

## REPORT OF THE 108<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE WOMEN'S LEAGUE

The 108<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Women's League was held on Thursday 31st March 2016 at the Unitarian General Assembly meetings, held at the Birmingham Hilton Metropole Hotel with 61 people present.

President Joy Foster opened the meeting with the Women's League Prayer about friendship and service and the hymn "Do you hear". Apologies were received from Eunice Smith, Mary Wightman, Jean Inkson, Ann Harrison, Ann Peart, Mary Horn, and Ann Jones.

A presentation of a gift of appreciation was made to Barbara and John Clifford who have edited the League Letter since 2011. Joy and Tony Foster have agreed to take over as editors of the League Letter later this year.

The minutes of the 107<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting were agreed, and Susan Holt, Treasurer, presented the Accounts and reported an income of £5,869 and an expenditure of £4,857 with an excess of income over expenditure of £1,012. The Secretary, Susan Wildman, reported that she had attended all Central Committee meetings and the Finance and General Purposes committee, has produced reports and minutes, and information on constitutional change sent to branch secretaries. Altrincham and Dukinfield W.L. branches have closed. Celia Cartwright has produced an A.5 League Annual. The project for 2015-6 was Unitarian College, Manchester. The project for 2016-17 is NDCS (The National Deaf Children's Society), and for 2017-18 will be Prostate Cancer UK. Further suggestions are needed for fundraising projects in future years. £1,000 has been donated to Dr. Williams' Library, where the W.L. archives are stored. Mary Wightman organized another successful rally at Whalley Abbey in October. A card was sent to the staff at Whalley Abbey as the lower floor including the Chapel and dining room were flooded in the winter. The next rally will be at Hinsley Hall, Leeds 18-19<sup>th</sup> October, Mary Wightman has the booking forms. Mary Wightman is assembling photos of past presidents, and has a list of missing photos, any help would be appreciated. Barbara and John Clifford are stepping down as editors of the League Letter and this will be taken over by Joy and Tony Foster. Sheena Bluer also wishes to stand down at Memorial Fund treasurer sending gifts to ill or bereaved members or for celebrations. There was a moment of remembrance for friends who have died including Margaret Evatt, a member of the Scottish District. Thanks to Joy for her Presidential year.

The President proposed that the Accounts and Secretary's report should be adopted, this was agreed. A vote of thanks was given to the retiring President, Joy Foster, by Sheilah Stott with warm appreciation of Joy's warmth and compassion and all her work during her year as President, and agreed by the meeting. Joy replied that she was glad to have been of service, and had many happy memories of the year which has gone so quickly. She has thoroughly enjoyed the experience and the warm welcomes she has had. Of all the meeting houses, chapels and churches and the churches she has seen, the building she liked best was Ullet Road Church, Liverpool, followed by Frenchay chapel, Bristol. Janet Poole has had a year as vice-president and on Central Committee, and Joy wished her every success to as President for the coming year. Joy thanked her fellow officers for their support.

Judy Hague proposed a vote of thanks to the officers and ex-officio officers, and Barbara Clifford proposed the election of Officers for 2016/17. These are:

President – Janet Poole, N.E. Lancs. District  
President-Elect – Rev. Celia Cartwright  
Past President – Joy Foster, S.E. Wales District  
Hon. Secretary – Susan Wildman, Western District  
Hon. Treasurer – Susan Holt, Manchester District  
Hon. Fellowship Secretary – Joyce Thompson, N.E. Lancashire District  
Jean Bradley expressed thanks to the auditor Wyatt, Morris, Golland of Rochdale.

A constitutional change was proposed by Susan Wildman and seconded by Susan Holt "That a member be elected to Central Committee every February to serve for three years. Proposals to come from District, Branches and Individual members and sent to the Secretary before the February Central Committee Meeting. Each name to have a proposer and seconder and candidates to be asked if they want their names to go forward." This was agreed and will be added to the Constitution.

The President Joy Foster presented a cheque for £6,000 from the League Project for 2015-6 to Revd. Alex Bradley, Principal of Unitarian College, Manchester. Alex received this with thanks.

Outgoing President Joy Foster presented the President's badge of office and necklace to Janet Poole and in turn Janet presented the President-elect's badge to Revd. Celia Cartwright.

The new President introduced the speaker, Louisa Moorhouse from the National Deaf Children's Society (ndcs), the fundraising project for 2016/17. Louisa spoke with a slide show, and said that it is now 10 years since screening for deafness in newborn babies was introduced. There are 45,000 deaf children in the United Kingdom, 4 deaf babies are born every day, and 90% are born to hearing parents, this can be caused by medication, genetics, premature birth, illness or infection. She explained what 'ndcs' does, including free family weekends when a child is newly diagnosed with hearing loss, before primary school and before secondary school. There is also a purple roadshow bus which travels the country. Louisa introduced Atia Ahmed, the mother of two deaf children, and she spoke about her oldest child, now aged 7 and in primary school, and how the child's deafness had affected her and her family, and how 'ndcs' had helped them. Unfortunately there was no time for questions. For more information see [www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)

The meeting closed with words by the newly installed President Janet Poole thanking Richard Merritt for playing the piano, and Margaret Hill for making a quilt which was being raffled to start off the fund raising project for the National Deaf Children's Society. The meeting ended singing the hymn "Here, I am, all alone, can't do this job on my own".

Margaret Hill