Journey course; new IT equipment (if required) involved in running the course; explore the possibility of leasing the land behind the Co-op Funeral Care and establishing a 'Place to Be'
 - LIBRARY - interest shown in this being run externally but a good 'fit' with Food Pantry initially, those attending FACETS, and perhaps some activities for families.

Leadership Structure

- Our current Leadership model from Church Council downwards currently does not have its focus on Vision, Mission and Strategy, and this could be significantly and hopefully relatively easily be improved.



Appendix 1

HISTORY OF LIVERPOOL ROAD FROM 1968 - 1980 **COLIN FYLES**

At Easter 1968, Brighton Road Church closed and the majority of the congregation decided to move to Liverpool Road. Liverpool Road had a thriving Boys Brigade company with large numbers in the junior and company sections. Brighton Road had a small Boys Brigade company and they decided to move to Southbank Road. Brighton Road had a thriving Girls Brigade. Liverpool Road didn't have one, so they decided to move to Liverpool Road. Brighton Road had a fairly small Youth Fellowship but very few of them decided to move to Liverpool Road. What Brighton Road did share was the minister Fred Harrison. Eileen and I, along with Mike Brookfield, had led the Youth Fellowship at Brighton Road and we got involved with the young people at Liverpool Road. It wasn't long before there was a thriving Youth Fellowship at Liverpool Road and about the time it started to grow Ken Hooton got involved with the leadership. It grew slowly but the crucial decision was when the Leader's Meeting (the forerunner of the Church Council) decided to invite Cliff College to run a week long Mission, after pressure from Fred Harrison. This was about 1973. The group of lads from Cliff were on fire and were heavily involved with the Charismatic Movement, which was sweeping the country at the time.

They held meetings every night and many of our young people made a commitment to follow Jesus. One of the Cliff team talked to Ken Hooton, one of the older members of the fellowship and me. We met in the Beginners room and he talked about the Holy Spirit. Then he asked us if we wanted him to lay hands on us so that Jesus could Baptise us in the Holy Spirit. The three of us agreed and first of all he laid hands on Brian, the member of the fellowship. We were astonished to see Brian immediately fall to the floor and he was immediately on his back laughing and speaking in tongues. Just like the disciples on the day of Pentecost, you would have sworn he was drunk! He then repeated the process with Ken and me but nothing happened.

For me it happened a day or two later. I was on my knees making up the coal fire before bed and a warmth spread from the soles of my feet, up through my body and finished up at the top of my head. I have never experienced such joy and elation in all my life. I was also given the gift of tongues. Ken Hooton had a similar experience. That was a crucial point! From that point on, the number of young people attending Youth Fellowship on a Sunday evening, and attending the evening service, grew rapidly. Also the number making decisions to follow Jesus increased. There were, on average, forty youngsters in the evening service. We held Coffee Bars once a month in the Primary room and youngsters from all over Southport came. We held an appeal at the end of each Coffee Bar and usually we counselled two or three youngsters. One evening we were overwhelmed by the number coming forward and we were struggling to cope with the numbers.

I counselled three youngsters from Our Lady of Lourdes and all of them made decisions to follow Jesus. The following week they came to borrow hymn books because they persuaded the Priest to include 'And can it be' in a service. There were three of us who would deliver the message at the Coffee Bar but we never planned in advance who would deliver it, we relied in faith for the Lord to give one of us a message and He never failed! They were very exciting times, there were a number of months when we saw several young people giving their lives to Jesus. The numbers turning up grew over a few months, and for a bit of fun we had a vinyl record and if a record number turned up we broke the vinyl record in front of them.

We went through several records! The after Church Sunday evening fellowship met at a number of houses, some parents of the young people and sometimes at our house or the Hootons. There were times that the room was full and some of the youngsters were sitting on the stairs and in the hall. During the week, in the evenings, we regularly had young people dropping in and they would talk to Eileen who would listen to them and give her wise council. They also regularly turned up at the Hootons or Mike and Linda Brookfield. These informal chats were just as important, if not more important than the sermons or talks on a Sunday evening! When the Cliff College team were here we told Fred Harrison (the minister) about being Baptised in the Holy Spirit and he was very sceptical. He told us to have nothing to do with it. He started to take notice when amazing things began to happen, not just young people coming to faith, but we were seeing the Gifts of the Spirit at work. He went to a conference and following a talk from the Rev'd Colin Erquart (not sure of the spelling) Fred was Baptised in the Spirit. Towards the end of Fred's time at Liverpool Road, Doreen Hooton, who was very sceptical about what was going on, had a bit of a crisis in her life and she came through to a deeper faith and she was Baptised in the Spirit.

As Fred was leaving he told us to make an appointment to go and see the new minister and tell him everything that had happened and what was still happening. We did as he suggested and the minister listened carefully. He thanked us for telling him and then proceeded to totally ignore everything we had told him! Sadly he wasn't interested in anything to do with the supernatural working of the Spirit and we got no support for our work (I have deliberately left out his name but if you wanted to you could work it out). The Spirit was still at work but not at the depth that occurred during Fred's time. The members of the Youth Fellowship that were still around were getting into their twenties now and they met at Ken and Doreen's house. It was during his ministry that Telephone Church started and it was very successful. Betty Howarth had arrived at the Church by now and she found the minister to be very helpful. He was a man of God but sadly he wasn't switched on to the work of the Spirit. It was during this period that Francis and Denise Neale started coming to Liverpool Road and they grew in faith during their time here, becoming regulars at Ken and Doreen's Sunday evening fellowship. Ken and Doreen did a remarkable job and a number of young people matured in their faith. During this time, up to the arrival of Derek Bowker, three people became Methodist Ministers and, of course, this doesn't include Ros Watson, Ros and Chris joined Liverpool Road much later.

Although amazing things happened during this period of time amongst the young people and the leaders, most of the congregation remained untouched by the work of the Holy Spirit. They were very special times and Eileen and I were very blessed to play a part in it. By the time Derek Bowker arrived most of the renewal was over.

I spoke to Fred Harrison a few years ago and he said he regretted leaving Liverpool Road when he did, as all attempts to stir the congregations of the churches he went to after, were unsuccessful. In the end it was the constant opposition from a minority of older, established, members of the congregation at Liverpool Road that wore him down. So he decided to move on and build another Church up. Unfortunately it didn't work out and he realised that it was God's will for him to stay at Liverpool Road. It shows how important it is to know God's will and stay in it!

Apart from many young people coming to faith in Jesus, which was the most important outcome of that time, there were other amazing signs of the Holy Spirit at work, and some of the young people went on to have ministries in other places. One of them was Ernie Grimshaw (you could write a whole book about Ernie, and Nicky - his wife). Ernie grew up in a Central Avenue, the family had no connection with Church. He joined the Boys Brigade because he liked football, and most sports. He was looking for sport, which he got, but he also had his eye on Nicky and because she went to Youth Fellowship, so did Ernie. Not only did he find Nicky but he found Jesus. Using his own words he left school just about able to read and write.

He went to Cliff College for two years and felt called to the mission field. The only problem, he felt called to France and no missionary organisation was interested. To cut a long story short he wrote to a missionary college that trained people to speak French, as well as other languages. They weren't interested, so he wrote again saying "my wife and I will be on your doorstep in September, with all our luggage, ready to start". They let them in! They found an American Evangelical organisation doing Church plants in Normandy and joined them. Along with an American couple they laboured in vain, until the Lord showed them that the Roman Catholic Church was already established and why not feed any people who came to faith into the Catholic Church. They did this and people were coming to faith. After a while they had a visit from the local priests and expected a confrontation. To their amazement the priests asked them to run a Bible study for the Clergy!

After a few years they trained some of the local people to do this work and they headed back to England for Ernie to train for the Methodist Ministry. Ernie didn't go into normal circuit ministry, he became a naval chaplain on nuclear submarines. Round about the time he retired he was asked to help plan a celebration service to celebrate the work of the armed forces and he met Prince William during this time, in fact they sat next to each other. Remember, Ernie left school with no qualifications and just able to read and write! Isn't God amazing?

Mike and Linda Brookfield had young people going round to their house to talk. Two of them were named David. One of them I will call David X, for reasons you will see shortly. Linda had cause to call at the flat of David X. She looked in a room and saw plants growing and they had a strange smell. They turned out to be cannabis plants. David X came to faith and gave up his plans to become a gardener! At one point in Mike and Linda's involvement with David X, his parents had thrown him out because he had caused them so much trouble and he was homeless. Mike went round to see his parents and explained that he had turned his life around and tried to persuade them to take him back. His mother said no and Mike said to her "well that's another night he will spend sleeping under the pier". He spent a few nights like that (I'm not sure of the exact order of these events)! David eventually moved away from Southport and we haven't heard of him for years.

Another David, David Y, started coming to fellowship and many of the young people were frightened of him. He had both his hands tattooed black and had been previously held by the police as a suspect in a murder case. He professed faith in Jesus, after a while, but he was taking drugs. One Christmas Eve he turned up for the communion service, either drunk or on drugs or both. He sat towards the back shouting obscenities and hurling hymn books down the Church. After the service Ken Hooton quietly challenged him about this and David Y threatened him. Ken stood his ground and very calmly talked to him and reminded him that he professed to follow Jesus. David calmed down and left to go home. One night Mike and Linda were in bed and they heard a bang. Mike went down stairs and found David curled up in the porch, his face was painted white.

He was high as a kite on some drug, or drugs. He said he was frightened to go home because he thought it was haunted. They talked to him and he said he had sacrificed an animal in his room, he was a bit vague about the details. Mike and Linda suspected that his flat was possessed. Mike went to see the Pastor at Elim in Manchester Road, now Lakeside Pentecostal Church. Mike, the Pastor and one other from Elim went to see David Y and they said they could detect an evil presence in the room and said the room needed to be delivered and he needed to renounce his involvement with Satan. David Y was so scared that he agreed. They went to every part of the room and commanded Satan to leave in the name of Jesus. They were conscious of the evil presence moving around the room and then going through the door. Then there was a feeling of peace which settled on the room.

Then they claimed back the room for Jesus. David Y didn't have anything to do with Satanic practices again. You couldn't meet a more down to earth guy than Mike, he is not prone to exaggeration. We have not heard anything of David Y for years. Another young person Linda and Doreen Hooton got involved with was Ged. He had tried to commit suicide several times and Linda and Doreen took him in hand. They went round one Saturday and spent most of the day cleaning his flat, which apparently was in a terrible state. Cutting a long story they got him sorted out and he gave his life to Jesus. Ged came and spoke at Linda's funeral. Kevin and Lynne Frost were members of the Youth Fellowship and after they got married Kevin's job took him away from Southport to Reading. The company moved him again to Knutsford and they arrived at the Methodist Church to be involved in a Charismatic Renewal there. I believe this Church played a significant role in the lives of Ann and Tim Hall!

There were broken relationships healed during this time. Also many of the gifts of the Spirit were given in a number of different situations to different people as and when the Spirit felt they were necessary. There was opposition from some influential people but we also received tremendous support from the majority of the congregation and we were particularly grateful for the support we received from the BB Officers, Jim Lloyd, Ken Grundy, Graham Iddon and others. Also the GB Officers and the Guide leaders. Members of the youth fellowship from those days are still key members of Liverpool Road; Graham and Doreen Iddon, Jane Wilcox, Pam and Ray Flanagan, Caroline Broadhurst and Paul Matthews (I apologise if I have missed anyone out).

They were great times but that was back in the seventies and I believe, along with you and others in the Church, that the Lord is longing to do even greater things among us. Eileen had a cousin (sadly he died just before Christmas) who went to Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Hounslow, where the Lord is doing remarkable things. They had a weekend led by a retired vicar, Sandy Millar, from Holy Trinity Brompton. On the Sunday the Holy Spirit came upon them with tremendous power and one of the congregation said "The Lord has just told me that revival has begun and he is telling us to look again at the prophecies of Jean Darnall". She is an American lady who had three visions in the late 1960's. She was shown that revival would come to Britain and told this would happen in a number of ways. Two of them are happening in Southport; firstly she said that across the country people from different Churches would come together to pray. This is happening and there are at least 90 other similar meetings taking place across the UK, secondly one of the main driving forces for revival would be from unchurched young people finding Jesus and telling their friends and families. This is happening through the work of Tabz, Hettie and others in the SASWT. The country has changed since the seventies, but God hasn't. Revival is coming and we need to be ready to be a part of it. If you want to look at her prophecies; google 'the prophecies of Jean Darnall'.

Eileen and I had the opportunity to hear her talking about it when she spoke at St Peter's Church in Birkdale in about 1970. St Peter's were also having a Charismatic Renewal at that time. The gifts of the Spirit are contentious with some. They don't make anyone a superior Christian, as some of the Corinthian Christians claimed and Paul had to deal with this problem. He speaks about this issue in 1 Corinthians chapter 13; "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal", etc. The gifts of the Spirit are to equip Christians with the tools needed to more effectively carry out God's work, we are the body of Christ. A tradesman does not become superior by having the best power tools. They simply equip him to complete the job more efficiently. You are better off using a modern power drill than using a hand drill. Some Christians are frightened of the gifts.

Until recently, if I used my drill when our 5 year old grandson was around, he ran off frightened by the noise. Then I showed him that it was nothing to be frightened of, it just made the job easier. Once I had explained that he is now ok when I use it. It is the same with some of the gifts of the Spirit, God gives them to make his work more efficient. His power is greater than that of the evil forces of Satan! How do we receive the gifts? Jesus tells us in Matthew 11: 7-11 'Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks the door will be opened.

"Which of you, if his son asks for bread will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish will give him a snake? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will you Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him"!



Appendix 2

GOING FORWARD ACTIVITY REPORT

ACTIVITY/THEME	5 WAYS TO WELL-BEING					PH HOLT FUNDING CRITERIA	COMMENT/ STATUS	GOING FORWARD	
	Connect	Be Active	Take Notice	Learn	Give				Faith
1. FOOD PANTRY Supporting families on low income	√			√		Church members may volunteer	People Need Problems	Almost ready to launch. Volunteers from church family and outside. Building modifications underway.	Include debt counselling. Hospitality – snacks and light lunches?
2. LIBRARY – south Birkdale All ages	√			√		Staffed from outside but Church members may volunteer	People Communities Needs	Good partner to Food Pantry and FACETS. Organised by another group	Proposal being prepared by Tim Hall. No cost to us.
3. ALLOTMENT Supporting families on low income	√	√	√	√	√	Church run activity	People Communities Need	Project underway. Ready to launch to public post Covid-19. Link to Food Pantry.	Consider classes on how to make best use of the fresh food
4. FACETS Group activities for adults	√	√		√	√	Church run activity	People Communities Need	Much praised activity well suited to current situation. Data already available to support the need for this.	Apply for funding to smarten décor (main hall) & improve car park. Encourage new membership – linking to Social Prescribers
5. PLACE to BE	√		√			Church- monitored space. Bereavement Journey course established: final week devoted to faith.	People Communities Need	Explore possibility of leasing the waste land behind The Co-op Funeral Care and developing a garden for Quiet Reflection.	Could extend concept to providing a space indoors for similar use in bad weather.
6. MEN'S SHED		√		√	√	Church members may be involved. 'Maintenance team' reimagined	People Need Problems	Good activity for one-to-one support. We have equipment and jobs needing doing.	Look at CVS database for volunteers with appropriate skills

Appendix 2.1

GOING FORWARD ACTIVITY REPORT

PROBABLE ACTIVITY/THEMES	5 WAYS TO WELL-BEING					Faith	PH HOLT FUNDING CRITERIA	COMMENT/ STATUS	GOING FORWARD
	Connect	Be Active	Take Notice	Learn	Give				
7. Girls' Brigade and Boys' Brigade	√	√		√	√	Christian based youth organisation	People Communities	Offers valuable all-round programme including spiritual awareness but recruiting young people today is challenging,	Discuss with leaders how best to support their work going forward.
8. Walking Group	√	√	√	√		Christian-led group that brings together people from different backgrounds	People Communities Need	Connecting with nature and open spaces very valuable. Opportunities to chat are non-threatening	Resume this activity when safe to do so.
9. HOLIDAY HUNGER & FOOD	√			√				A project that exists that we may be able to contribute towards	Talk to Maria Parker
10. DROP-IN CENTRE	√		√			Church volunteer presence		Have catering facilities. Serve light snacks and lunches	May link in with Food Pantry. Café run privately?
11. YOUNG PEOPLE HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES	√	√		√		Church volunteer presence		Look at our resources available for Youth Work. Can these be re-applied?	Speak to our Youth Workers. One-day activities during holidays?
12. BABY & TOTS GROUP YOUNG FAMILIES	√	√		√	√	Baby & Tots Group led by Outreach Worker		Possible link to Library sessions and Walk to School Still to research Parenting 2000	Further discussion on how to develop this Speak to Moira Reilly

Appendix 2.2

GOING FORWARD ACTIVITY REPORT

PROBABLE ACTIVITIES/THEMES	5 WAYS TO WELL BEING						PH HOLT FUNDING CRITERIA	COMMENT/STATUS	GOING FORWARD
	Connect	Be Active	Take Notice	Learn	Give	Faith			
13. ENQUIRIES FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS	√			√		Possible church volunteer presence.		Consider groups returning to rent premises after Covid.	Some re-decoration of school rooms will enhance presentation
14. PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER CHARITIES								Activities for those with Alzheimer's Disease and Autism mentioned. Need to research possibility.	Need to explore potential of this. Talk to charities.
15. HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH - AINTREE						Church with well-established community links and grant application experience.		Contact made with administrator during a zoom meeting. Invitation given to visit that church.	Consider visiting Ruth Nuttall when safe to do so.



THANK YOU!