



St Mary's and St Nicholas': The Halewood Ecumenical Team

Halewood Church Council Annual Report

For the year ended 31st December 2008

DRAFT

Administrative Information

The Parish Office, St Nicholas' Centre, 70 Church Road, Halewood. LIVERPOOL L26 6LA.

Official correspondence should be sent to the Parish Administrator at the above address.

Halewood Church Council

Halewood Church Council (HCC) is the overall decision-making body for the Parish. It is an *ecumenical* Church Council – Anglican and Methodist – which acts as the Parochial Church Council (PCC). As such, it operates under the *Parochial Church Council Powers Measure 1956*. The PCC is exempted by order from registering with the Charity Commission.¹

The aims of HCC, as defined in the *PCC (Powers) Measure of 1956* are:

“to cooperate with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.”

In practice, “the minister” in our context means **Halewood Ecumenical Team**, whose *Constitution and Code of Practice* declares Halewood (i.e. both churches in the parish and throughout the area covered by the parish) a Local Ecumenical Project, and guarantees equality of status to both churches and to Anglican and Methodist ministers within the Team. The Ecumenical Project’s Sponsoring Body is **Churches Together in the Merseyside Region (CTMR)** (formerly Merseyside And Region Ecumenical Assembly – ‘MARCEA’.)

The two churches, **St Mary’s and St Nicholas’**, relate to the Anglican Diocese of Liverpool and the Liverpool District of the Methodist Church; and to the Anglican Deanery and Methodist Circuit which cover the South of Liverpool. (St Mary’s church was, from the beginning, a shared Anglican/Methodist building. St Nicholas’ remains an Anglican building.) Worship and Ministry in both churches reflect both Anglican and Methodist traditions.

Both churches have **District Church Councils (DCCs)** to which local powers and budgets have been delegated. St Mary’s DCC acts in accordance with its *Standing Orders*. The appointment of DCC members is governed by the *Church Representation Rules (2006)*. Those elected to either DCC are also automatically members of HCC. For Methodist purposes, the St Mary’s District Church Council is considered to be the Methodist Church Council for Halewood.

Both DCCs have appropriate **committee structures**, although there may be differences depending on local needs. On occasion, there will also be cross-parish working groups, formed to deal with particular issues. These report directly to HCC.

Both DCCs also produce an **Annual Report** which may be read in conjunction with this Parish report.

¹ Changes in charity law mean that this status of “a charity exempted... from registration” will no longer apply to us from September 2009, when Church Councils which meet certain income criteria will be required to register with the Charity Commission. At the moment, the place of ecumenical Church Councils is under discussion nationally and we are awaiting advice on how to proceed.

Halewood Ecumenical Team

The Team currently comprises:

Anglican Ministry

Team Rector (based at St Nicholas):

The Revd Alan Jewell

Team Vicar (based at St Mary's):

The Revd Sarah Errington.

Reader: Mrs Alison Shacklady

Reader: Mr Clive Rigby (Licensed in 2008)

Methodist Ministry

Minister: The Revd Ian Hu

Youth and Community Worker:

Miss Margaret Oultram

The Anglican Team Vicar and Readers are responsible to the Team Rector. The Anglican ministers are currently Authorized by the Methodist Conference, but the Church of England still does not yet recognize Methodist Ministers in the same way. We continue to regard the signing at national level of the **Anglican-Methodist Covenant** on 1 November 2003 as a sign of hope.

Although the *Constitution and Code of Practice* envisages an Anglican Rector, an Anglican Team Vicar and a Methodist Minister all based in Halewood, the reality of clergy deployment issues means that between them, Ian Hu and Margaret Oultram offer the equivalent of one full-time Methodist ministry. Similar issues relating to the Anglican Deanery's Mission Plan (in response to declining numbers of Anglican ordained ministers) mean that we envisage a time when it will no longer be possible to have both full-time Anglican ordained posts. The *Deanery Mission Plan* also involves us working more closely with the parish of St Hilda, Hunts Cross, in an informal 'cluster'. (More of this below.)

The Team offers services to the Circuit on each quarterly plan and we are very happy to welcome Ministers and Local Preachers from elsewhere in the Circuit to appointments in Halewood. We have a particular relationship within the Circuit with the other churches in our 'sector' – i.e., the two Garston Churches, Banks Road and Garston Park. (Garston Park Church, housed in what was Island Road Methodist Church, is in ecumenical partnership between Methodists and the United Reformed Church).

Team Coordinator

The Ecumenical Team has a Coordinator. This role rotates around Team members and any member of the Team may be Coordinator for up to five years. The Coordinator facilitates Team meetings and chairs Halewood Church Council. From the Annual Meeting in 2006, The Revd Sarah Errington has filled this post.

Team Meetings

The Ministry Team meets for business approximately once a month, in addition to which we have a yearly day together, for part of which we are joined by members of the Hunts Cross team. (This is no longer an 'away day', as in recent years we have met in the home of a Team member. In September 2008, we met at the Revd Ian Hu's Manse in Garston).

Members of the Team also usually meet for morning prayers on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and for Communion at St Nicholas' on Thursday mornings, followed by an informal get-together at the St Nicholas' Centre Coffee Shop. The Revd Jane Durham of St Hilda's, Hunts Cross, joins with us on a number of occasions. These weekly 'Coffee Shop' meetings provide opportunities for us to catch up with one another and also mean that parishioners who want to speak to a member of the Team know where to find us! Members of the Team value the opportunities that this provides.

Team News

In last year's report, we welcomed **Mr Clive Rigby** to the Team. Clive is an Anglican Reader who had been ministering in Kirby Lonsdale, but who wanted to transfer his Licence to Liverpool Diocese following his retirement from secular work (as a teacher). On 16th June 2008, Clive was formally Licensed by the Bishop of Warrington at a service of Evensong at the Cathedral. He has become a very welcome addition to the Team. Clive also keeps in contact with his previous parish and has been lecturing at Liverpool Hope University.

The Revd Alan Jewell, who arrived in Halewood in 1997 as Team Vicar based at St Nicholas', became Team Rector of Halewood in 2001. His Licence as Team Rector was initially for a period of seven years and this expired in November 2008. Alan spent quite a bit of 2008 in reflection on his ministry and his calling. In the autumn, there was a formal review, led by the Archdeacon of Liverpool and involving representatives of St Mary's and St Nicholas', from Anglican and Methodist perspectives. The review concluded that it would be right to recommend to the Bishop that Alan be re-licensed and the Bishop agreed with the recommendation. It was planned that the re-Licensing (for a further period of seven years), by the Bishop of Warrington, would take place at the Cathedral early in 2009.

The Revd Canon Owen Eva, MBE

This year, we record our thanksgiving for the life of **the Revd Canon Owen Eva, MBE**, Rector of Halewood from 1962 to 1986. Owen saw the parish and community of Halewood through some of its most significant changes. He was a pioneer and champion of ecumenical cooperation, "the architect of the longest running Anglican/Methodist ecumenical project in the country"² and the first in Halewood to hold the title of *Team Rector*. Owen died on the morning of Friday 18 April 2008. His funeral took place on 25th April at the church of St Berteline and St Christopher, Norton, Runcorn, the parish he and Joy had made their home in retirement. **The Revd Colin Critchley**, a former Halewood Team member, now retired from Licensed Ministry, who had worked closely with Owen, spoke at the funeral of Owen's remarkable life and ministry.

A memorial service for Owen and Joy Eva was held at St Nicholas' on Saturday 25th October 2008. Colin Critchley led the service which was attended by family and friends from far and wide.

Halewood-Hunts Cross 'Cluster'/Ecumenical Relations

As a parish, we continue to work closely with the parish of St Hilda's, Hunts Cross, as part of the Liverpool South Deanery Mission Strategy. We are grateful to the **Revd Jane Durham**, Priest-in-charge at St Hilda's, for her enthusiasm and dedication to the 'cluster'. As noted above, Jane meets regularly with members of the Halewood Team. We seek to offer support and encouragement to

² Quotation from the address given by the Revd Colin Critchley at Owen's funeral service, and reprinted in the June 2008 edition of the Halewood parish magazine.

one another across the cluster – as well as cover for holidays and so on – and have again felt this to be mutually beneficial.

In 2008, the churches of the 'cluster', with other churches in Halewood and Hunts Cross, again shared a **Lent course** and met together for an act of **worship and witness** in Hunts Cross on Good Friday. (This was intended as an open air proclamation, but bad weather meant that we took refuge inside St Hilda's church. We have better hopes for 2009!)

Instead of a 'Parish Weekend', July 2008 saw a **weekend away** for the three churches of the cluster at **the Quinta**, near Chirk. Led by Tony Hardy and Kelly Betteridge from CPAS, those who went had an enjoyable and rewarding time together. Our thanks go to Simon and Sandra Brown and Pam Boffey who did so much to make it work.

On 7th December 2008, our **Confirmation Service** was held at St Nicholas', with the Bishop of Warrington preaching and the Revd Ian Hu presiding. Candidates from St Nicholas', St Mary's and St Hilda's were Confirmed in both Anglican and Methodist traditions. Confirmation preparation groups – one for adults and one for young people – met across the cluster and were felt to be very successful. 19 Candidates from St Nicholas' and St Mary's were Confirmed, of which 6 were adults.

We have also begun to worship more regularly together, with evening services on the first Sunday of each month being held at one of our three churches and led by ministers from the cluster.

Work with Children and Young People

We are proud that, since 2006, our churches have held the Diocesan **Child Friendly Church Award**. This is a tribute to all those who give generously of their time and energy, and, in particular, to **Mrs Gill Dover**, our *Under 18s Coordinator* and Child Protection Verifier, for her many hours of hard work, which ensure that our provision for children and young people follows the very best practice. Our thanks go to Gill and to Margaret Oultram, who is the Ministry Team member with responsibility for work with children and young people.

Once again it was a busy year for all the groups working with children and young people in Halewood. The year started with Halewood hosting the **Diocesan Core Skills Training** led by Jane Leadbetter. All of our groups continued to meet regularly with good numbers attending overall.

Both churches offered **crèche facilities** during their morning services, together with **Sunday School** or **Junior Church** for those aged 4 and up. These groups continued even when the church services moved into their respective Centres – St Mary's because of the heating problems and St Nicholas' because of the refurbishment of the church building.

Mums, Dads and Tots meets at the St Nicholas' Centre on Tuesday afternoons during school term-time. In 2008, they held a sponsored Sing-a-long (with Alan Jewell on guitar) and raised enough money to purchase a pew for St Nicholas' church.

JAM Club, for 4-11 year olds (reception to year 6) is an after-school club which takes place at St Mary's each Wednesday from 3:30-5:00pm during term time. The club enjoys a range of activities from crafts, drama, cooking, storytelling, prayers, puppet-work, singing, video clips, games and music, with Christian teaching. When the church heating broke down in the autumn of 2007, JAM Club moved its meetings into the Care Centre, which has proved easier to manage. The Club has

remained in the Centre ever since. 47 children are on the register since September and approximately 30 attend each week.

100% Boss Club is for 8-12 year olds (school years 4-7) and takes place on alternate Tuesdays from 5:30-7:00PM at St Mary's during term time. The running of the group divides fairly evenly between Christian teaching and games. Members join in and participate well, as leaders present Christian topics in a fun way. Most of the children in the group are un-churched and do not go to the church school. There are 13 young people on register since September and about 8-10 come each fortnight.

Youth Fellowship had a busy year. They enjoyed a weekend in Beddgelert in February. In April, some of the young people went once again to 'Save the Family' at Plas Bellin to run a holiday club for the children there. They took part in the Circuit weekend in October, staying at Banks Road Church, Garston, but attending various events at 'ECG' in Southport. November saw a 'Lock-in' at St Mary's and a Carvery meal prepared and served by the young people. This raised money for both churches as well as for club funds. 12 youngsters were Confirmed in December. The young people also took part in leading Circuit services.

Vineyard Youth Club is held at the St Nicholas Centre each Friday evening during school term time. Vineyard can take up to 40 young people from the age of 10 to 16 years. Vineyard is a social club, where members can play computer games, pool, table-tennis; they may watch videos and, in the summer, play football outside. Sometimes the group hosts visitors – for example, the police, with police horses - and sometimes they enjoy a trip out, such as ten-pin bowling or ice-skating. They also organise a trip to the Lake District, (about every 18 months) which is an adventure weekend, involving rock climbing, canoeing etc. Vineyard members are asked to join church parade each month at St Nicholas church. In 2008, Vineyard raised money for 'Children in Need'. They also celebrated the 40th birthday of the club.

There are 13 young people on register since September; about 8-10 come each fortnight.

nGage, a group for 17-21 year olds, continued to meet, though not on a regular basis, for various reasons. They had a weekend at Wigton in the Lake District in February with some young people from Elm Hall Drive church.

Step In Time Dance Group meets at the St Nicholas' Centre on Thursday evenings and encourages children and young people to dance for enjoyment (rather than in order to pass exams). In 2008, Step In Time took part in a charity evening, put on a performance of 'Cinderella' and had a sleepover at the Centre. They also took part in a dance show as part of the Halewood Culturefest event.

Uniformed Organisations

The uniformed groups of the **Guiding Association** – Rainbows, Brownies and Guides – continued to use the St Nicholas' Centre for their meetings. 2009 is the start of the Centenary of Guiding, so there is much to look forward to.

The **Rainbow** group celebrated their 18th birthday in June with a party attended by Kylie. They also painted 1000 handprints for 'Children in Need' in October.

Brownies enjoyed trips out, including to the Catalyst Museum in Widnes and the Halewood Theatre Club Pantomime. Sadly, the 2nd Halewood Brownies had to cancel their pack holiday due to a lack of

numbers. Brownies enjoy working for and achieving badges ranging from Hostess, to Musician, and Entertainer. Visitors to Brownie meetings included Maureen Davies, who came to test the Brownies for their Artist Badge, and Alan Jewell, who spent an evening teaching some Circus Skills.

After hearing about the church refurbishment during one Church Parade early in the year, the 2nd Halewood Brownies decided they would like to raise some money towards it. They organised and held an Easter Fayre at the St Nicholas' Centre, making enough money to purchase 3 chairs.

In the autumn the Guiding Association issued a national challenge to "Change the World", with 19 different projects to choose from. The 2nd Halewood Brownies democratically decided on "Adopt a Shop" for Save the Children, and worked very hard discussing finance, designing flyers and organising the event. A great amount of goods was very generously given towards the project and the stall is to be held in 2009.

Sadly, after 36 years of running Brownies in Halewood, **Mrs Pam Boffey** is to retire from her role as 'Brown Owl'. We thank Pam for her commitment to and enthusiasm for her work with the many Brownies she has known over the years. We are happy to report that the pack is in safe hands, as two Brownie mothers have offered to take over and undergo the relevant training. Pam says, "I wish Karen and Rachel as much support from parents and the church as I have had, and as much happiness and fun" – and we certainly join her in that.

The **Guides** became involved with raising funds for various causes and held an environmentally friendly fashion show in November.

Uniformed groups for boys – Beavers, Cubs and Scouts (which is also open to girls) – meet at their own premises on Hollies Road. They attend Parade Services at St Nicholas'.

The Summer **Holiday Club** was another successful event for the seventh year running. The Club is led at St Mary's by Margaret Oultram and a team of dedicated helpers who spend many weeks in preparation. This year's Club was attended by a total of around 60 children. As in previous years, the week concluded with a special service at St Mary's, highlighting the teaching and activities that the children had enjoyed throughout the Club..

In December a very successful '**Christmas Extravaganza**' was held at St Mary's, telling the Christmas story in a contemporary setting and style. Some of the Youth Fellowship took part as actors and musicians, alongside other members of both churches and Grandpa George.

Leaflets about all the activities for children and young people in the parish are now available in a folder in each church and the St Nicholas' Centre.

In July, at the HCC meeting, **92 people were authorised to work with children and young people** in the parish. A further 11 people were provisionally authorised as they were going through our Child Protection procedures. As a parish we continue to be blessed with the number of volunteers who are willing to commit their time and energy to working for children and young people. Their dedication and enthusiasm are very much appreciated.

Protection of Vulnerable Adults

CRB checks have been started for those who need to be checked under the POVA policy and the Baptism Sponsors attended a Child Protection course. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, progress on the POVA procedures has been slower than anticipated.

Parish Events and News

Halewood is a busy parish with a cycle of annual events and a number of one-off (and often memorable!) occasions. 2008 saw its fair share of both!

Summer Garden Fete

This annual event, held jointly with Halewood CE Primary school, this year raised £3,264.56, of which £1,100 was given to the School. The fete was opened by Judge Richard McCullagh, Patron of Halewood CultureFest (of which more later) who, with the Mayor and Mayoress of Halewood, also had the unenviable task of judging the children's Fancy Dress. This year saw fine weather (hurrah!) and most stalls reported an increase in takings. Highlights included the Mayor and Mayoress of Halewood, *sans regalia*, cooking hot dogs for the assembled masses. Entertainment was provided by children from Halewood CE and by local dance and majorette groups.

Halewood CultureFest 2008

2008 saw the first annual **Halewood Culturefest**, a programme of events involving local performing arts, environmental, art, historic, literary and sporting activities and groups. CultureFest began at a meeting of Halewood Church Council, with the possibility being raised of us doing something as a local contribution to **Liverpool's year as European Capital of Culture**. Mrs Alison Shacklady, took on the idea with typical enthusiasm and set up a steering group, including representatives of various organisations within the community as well as from the churches of Halewood and Hunts Cross. Halewood CultureFest 2008 soon blossomed – with **Halewood Town Council** coming on board and support from the **Community Foundation for Merseyside** – and expanded from its original week to a packed fortnight.

The CultureFest programme ran from Sunday 22nd June to Sunday 6th July, with a concert by the **Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra** at Halewood Leisure Centre as our headline event. (Those who were there will not soon forget the sight of the Mayoress of Halewood being left to conduct the RLPO!) There were also (free!) concerts featuring the **Knowsley Youth Orchestra**, the **Bentley Operatic Society** and **Knowsley Ladies Singers** – and, as they say, much, much more!

Events and attractions took place at various locations around Halewood including a magnificent **Flower Festival** at St Nicholas'. St Nicholas' also hosted an interdenominational evening service, attended by Judge Richard McCullagh (festival Patron), the Mayor and Mayoress of Halewood, the Mayor of Knowsley, the Lord Lieutenant of Merseyside and the High Sheriff of Merseyside. The service was recorded by **BBC Radio Merseyside** and broadcast the following Sunday morning on the *Daybreak* programme.

Members of St Nicholas' and St Mary's churches played an active role in planning, and leading and coordinating many of the activities during the two weeks of the Culturefest. The whole programme was a good example of local partnership working. Based on the success of the 2008 Culturefest, we plan to run a similar programme for 2009 (sticking to a one week festival this time!).

Parish Magazine

Simon and Sandra Brown, who had edited the magazine for a number of years, announced their intention to stand down because of other commitments. Having done a sterling job for a number of years, we were concerned about how we would replace them. We were very pleased, therefore, when Colin West agreed to become editor from the beginning of 2009. Our thanks go to Simon and Sandra for all their hard work and to Colin for taking on this task.

Halewood Mothers' Union

Halewood Mothers' Union meets regularly at the St Nicholas' Centre, on the first Thursday afternoon of each month, with occasional evening meetings to make it easier for anyone who works during the day to attend. In March we hosted the annual Lady Day service at St Nicholas' and provided a buffet lunch in the Centre afterwards. The day out in June to Kirby Lonsdale soon sold out, and considering the summer we had, the weather wasn't bad either. Sandra Thomas kindly hosted the Garden Party in July, and in September we provided the successful tombola table at the Deanery table sale. Then in November, members attended Cathedral Day. In December we held our Christmas Party, and throughout the rest of the year, members were entertained by some wonderful speakers including three members of the clergy. We also enrolled three new MUscimen (male members of the MU Supporters Club) along with two new members.

The Branch Enrolling Member is Mrs Hazel Royden. Enquiries about MU can be addressed to her at the Parish Office.

Halewood Church Council Members 2008

St Nicholas' District Church Council

Team Rector

The Revd Alan Jewell Chair

Readers

Alison Shacklady
Clive Rigby

Church Wardens

Sandra Thomas
Graham Elliott

Deanery Synod Representatives

Graham Elliott 2008 - 2011
Flo Owens 2008 - 2011

Methodist Circuit Representative

Hazel Royden

Elected Members

Joe Barlow
Jim Beck Deputy Church Warden
Tom Beesley Vice Chair
Mike Cleary
Stan Cargill
Tom Harrison
Karen Hartley
Pat Hatchard Secretary
Debbie Kenwell
Jan Norris
Les Richardson
Dot Taylor
Linda West
Lesley Webb Deputy Church Warden

Two elected posts remained vacant.

Treasurer

Sandra Austin

Parish Bursar

Janet Fleming

Electoral Roll Officer

Les Richardson

St Mary's District Church Council

Team Vicar

Sarah Errington Chair

Lay Worker

Margaret Oultram

Churchwardens

Both posts remained vacant.

Stewards

Mark Harrison.

The second post remained vacant.

Methodist Circuit Representative

Harry Birch

Deanery Synod Representative

Nick Chandler 2008-2011

Elected Members

Sheila Bersin

Carol Blakeborough (from APCM 2008)

Pam Boffey

Sue Chandler Secretary

Elaine Crerar

Bill Crighton Treasurer

Alan Dooley

Gill Dover (until APCM 2008)

Vanessa Harrison

Tina Murrall (until APCM 2008)

Clare Payne (from APCM 2008)

Co-opted members

Margaret Darnell (from 13 May 2008)

Sue Torpey (from 13 May 2008)

Proceedings of St Nicholas' District Church Council

Development Project

Perhaps the most momentous decision that the DCC took was to ask HCC to commit to the proposed second phase of the **St Nicholas' Development Project**. With HCC's agreement, the work began in April and the building was closed for six weeks. During the closure, services were held at the St Nicholas' Centre. Happily, St Nicholas' re-opened in time for **Halewood CultureFest 2008** and played host to a number of CultureFest Events (see above). The **formal opening and dedication of the newly refurbished building**, however, had to wait until October. We wanted to invite **The Ven Ricky Panter, Archdeacon of Liverpool**, to participate in this - because of his support for us and the project - and were therefore dependent on his availability. So it was that our Harvest Festival on 12th October 2008 included thanksgiving for the fruits of all our labours as well as for the fruits of the earth! **The Mayor of Halewood, Councillor Harry Birch** (well known to us as a regular and longstanding worshipper in the parish) officially opened the newly refurbished building and Archdeacon Ricky led us in prayers of thanksgiving and dedication. (He also memorably led us in a song about *Bananas, Monkey Nuts and Grapes...*)

The response to our refurbishment has been overwhelmingly positive: the building has a new 'wow' factor, experienced by many people coming in for the first time who have stood and the back and simply said, "Wow!" Even those who were unsure of the project in its early days have expressed their delight in what has been achieved. We believe that we have retained the best of our heritage and adapted to make the building warmer (both literally and metaphorically) and more welcoming, more comfortable. The refurbishment has allowed many to appreciate again the glories of the building – its William Morris/Burne-Jones windows, the striking roof-timbers – and to enjoy the new, improved heating, lighting, carpeting and seating.

Amongst our many joys are the new chandeliers, designed and crafted to put people in mind of the old chandeliers that had been replaced by newer fittings, which were by 2008 considerably past their sell-by date. We warmly invite anyone who has not yet seen the refurbished building to pay us a visit.

The refurbishment has been financed by sacrificial giving, fund-raising and by seeking grants and loans. The Building Fund-raising group is to be congratulated and commended for their enthusiastic and tireless work. The fact that we have taken out two substantial loans (£15,000 from the Diocese and £60,000 from Lloyds TSB, requiring repayments of £844 per month) to allow us to complete the whole refurbishment project and enjoy the results, means that the church family is committed to sustaining its efforts for a number of years to come. We believe that we are able to do this and are thankful to all who share this vision.

Although he would be the first to say that this is a team effort – something involving the whole church family – we must record our thanks to **Mr Tom Beesley**, who, as chair of the fund-raising group and our project manager, has been at the forefront of this project, from vision to reality.

Other works carried out on behalf of St Nicholas' DCC included temporary repairs to the **church car park**, carried out by Tom Harrison and an extension to the area of the **Garden of Remembrance** for the interment of cremated remains.

Proceedings of St Mary's District Church Council

St Mary's District Church Council's discussions during the year included the following major items:

The replacement of the heating system in Church.

The DCC looked very carefully at the various options available in terms of replacing the underfloor heating system, which had failed in the autumn of 2007. A group visited St Chad's Church in Leasowe on the Wirral to look at the system with which they replaced their underfloor heating several years ago, and came away convinced that we should go down the same route. (See further below).

Encouraging prayer.

The DCC spent some time over various meetings discussing ways in which the prayer life of St Mary's could be encouraged to continue growing. One result is that we have held two evening meetings, during which we have spent time in both fellowship and prayer. We have also started planning some 'Prayer Walking', to take place during 2009, as well as continuing to encourage people in their individual spiritual lives.

In December we held a service entitled '**Christmas Extravaganza**', which was aimed especially at primary school children and their families. It was a great success, with over 100 people attending. We hope to be able to hold similar services on a quarterly basis in the future.

St Mary's DCC takes a particular interest in the provision of **Sunday School and Crèche** for younger members of the church family. Towards the end of the year, we made plans to start a new group on Sunday mornings, for children in school Year 6 and above, as there is a group of them who come to church, but are now too old for Sunday School. The group was due to start meeting in January 2009, but there will be a knock-on effect in that we will no longer be able to provide a separate crèche for the very young children.

We continue our **Missionary Link** with *Helping Hands* in Athens, and our links with *Save the Family* in Flint.

Following the failure of the underfloor **heating system** in church in the autumn of 2007, we moved our Sunday worship into the Care Centre for the months of January to April. This proved to be very successful, as people appreciated the closer fellowship (as well as the warmth!) in the Centre. In the meantime, we decided to have a new infra-red overhead heating system installed in church. Having received a Faculty, the work was carried out in September 2008. The new system gives us much greater flexibility to heat the church at short notice, and also to heat selected areas of the space for smaller meetings.

Deanery and Circuit

HCC has a continuing interest in the issues being faced by both Deanery and Circuit. In 2008 these included some staff changes on the Circuit: sadly, Philip Wren retired on health grounds at the end of May; in September, a probationer Minister, Sally Binymin, was welcomed to the Circuit to cover Childwall and Aigburth churches, and Alan Crump, a URC Minister, took up his post at St James' Woolton. In the meantime, three candidates were accepted by the Circuit to go forward for ordained ministry. Towards the end of the year, proposals concerning the future of the Circuit were under discussion, looking at how to manage the reducing numbers of ordained ministers available.

At the same time, similar discussions were being held in the Deanery, looking towards drawing up a new Deanery Mission Plan. The Deanery clergy spent two days discussing a proposal to go to Deanery Synod in 2009.

St Nicholas' Centre Management Committee

The St Nicholas' Centre is located next door to St Nicholas' Church at 70 Church Road, Halewood, L26 6LA. Originally a children's home, the building was purchased by the church and re-opened as a church Centre in 1995. It now houses our **Parish Office** and provides rooms and resources for church and community groups, such as:

St Nicholas' Junior Church
Rainbows, Brownies and Guides
Monday Fellowship and Wednesday Craft Group
Thursday Morning Coffee Shop (and occasional Fair Trade stall)
Mothers' Union
Vineyard Youth Club

The Centre aims to be self-sufficient and is managed by a Committee which reports to the St Nicholas' District Church Council.

On the 25th February 2008, the Centre was pleased to open a 'quiet room' for prayer and reflection, and for small meetings. The room, to be called '**Nancy's Quiet Room**' was dedicated in memory of Mrs Hannah (Nancy) Hesketh, an active and devoted church member of many years standing who died, at the age of 92, in May 2006. The official opening was performed by Nancy's son Eric, accompanied by other members of the family.

The Centre continues to be used in many varied ways: one of our Brownie packs held an Easter Fayre on Sunday 2nd March and raised £207. The church uses the Centre for a number of fund-raising and social events during the year, including a Christmas Lunch and Christmas Fayre (which raised £1,500) as well as quizzes, a birthday party for our friend Eric, and the occasional 'Murder Night'.

This year the Centre Management Committee was pleased to receive a **grant of £1,000** from Halewood Town Council to purchase 50 new chairs and 6 small square tables.

Maintenance and repair of the Centre continues to be an important but demanding part of our remit: recent years have seen extensive refurbishment to the external areas, including the replacement of all gutters, pipes, fascias and soffits in new UPVC, the repair and re-painting of external woodwork, and the replacement of security and fire alarms.

St Nicholas' Centre: Contact Details

Further information about the St Nicholas' Centre, Halewood, is available from the Parish Office, by email: HalewoodParish@BTConnect.com or telephone: +44 (0151) 487 9965

Postal Address:

The St Nicholas' Centre, 70 Church Road, Halewood, LIVERPOOL. L26 6LA

Other Associated Bodies

Listening Ear (Merseyside)

Listening Ear (Merseyside) is based at the St Nicholas Centre and offers a free, confidential, non-judgemental, reflective listening, counselling and bereavement service for people aged sixteen and over from across Merseyside. The **Butterflies** project offers a service to under-sixteens affected by bereavement and loss.

Listening Ear (Merseyside) is a charity (Charity Registration No. 1117324) and a Company Limited by Guarantee (Company Registration No. 5999650 (England and Wales)). Its *Memorandum and Articles of Association* state that its objective is to provide:

“the relief of persons in Merseyside who are in conditions of poverty, sickness and distress, in particular by the provision of a professional, Christian, caring and confidential reflective listening and counselling service with the purpose of relieving such persons.”

Further information about Listening Ear (Merseyside) is available on its website: www.listeningearmerseyside.org.uk or by telephone: +44 (0151) 488 6648

St Mary's Care Centre

As noted in its own Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31st March 2008,

“St Mary's Care centre is the sole provider of day care services for older people living in Halewood.”

“The main objective of the charity is to provide holistic day care services to older people resident in Knowsley. The centre currently provides day care to approximately 50 service users. The centre is funded by Knowsley Social Services and referrals are made through Halewood social services team.”

“The centre acknowledges the difficulties that older people have in accessing health care services and aims to alleviate these inequalities.”

The Care Centre's *Articles of Association* state that there must be “between four and twenty directors, four of whom, classified as A directors, are nominated and removed by the Parochial Church Council of Halewood (after consultation with Halewood St Mary's Church Council). The directors can also appoint a maximum of three co-opted members for a period to be specified by the Board.”

The Care Centre began offering support to elderly people in Halewood in 1986. Today, its client group of vulnerable, elderly people are collected by minibus and given a hot meal and provided with support, advice and social contact. The Care Centre is open from Monday to Friday, between 9:00am and 4:30pm.

St Mary's Care Centre is a charity (Charity Registration No. 1000849) and a Company Limited by Guarantee (Company Registration No. 2516554 (England and Wales)).

The Trustees' Report for the year ended 31 March 2008, can be found at the Charity Commission's website (www.charity-commission.gov.uk).

St Mary's Nursery

Part of St Mary's Roseheath Childcare, the nursery, based at St Mary's, opened in 1978 and offers care to children from birth to age 5. (The other part of the provision is based at Greengates Community Primary School, Leathers Lane, L26 1XQ).

The Nursery reports to St Mary's DCC and to HCC.

The contact number for the Nursery is: 0151 486 2963

The Nursery's most recent Ofsted report can be found at the Ofsted website (<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/>).

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In Conclusion...

As this report shows, Halewood is a busy and lively parish with plenty of activity. There are many ways in which people can get involved and a report like this can do little more than scratch the surface. In addition to those whose names are included, there are, as always, many more unsung heroes. We are grateful to all who have played their part in the life of the church in this parish and beyond.

We believe we have much to be proud of as we look back on 2008, and we look forward with hope and faith to what lies ahead.

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