

**THE
NATIONAL
UNITARIAN
FELLOWSHIP**



The Unitarian Postal
and
on line fellowship in the UK

74th Annual Report & Accounts

2018

Registered Charity Number 1040294

Affiliated to the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free
Christian Churches

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the
National Unitarian Fellowship, De Vere Staverton Estate,
Daventry, 4th April 2018

President's Welcome The President, Joan Wilkinson, opened the meeting.

Apologies were received from Ken Smith.

NUF Prayer, and Remembrance of those who have died NUF Minister, Rev Tony McNeile read the NUF prayer followed by a moment's silence in remembrance of those members who had died during the year:

Elizabeth Barlow
Gordon Sanders
Richard Beare
Liz Foxbrook

Acceptance of last year's Minutes The Minutes of the 2017 AGM, previously sent to members, were received and accepted; proposed by Tony McNeile and seconded by Howard Wilkins.

President's Report and handover to new President The President, Joan Wilkinson, reported that since last year the NUF publications had been seasonal, and finances had benefitted from this change. She also reported that members were voting on the reduction of the committee from four honorary members plus eight ordinary members, to four honorary members plus four ordinary members. Voting results will be published in the summer Newsletter.

The Four Groups Weekend will be held from October 26th - 28th at The Nightingale Centre, Hucklow. The four groups concerned are the National Unitarian Fellowship, Peace Fellowship, Unitarian Renewal Group and Unitarian Earth Spirit Network. Planning for the weekend is underway. Joan went on to thank all the volunteers, in particular Tony McNeile, and also Howard Wilkins who is taking on the role as President. Joan then handed over to the new President, Howard Wilkins.

Tony McNeile thanked Joan and read a tribute to her. A gift was then presented to Joan as outgoing President, and to Valerie Walker as outgoing Treasurer. Secretary's Report was as written in the Annual Report by Janet Lythgoe, the current Secretary. She thanked everyone for their help and support during her first twelve months as Secretary.

Treasurer's Report Valerie Walker summed up her report. No queries were received. Valerie is now stepping down as Treasurer. The role will be taken on by Ken Smith. Matters Arising The interim finance office for the Inquirer asked if the NUF would reintroduce an annual donation to the Inquirer. This will be discussed by the committee.

Tony then introduced the *talk by Rev Ernest Baker* who spoke on the subject of Unitarians and Social Responsibility, asking the question; "Y r u bovver'd wiv that? Ernest actively promotes the ongoing support of Unitarians for 'Send a Child to Hucklow'. Ernest talked about the Epistle of James "faith without works is dead' and Martin Luther "Salvation by Grace through Faith". He compared this to the "Salvation by Character" of James Freeman Clarke. Moving to more recent times Ernest talked about Paul Tillich, a German, who fled Nazism in the 1930s, and his book "The Dynamics of Faith". He then went on to quote Oscar Romero: "We cannot do everything. And there is a sense of liberation in realising that. This enables us to do something and to do it very well". Ernest offered a word of caution for volunteers that 70% of any job is boring, and feels that today's volunteers are often doing the work for selfish reasons. He remembered his mother's adage of 'Duty makes us do things well; love makes us do them beautifully". He concluded with a mention of Raymond Holt's book, "The Unitarian Contribution to Social Progress in England". Ernest was thanked by Tony, and then took questions. The new President closed the meeting.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

It's hard to believe that it is time for the Annual Report once again. Where does the year go!

There has been a change in the NUF committee this year, with a reduced number of ordinary committee members, from eight to four, as voted for prior to the AGM. In readiness for the 2019 AGM we looking for new committee members, with a nomination slip having been circulated with the winter edition of the Newsletter.

I hope you are continuing to enjoy the regular Newsletters and Viewpoints, which are packed full of interesting articles and useful information, and also I hope you are making use of the website. Back copies of the NUF publications can be found there, as well as Rev Tony McNeile's latest meditation or sermon. There is a chance to air your views and take part in discussions. Please make use of this opportunity if you can. Many thanks to all for your patience and understanding as I was learning the Secretary's role. Having now completed almost two years I feel almost an 'old hand'!

Janet Lythgoe

WEBSITE REPORT (www.nufonline.org.uk)

The website continues to be the main vehicle by which to attract new members to the Fellowship. The Monthly Reflections and Services are on the front page of the website as are directions to regular publications, the *Newsletter* and *Viewpoint*. This year we have added a Report from the EUU Cologne Conference 2018 written by Peter Zoné and a section under 'Other Publications', where Lindsey Press publications are reviewed as well as books written and published by other Unitarian writers. Reviews of books appropriate to the above will always be welcomed in order to build up a valuable archive of books written by Unitarians.

FACEBOOK REPORT

The National Unitarian Facebook group gives the Fellowship a space to interact with other congregations through the membership of the group. The regular bloggers continue to give us food for thought but this year we have seen links to what may be happening in the worship of several congregations. The group also provides space in which to promote the Monthly Reflections and other material and services which the NUF film team has produced. The Facebook group is accessible from the front page of the NUF website:

www.nufonline.org.uk

VIEWPOINT

The theme for 2018 was *Unitarians and Social Responsibility*, and we haven't been short of Unitarians committed to social action and who have also been willing to write.

The series began with Rev Ernest Baker, followed by Rev Feargus O'Connor, Bronwyn Lowe, Louise Rogers and Tony Cann. What a spectrum of social commitment they covered but just as importantly was the way that Unitarianism informed both the private and public morality of their behaviour and actions in community and family. Some of the writers drew on our Unitarian history whilst others examined a personal morality which went beyond race and creed.

Ernest showed how Unitarianism informed his work as long-serving Secretary of the *Send a Child to Hucklow Fund*. Feargus wrote of our rich Unitarian heritage and its continuation towards the welfare of animals. His indefatigable fund-raising includes support of human breast research through *Animal Free Research UK*.

Bronwyn demonstrated how our chapels can be used for the benefit of the local community, drawing on the re-building work at Dukinfield. Louise and Tony wrote of private and public morality, Louise drawing on her commitment in caring for her mother. Tony looks at our personal behavior resulting from what we think and how this plays out in the community in social action inclusive of race and creed.

The theme for the coming year will be *Unitarians and the Arts*. Please consider contributing your thoughts

on the above or contact me if you would like to write on an issue of specific interest to you in no less than 2,500 words, which would make up one edition of the *Viewpoint*

UNITARIAN INTERNET FELLOWSHIP

The *Unitarian Internet Fellowship* previously known just as the *Forum* must be the longest standing discussion Unitarian Internet discussion group in the movement, pre-dating the many Unitarian Facebook groups now available.

The topics discussed on the Forum section included a commentary on our Swedish member's four day visit to the *European Unitarian Universalist Autumn Retreat*, the full report being available on: <http://www.nufonline.org.uk/NUF2015/pdfs/CologneEUU18.pdf>

Amongst many topics on the Forum section, we have addressed the subjects of 'The Future of Faith', 'What do we mean by Religion', 'The God Question', 'Poetry and Religion', and following on from the Theology Conference and a Sermon by our own Minister, Rev Tony McNeile, entitled 'Faith without Foundation', we considered the 'Future of Faith'.

The Sermons and Addresses section is open for anyone to view and has always been very popular. The last four sermons have had 1,435 with the first of these alone, 'Spirit, Numinous, Sacred' by Rev Phil Silk attracting 1,105 views. However, these are recent and over time the number of viewers to each sermon is usual between 3,000 and 4,000 with one

reaching 6,500. I would encourage anyone wishing to have their sermons included to contact me.

If you wish to register for the Internet Fellowship please go to the main page of the NUF website: www.nufonline.org.uk and follow the instructions, you will be most welcome.

Joan Wilkinson

NUF WORKING WITH UKUNITARIAN TV

The team filmed several society sessions at the 2018 GA Meetings and these have been very well received as they were released through the Spring and Summer.

Services continue to be filmed with a different service being included on the front page of the NUF website bi-monthly: www.nufonline.org.uk .

The Monthly Reflections throughout the year have also been well received with the archive becoming a valuable resource, available to all Unitarians and general surfers. To ensure that those without computers do not miss out, the Reflections are written up and included in the *NUF Newsletter*

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Your newsletter needs YOU!

The newsletters this past year have been carried by the incredible efforts of Joan

Wilkinson. Without her we would not have had a newsletter to publish on multiple occasions.

Thank you so much Joan for what you have given us.

Thank you also to Tony McNeile, Janet Lythgoe and Howard Wilkins for reliably giving us items to split Joan's pieces up by.

Thank you to those of you who have sent in material who haven't done so before, although you have been few, you are appreciated!

Please, people, for goodness sakes, help us to provide you with a varied newsletter.

Mattie Pugh

BOOKS OF FELLOWSHIP

Well – my previous words re our anachronistic mode of communication through letter writing, elicited a response from two more folk who have now boosted one of our two BOFs from three to five scribblers, and as one would expect, have brought new interests and ways of thinking in to the mix. Both BOFs would welcome new members.

We can take time to reflect before putting pen to paper; no hurry; no pressure to press (sorry, click on) the

'send' icon. I usually sit with the newly arrived bundle of letters for a leisurely read over breakfast, with apologies to subsequent recipients for any buttery finger marks (only joking!)

So – if there are any ditherers out there reading this

and would like to join us, get out your pens. We would love to hear from you!

Pat Caddick

MINISTER'S REPORT

I have written worship material for the NUF Newsletter and I have been writing and producing meditations for the NUF website. My inbox and phone continue to be open for any NUF member who needs a chat or wants to unburden in confidence.

Tony McNeile

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY & TREASURERS REPORT

1st October 2017 – 30th September 2018

It has been a pleasure to take over the twin roles of Membership Secretary and Treasurer from their previous office holders, Howard Wilkins and Valerie Walker respectively.

Particular thanks to Valerie for her help in the transfer of responsibility of Treasurer during the summer months ; that our finances show a small surplus this year is a tribute to her stewardship of NUF finances over the last few years.

Thanks also to John Wilkinson for taking care of the electronic distribution of our publications to those members who have specially requested this. NUF has been a pioneer of this method of publication for many years.

As I was on holiday for most of May and June I decided not to go ahead with seeking new banking arrangements for this year but once I have regularised the membership situation I will investigate the matter further.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

General Data Protection Regulation changes during the year require organisations to be especially careful as to how they

manage personal data. During the latter part of 2018 I contacted all those on our NUF membership lists who appeared to be a year in arrears with their subscriptions informing them that if we did not hear from them by a due date that their names would be removed from the records. I am pleased to say that this approach elicited several late subscriptions which has enabled our accounts to be more healthy. At the time of writing we have 113 fully paid up members, 27 who receive by e-mail, and 86 receive hard copies. Grateful thanks to those members who have added generous donations to their subscriptions. It has been a pleasure to welcome several new members to NUF for the first time and we look forward to their contributions in the future. Sadly we have also lost contact with some members for several years – the word ‘fellowship’ implies relationship and if we receive neither subscription nor resignation there comes a point where we must conclude that we no longer provide what is wanted. If the fault lies with us and you do not receive publications as expected please inform me. With three members of the committee involved with membership matters until recently some oversights are difficult to avoid.

May I remind all members that the subscription year now matches the calendar year – a change we made some two years ago but which not all members seem to have acknowledged. If you do not receive a publication please let me know – we have surplus copies of most issues available. You will find pdf copies of NUF publications going back many years on our website ; should you wish to have printed copies of any for study or small group purposes these can always be provided

Kenneth Smith

ACCOUNTS

NATIONAL UNITARIAN FELLOWSHIP

Registered Charity No. 1040294

Assets	30.09.17	30.09.18
CAF Cash Extra Account	£4511.24	£4693.81
FP CAF Fixed Interest Fund B	£7485.65*	£7142.31*

*This is the SHARE VALUE at 30th September 2018 and does not relate to earlier balances or the interest payments throughout the year .

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS – YEAR ENDING 30TH

September 2018

Receipts	01.10.17 – 30.09 18
Subscriptions and Members donations :	
Cheques	£985
Faster Payments transfers	£396
Further donations	
from MUA, Duncan Norman Trust Fund	£388
CAF Investment Fund Interest	<u>£169.19</u>
TOTAL	<u>£1938.19</u>

Payments	01.10.17 – 30.09.18
Printing of Newsletter and Viewpoint	£774 .31
Postage and Distribution	£240. 91
GA Meetings	
room hire, display stand, delegates expenses	£519 .00

Internet and domain hosting charge	£ 71.40
Donation to GA and retirement gift	£ 90.00
CAF bank charges	<u>£ 60.00</u>

TOTAL £1755.62

Surplus for year 2017/18 £182.57 ; deficit for the year 2016/17 (£ 188. 55)

Note to Accounts

*Investment Fund interest is paid directly into the current account every quarter.

Kenneth Smith

NUF Treasurer and Membership Secretary
2018

December

President - Joan Wilkinson
Minister - Rev Tony McNeile
Treasurer - Ken Smith
Secretary - Janet Lythgoe
Committee - Howard Hague, Ian Martin
Derek Harvey, Hazel Warhurst,
Nick Saunders
Newsletter Editor - Mattie Pugh
Viewpoint Editor - Joan Wilkinson
Distributor - Derek Harvey
Books of Fellowship - Pat Caddick
Internet Forum Manager - Joan
Wilkinson
Membership Secretary - Ken Smith

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name.
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Address.
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Post Code. Contact
details.

Subscription: £13.00 Students:£5.00
Return to: Mr Ken Smith, 12 Gravely Rd, Church
Crookham,
Fleet, Hampshire. GU52 6BB