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

Annual Report 2007

St Mary's and St Nicholas' serve the town of Halewood within the borough of Knowsley, on the edge of the city of Liverpool. Halewood continues to be a place of great change; having been a small village of about 1000 people in the 1950s, through the creation of council housing to accommodate large shifts of population from Liverpool in the 1960s and '70s, to its current position as a large conurbation with many areas of new owner-occupier housing. (The 2001 Census gave a total population of 22,691.)

St Nicholas' Church is located in the North Ward of Halewood, the older 'village' area. St Mary's is located in the South Ward, that part of Halewood that is designated as Urban Priority Area. The two churches seek together to serve the whole parish, and do so as an ecumenical partnership of Anglican and Methodist traditions. St Mary's is a shared Anglican/Methodist building, whereas St Nicholas' building is solely Anglican. Both churches provide worship and ministry reflecting the two traditions.

The parish relates to the structures of both churches, and is part of the Anglican Deanery of South Liverpool and the Diocese of Liverpool; and of the Methodist South Liverpool Circuit and District of Liverpool.

St Mary's 40th Anniversary Celebrations

The 40th Anniversary celebrations were an important part of the year, and were generally agreed to have been very successful. About 200 people attended a very enjoyable Barn Dance in Hollies Hall on the eve of the Anniversary. The Anniversary service on 11 March 2007 was attended by 166 people. We were very grateful to the Bishop of Warrington and the Chair of the Methodist District for leading our worship on that occasion. Other events organised for the Anniversary included a day of prayer and fasting, and a children's Praise Party, which was led by Doug Horley and his team. 150 children and their carers, most of them local, but some from as far afield as the Wirral in one direction, and Chinley in Derbyshire in the other, spent a fantastic evening in church, enjoying praising and worshipping the Lord together.

The Bishop of Liverpool, whose other commitments had prevented him from attending the service on the Anniversary date itself, came to preach at a United Service at St Mary's in September.

The Halewood Ecumenical Ministry 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 (whom we expect to be 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 and the Team offers services to the Circuit on each quarterly plan. The Church of England still does not yet recognize Methodist Ministers in the same way, but we continue to regard the signing at national level of the Anglican-Methodist Covenant at a celebration on 1 November 2003 as a sign of hope.

The Ecumenical Team has a Coordinator. This role rotates around Team members. 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.

The Revd Colin Critchley, who served as Honorary Curate in the parish over many years, retired from Licensed Ministry on 30th September 2006. Halewood Church Council expressed its gratitude to Colin, on behalf of the parish, with a presentation made at the Covenant Service early in 2007. Although Colin decided not to seek the renewal of his Licence, we are glad to note that he and Jean remain active members of the worshipping community in the parish, and that both continue to participate in the life of church and community in Halewood. In particular, Colin, who was the Bishop's Advisor on Child Protection before his retirement, supports our work with children and young people by offering regular training sessions on Child Protection.

2007 saw a period of relative stability for the Ministry Team, with more continuity and less change than in some previous years. During the latter part of 2007, Mr Clive Rigby, a Reader who has been ministering in Kirby Lonsdale, but who wanted to transfer his Licence to Liverpool Diocese following his retirement from secular work, began attending Team Meetings and services in the Parish, with a view to joining our Ministry Team in due course. We look forward to welcoming Clive formally to the Team during 2008.

The Ministry Team met for regular business meetings on 13 occasions in 2007. We also spent a day together in September, for which the members of the ministry team from St Hilda's Hunts Cross joined us during the afternoon, as well as a Christmas social. In addition to this, the full-time members of the Team usually meet informally once a week, and use the opportunity to catch up with any pressing issues.

Halewood-Hunts Cross 'Cluster'/Ecumenical Relations

As a parish, we 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'. Jane attends meetings of the Halewood Ecumenical Ministry Team, and joins other members of the Team at St Nicholas' on Thursday mornings and on other occasions. We seek to offer support and encouragement across the cluster – as well as cover for holidays and so on – and have again felt this to be mutually beneficial.

In 2007, the churches of the 'cluster', with other churches in Halewood and Hunts Cross, shared a Lent course on spirituality and met together for an open air act of worship and witness on Good Friday.

In 2007, our Confirmation Service was held at St Hilda's, with Bishop Ian Stuart presiding and the Revd Ian Hu preaching. All candidates were Confirmed in both Anglican and Methodist traditions. The service was well-received by all who took part and we were particularly encouraged by the response of those at St Hilda's for whom the ecumenical dimension was new.

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 and is a charity excepted by order from registration with the Charity Commission.

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."

The two churches, St Mary's and St Nicholas', 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.

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.

In 2007, HCC continued to discuss the admission of children to Holy Communion, noting the current policy of the Methodist Conference that baptised children should be welcomed to the Lord's Table. At its meeting on 8th October, Halewood Church Council considered a motion to ask the Bishop's permission to admit to Communion all who have been baptised, regardless of age and without the need for Confirmation. After thought, prayer and discussion which had taken many months, the motion was not carried and our policy remains unchanged. Given the amount of time, energy and resources we have given to this issue, it was felt that we should now leave it aside for some time.

Protection For All

HCC has policies for working with children and vulnerable adults, both of which are reviewed annually. Mrs Gill Dover is our Under 18s Coordinator and oversees our

Child Protection Policy. In January 2007, Mr Martin Bailey was appointed as Coordinator of our policy for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults ('POVA'). During the year, the POVA Policy was written and this was adopted by HCC in October. The main groups of volunteers who will need to be CRB checked under the POVA policy will be St Nicholas' Baptism sponsors, St Mary's Pastoral Team and those who run the Stroke Club.

We are grateful to Gill and Martin for all their work and for taking responsibility for these vital and demanding areas of our work.

Wardens and Stewards

At the APCM on 23rd April 2007, Mrs Dorothy Taylor stood down as Church Warden for St Nicholas', as she had indicated she would do a year previously. Mr Graham Elliott, who had been Deputy Warden at St Nicholas', was elected in her place to serve alongside Mrs Sandra Thomas who was re-elected. St Nicholas' DCC appointed Mr Jimmy Beck as Deputy Warden, and re-appointed Mrs Lesley Webb.

Mr Alan Dooley stood down as Church Warden for St Mary's. The second Warden's post at St Mary's was still vacant. Mrs Gillian Dover also stood down as Steward. Mr Mark Harrison was re-elected as Steward, leaving him the only member of what should have been a four-person team. St Mary's DCC discussed how best to cover the responsibilities of Wardens and Stewards in the circumstances.

Our thanks are due to all our Wardens, Stewards and Deputies for the hard work and responsibilities that they undertake and our best wishes go with those who have decided to stand down.

Parish and Church Treasurers

At the APCM, Mrs Sandra Austin was re-elected as Parish Treasurer. She also continues as St Nicholas DCC Treasurer and Treasurer for the St Nicholas' Centre Management Committee. Mr Bill Crighton was again elected as St Mary's District Church Council Treasurer.

The Treasurers are ably supported by Mrs Janet Fleming as Parish Bursar (re-appointed by HCC in July 2007) and by the District Finance Committees, chaired by Mr Steve Errington (St Mary's) and Mr Tom Beesley (St Nicholas'). Thanks are due to all who take responsibility for the churches' finances.

HCC Secretary

In 2007, Mrs Linda Harnwell stood down as Secretary to HCC and Mrs Clare Payne was appointed in her place. Our thanks go to both of them for making sense of our meetings!

District Church Councils

St Mary's and St Nicholas' Church Councils both have a Standing Committee (required in Anglican law) consisting of the Minister, Wardens and Deputies (at St Nicholas'), Wardens and Stewards (at St Mary's), and the Treasurer. The Standing Committee has power to transact the business of the Council between meetings, subject to the directions of the council.

In addition, the DCCs appoint other committees to further their work in certain areas, namely: Finance, Fabric, Pastoral and Worship. In addition, St Mary's has a Mission and Outreach group, and St Nicholas' has a Health and Safety Committee. Both DCCs have working groups to look at the development of their respective church buildings; and working groups to consider requests for charitable giving which are made to the Councils.

The DCCs meet every two or three months. Their members are elected at the APCM and also serve as members of HCC. There is a convention that those elected will stay in office for 5 years (St Nicholas') or 6 years (St Mary's). It has not always been possible to keep to this convention, with members sometimes being 'persuaded' to stay in office after their term might have finished.

DCC Meetings are normally chaired by the Minister, Lay Chair, or by an elected Vice-chair and proceedings are recorded by Secretaries appointed by the DCC. In 2007, Mrs Pat Hatchard was appointed Secretary to St Nicholas' DCC (and to the St Nicholas' Centre Management Committee) and Mrs Sue Chandler to St Mary's DCC. We are grateful to both of them for their hard work and the efficient service they provide.

Both DCCs may also have a number of co-opted representatives or observers who have interests in particular areas of the life of the parish.

Areas of interest to HCC and the DCCs include the following:

Finance

Financial matters include giving, fees and charges, and the preparation of the accounts and their presentation to the APCM.

Mr Terry Pollard was once again appointed Independent Examiner. We are very grateful to Terry for taking on (voluntarily) this work each year.

Both churches struggle with keeping finances on an even keel: we are doing all we can to increase our income and minimise our expenditure. St Mary's benefited from a 'Giving In Grace' programme; St Nicholas' decided not to follow this course.

Church Fabric

Both churches receive a quinquennial report from their appointed architects. This establishes the procedure required to carry out necessary repairs and maintenance. The architect with responsibility for St Nicholas' is Mr Robin Wolley (formerly of Edmund Kirby) and the architect responsible for St Mary's is Mr Robert Bell of Saunders Bell.

St Nicholas'

St Nicholas' has a traditional parish church building of locally quarried sandstone. The main body of the church was built in 1839, with transepts and tower being added later in the nineteenth century. The building has the problems of any building of its age and construction. The DCC, aware of its responsibilities as stewards of a Grade II listed building, has a development plan for its repair, conservation and refurbishment to ensure that we have a place of worship of which current and future generations can be proud.

In 2007, the building was closed for a three-month period (which included Mothering Sunday and Easter!) to allow Phase 1 of our development plan to be completed. The area at the back of the church was re-ordered giving better access for all and adding a toilet (at long last!) as well as a small utility room. A new oak and glass screen was built to create a welcoming space that can be used by the crèche during services and a comfortable area that can be used for prayers and other meetings. The design enclosed the old church porch (improving security) and was modified to preserve access to the old West Door. On the 8th July 2007, the newly refurbished area was formally opened and dedicated by the Revd Canon Owen Eva, former Rector of Halewood, in the presence of the Mayor of Halewood, Councillor Terry Powell, accompanied by his wife, Councillor Shelly Powell. Several older parishioners were also present, including Mr Frank Baldwin, Mr Tom Taylor (who was largely responsible for the work which originally created a church room in the 1970s) and Mr & Mrs Bill Winstanley.

We are particularly proud of our William Morris/Byrne-Jones windows. In 2007, we continued with the repair, restoration and conservation of our windows, using the firm Design Lights. This process, begun with a faculty granted in 2004 is now nearing completion and the results are there for all to see. Many of our visitors comment on the windows.

St Nicholas' DCC also considers issues concerning the churchyard and the area around the church, including its car park. In 2007, maintenance of the churchyard grass and hedges was once again entrusted to a local firm, ER Landscapes. The DCC has been pleased with the way in which this work has been carried out. We also had the car park cleared and re-surfaced, increasing the spaces available.

St Mary's

St Mary's Church is a flexible, modern, multi-purpose building, which was rebuilt in 1972 following a fire which destroyed the original church building in 1967. The plant houses a Day Nursery for pre-school children and a Day Care Centre for the elderly. St Mary's also has a garden and car park.

Church members are involved in the management of the Day Care Centre and Nursery, both of which have paid staff. Various other community groups use the St Mary's plant during the day and evening throughout the week. St Mary's DCC is concerned to balance the needs of the church itself with that of the Day Centre, the Nursery and other users.

In 2006, St Mary's DCC received its architect's Quinquennial Inspection Report. A significant amount of the work required by the Report has been completed, including the building's guttering. In the autumn of 2007, however, it was discovered that the underfloor heating system in the church had failed, and would have to be replaced. St Mary's continued to worship in Church until the end of the year, but decided that from January 2008, Sunday worship would take place in the Care Centre for the time being.

St Mary's DCC continues to employ a team of gardeners to keep the grounds looking presentable.

Worship

The Worship Committees report directly to their DCCs. They make recommendations on such things as: the pattern of services through the year; the role of music in worship; worship and occasional visitors; worship and children; welcome to worship; Baptism services, etc.

As an ecumenical partnership, we are aware that we have riches to draw on from both the Methodist and Anglican traditions and seek to celebrate both.

Pastoral

HCC is also aware that the Ministry Team is continuing to look at the development of pastoral care in the parish.

Both churches have established Pastoral Committees to consider the ways in which we exercise our care of church members and parishioners. For a number of years, St Mary's has had a Pastoral Care group – church members who have been trained to exercise this ministry. St Nicholas' DCC considered, but did not adopt this model. Pastoral care is exercised through a number of informal networks.

There is a system of passing on prayer concerns through telephone 'circles' and pastoral matters are also shared through an email distribution list.

Evangelism/Outreach

The three churches of the Halewood-Hunts Cross cluster joined with other organisations – including the Town Council – to support a Fun Day at the Hollies field and Hall. Other events, including the Praise Party at St Mary's, had an evangelistic element to them. Much of our 'routine' outreach is done through the 'Occasional Offices' (Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals – particularly at St Nicholas') and through our community involvement (including the two Church Centres and the Nursery at St Mary's).

Work with Under 18s

Work with Under 18s is the responsibility of HCC, and both DCCs take a particular interest in the provision of Crèche, Sunday School (St Mary's) and Junior Church (St Nicholas') for younger members of the church family, and the Vineyard Youth Club, which meets at the St Nicholas' Centre. The Circuit Youth Fellowship meets at St Mary's on Sunday evenings and provides spiritual and pastoral care for the teenagers in our congregations, alongside their peers from elsewhere in the Circuit.

Mrs Gill Dover continues as our Under 18s Coordinator and we are grateful to Gill for her willingness to serve in this way.

2007 was another busy year for all the groups working with children and young people. September saw the birth of a new group for 17 – 21 year olds. This group has grown out of Youth Fellowship and is called **nGage**. All the other groups continued to meet regularly with good numbers attending. The Circuit **Youth Fellowship** enjoyed a weekend in Beddgelert in February, despite the snow. In April, a group of them, together with 3 young people from Elm Hall Drive church, led a holiday club at 'Save the Family' at Plas Bellin. Some of them also went on the Circuit weekend to Garston Park in October.

Vineyard Youth Club had a weekend away in Keswick as well as trips out for activities such as Ten Pin Bowling. **Boss Club**, together with some church members, went to the Empire Theatre to see 'Joseph' as that was who they were looking at in their activity sessions. **JAM Club**, **Mums, Dads and Tots**, as well as the **Step in Time Dance Group** continued to meet regularly through the year.

Both churches continued to offer crèche facilities during their morning services, together with Sunday School or Junior Church for the 4-11 year olds.

The uniformed groups of the Guiding Association continued to use the St Nicholas' Centre for their meetings. The **Rainbow** group are now linked with Speke rather than Woolton and met with other groups for activities. **Brownies** and **Guides** enjoyed trips out, pack holidays and Guide camp.

The children's **Holiday Club** was held for the 6th year and was once again a huge success, with over 90 children registered. Another 'Family Fun Day' was held on Hollies Field in August.

In January, we ran a 'First Response' First Aid course over 2 Saturday mornings which was attended by 19 people, including 3 people from St Hilda's. A training course for young leaders was planned for October, but unfortunately was cancelled at the last minute by the facilitator. We hope to arrange another course in the future.

Simon Edwards left his post as Circuit Youth Worker in October.

In July, at the HCC meeting, 95 people were authorised to work with children and young people in the parish. A further 8 people were provisionally authorised as they were going through our Child Protection procedures. As a parish we are blessed with the number of volunteers who are willing to commit their time and energy for the children and young people. Their dedication and enthusiasm is very much appreciated.

St Nicholas' Centre

The St Nicholas' Centre provides an excellent resource for both church and community. It is used by any number of local groups and activities, and has a busy timetable throughout the week – including Church Council meetings, church and community groups for children and young people, courses for adults, and social and fund-raising events. The Centre has a Management Committee, made up of members from both St Nicholas' and St Mary's churches, which reports to St Nicholas' DCC. The Committee monitors the activities of the Centre and considers the needs of those who work there, as well as the Centre's users and residents. In 2007, the Revd Alan Jewell was Chair of the Committee and Mr Tom Beesley was the Centre Manager.

Mrs Sandra Austin, St Nicholas' Church Treasurer and Parish Treasurer, also acts as Treasurer to the Centre, ably assisted by Janet Fleming, Parish Bursar.

Mrs Barbara Harrington, administrator for both the St Nicholas' Centre and the parish, has her office at the Centre. We owe a debt of gratitude to Barbara, as the one without whom almost nothing else would happen! The Centre also employs a part-time premises officer, Mr William (Bill) Bell. Bill undertakes a variety of tasks for the Centre and church.

Particular issues that the Committee has discussed include matters related to rents and the use of the building to provide residential accommodation, office space and resources for church and community groups.

Listening Ear Merseyside

The St Nicholas' Centre also provides a home to Listening Ear Merseyside (a listening and counselling service). The Parish is proud of its relationship with this charitable organisation, which now provides a resource far beyond its local origins.

In April 2007 Listening Ear Merseyside became a Company Limited by Guarantee, in addition to its charitable status with the Charity Commission. In June 2007, the Butterflies project, which works with children suffering with bereavement or other loss (including the divorce or separation of parents) took over new premises within the St Nicholas' Centre allowing it to offer a much enhanced service. In October 2007, Everton Football Club player Tim Cahill visited the Butterflies project as part of the Premier League's community programme 'Creating Chances'. The visit was featured on SKY TV.

Halewood Church of England Primary School

Halewood CE Primary School is a Voluntary Aided School. The Incumbent is an ex-officio member of the Governing Body, and HCC appoints other Foundation Governors from both churches. Mr Tom Beesley is Chair of the Governing Body. Mr David Smith was appointed Headteacher in September 2005.

In 2007, the Governors continued to support the school as it built on the OFSTED report of 2005, which found that the school was **'outstanding' in every area of its work.**

The School saw the completion of a new Foundation unit and a new entrance, which improves security by controlling access to school premises. Areas of the school playground were also developed.

The Governors of Halewood CE act as trustees for a charity, The School Teacher's House Fund, which uses money raised from the sale of the said house to benefit the children of the school.

In addition, the churches are involved in most local schools, with members serving as Governors, working as teaching and non-teaching staff, participating in 'friends' groups and in other capacities.

Mothers' Union

Mothers' Union is a Christian organisation with more than 3.6 million members in 78 countries worldwide. Membership is open to all baptised Christians (male and female, married or not, and not only to mothers!) who support the Aims and Objectives of the MU, namely to support married and family life.

The Halewood Branch of the MU meets on a monthly basis, usually at the St Nicholas' Centre at 2:00pm on the first Thursday of the month. Meetings are held to support members and to encourage them to do what they can to promote the Aims and Objectives of the MU. Meetings usually include prayer and worship, and often feature an invited speaker who will talk on a subject of interest to the members. The Halewood branch of MU also holds occasional evening meetings to encourage those (often younger women) who are not able to attend during the day. The July meeting usually takes the form of a summer garden party at the home of one of the Branch members. In addition, MU members usually have a trip to a local place of interest.

The meetings immediately before Christmas and Easter are usually Communion services at St Nicholas', followed by a social get-together over refreshments at the St Nicholas' Centre.

Members of Halewood MU also attend and support events within the Deanery and Diocese.

As part of its membership, MU includes those not able to attend meetings, referred to as 'Indoor Members'. The Branch aims to support these members in different ways.

MU is committed to supporting a number of projects and regularly fund-raises for concerns close to the hearts of its members. The parish's Mums, Dads and Tots group is an MU initiative which aims to support families with young children. MU members usually run a stall at the parish summer Garden Fete.

MU occasionally honours men in the parish by enrolling them as members of the Mothers' Union Supporters Club. These men – known as 'MUSCLe Men' are given a membership card and a tie, which may be presented to them at a service in church. Whilst wearing the tie or carrying the membership card, MUSCLe men are entitled to receive a free cup of tea from any MU member!

Other meetings

HCC and the DCCs receive reports from other meetings, including those of the Anglican Deanery and Diocese, and the Methodist Circuit and District. The Ecumenical Ministry Team routinely keeps HCC informed of its activities.

Risk Management

HCC has a Child Protection Policy which outlines the roles and responsibilities of those who work with children and young people, and the legal requirements involved in such roles. Mrs Gill Dover, Under 18s Coordinator, is responsible for monitoring the policy and reporting to HCC.

The policy also includes a statement about the need for training for those who work in this capacity. Training sessions are provided on a regular basis and those who work with children and young people are also informed of training provided by other bodies (including Churches Together in the Merseyside Region).

As well as our Under 18s Coordinator, the parish is able to call upon the services of former Honorary Curate, the Revd Colin Critchley, who, until December 2004, was Diocesan Adviser on Protection for All.

HCC has a Policy for working with Vulnerable Adults. Mr Martin Bailey, POVA Coordinator, monitors this and reports to HCC.

The Parish is still working on devising a Health and Safety Policy for other areas of work and buildings, including statements about insurance and areas of compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act. St Nicholas' DCC established a Health and Safety Committee which has begun the work of implementing a Health and Safety policy within the life of St Nicholas'.

Grant Making Policy

Both churches aim to give 10% of their income to charity, but this ideal is not always met. Each church has a group which meets to consider requests for grants (the Mission and Outreach Committee in the case of St Mary's) and to make recommendations to the DCC. Other ad hoc requests may be considered by the DCC where appropriate.

Reserves Policy

The Council considers that it is appropriate to hold sufficient reserves in the General Unrestricted Funds of the two churches to cover at least three months' worth of operational expenditure.

Investment Policy

All non-operational assets, with respect to the General Fund, are held in deposit accounts with either clearing banks or the Central Board of Finance of the Church of England. The assets of the Endowed Funds are held in various investment and deposit funds with the Central Board of Finance.