

Bridge Builders

Christian Trust

connecting children with faith, hope & love



“Let the children come to me...”

Looking back to 2015:

Chair of Trustees' Annual Report

Project updates

Finance Summary 2014/15

Looking forward to 2016:

Director Peter Gordon

Friends of Bridge Builders

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Registered Charity number: 1088885

Patrons:

Right Revd Paul Bayes, Bishop of Liverpool
Revd Teddy Faure-Walker, Deputy Lieutenant of Hertfordshire
Cllr Sharon Taylor, O.B.E.

Trustees:

Revd Don Dowling (Chair), **Revd Richard Byass**, **Revd Canon Duncan Campbell**,
Mrs Jo Simson, **Mr Albert Binns** (Clerk)

Honorary Director:

In May 2015, after a long vacancy, the Trustees were delighted to appoint
Mr Peter Gordon as Honorary Director.

Peter is a member of St Nicholas Church & Churches Together in Stevenage. He is a highly experienced businessman having worked for both major international companies and smaller organisations often in the role of Chairman.

Project Managers:

Alexandra Horlock – ExploRE (assemblies, Christmas Journey, Easter Journey)
John Forster – Mentoring and Pastoral Support (MAPS), Whale Tales
Tracy Plumpton – Launchpad

Administrative Team:

Justine Hobbs – Finance and Administration Manager
Janice Hawketts – IT Support and Finance Administrator
Charlotte Prior – General Administrator

Throughout the year **16** Bridge Builders volunteers provided invaluable assistance in the Resource Centre and worked alongside Project Leaders in the schools.

Bridge Builders Christian Trust is an Associate Member of **Churches Together in Stevenage**. Over **100** volunteers from partnering churches were involved with The Christmas Journey and The Easter Journey.



*Mayor Howard Burrell visiting Longmeadow Evangelical Church,
one of three churches hosting The Christmas Journey in 2015.*



Bridge Builders Annual Report 2015

Don Dowling, Chair of Trustees

Dear friends,

Something to celebrate: Like many other charities 2015 has been a difficult year for funding, but our staff and volunteers have exceeded our expectations in the quality of their services and in their commitment to our vision; we are profoundly grateful to all of them. One child's spontaneous response to our Christmas Journey presentation says it all, "awesome!"

Our grateful thanks go to all Bridge Builders for all their support, and not least to Toby Purnell, our longest serving trustee, who retired after 14 years' service. We also said goodbye to Amanda Bryant our Fundraiser and Administrator who is moving to Lincolnshire. She will be much missed. However, just before Christmas Charlotte Prior joined us to strengthen our Admin Team.

This year we welcomed Peter Gordon as our Honorary Director, and his enthusiasm, vision and expertise has had a profound impact already on the present and future direction of Bridge Builders. One visitor to Bridge Builders described our work and organisation as one of Stevenage's "best kept secrets." We are determined that it should be a secret no longer. As part of that aim we have sought to raise our profile by expanding our list of patrons. We are so pleased that Councillor Sharon Taylor, O.B.E. and Revd. Teddy Faure-Walker have agreed to join us as patrons. Another initiative launched by Sheila Smith, our former director, is to form 'Friends of Bridge Builders' who will support us by prayer, giving and fundraising. So we look forward to exciting times in 2016 and beyond.

Finally, my grateful thanks go to my fellow trustees and to Arthur Binns, the clerk to the trustees who keeps us on the rails! May God bless you all, but most importantly the children, schools and churches whom we seek to serve.

Don



*If you believe Bridge Builders Christian Trust has a significant role to play in Stevenage and the surrounding area and would like to commit to supporting its ongoing work please complete a 'connecting children with faith hope and love' form and become a **Friend of Bridge Builders**. Every gift of time,*

talent and money benefits the children and encourages the team with the knowledge that their work is valued and appreciated.

The National debate continues but *Our vision is that every child within our community will have opportunities to explore the values of the Christian faith, so that they may look forward with hope and confidence, as they experience this love in action.*

Looking back to 2015 – our news in brief

Regular **assemblies** were delivered in **10** schools. A new programme devised, in response to requests from schools, addressed British Values: democracy, respect, rule of law, tolerance.



Quote from St Margaret Clitherow’s website:

“This afternoon our friends from Bridge Builders, Jo and Alex, came in to deliver an assembly about mutual respect and respecting Jesus. Don’t forget the one step challenge we were set, based on the ideas you came up with, to not be mean, to be kind and the golden rule, to treat others as you would like to be treated!”

How can I help? Pray for the staff and pupils in your local schools and the Bridge Builders assembly team (See map on back page)

Year 2 pupils and staff from **18** schools were inspired by storytellers in costume, craft activities and, of course, the presence of a real baby at **The Christmas Journey!**

Year 2 Class teacher Longmeadow Primary School:

“The children were excited and the trip had an air of mystery for them. I had asked them that morning what Christmas meant and was relieved that they said it celebrated Jesus’ birth. This event will have deepened their understanding.”



The purchase of screens and more authentic looking props enhanced **The Easter Journey**. A detective notebook proved popular with the staff and Year 6 pupils from **27** schools.



Class teacher Martins Wood:

“Some children prior to arriving thought it would be ‘boring’ I could tell that they really enjoyed the experience and moving between the stations gathering the evidence.”

Following her visit to The Easter Journey Lisa Kassapian, RE Adviser wrote...

The Bridge Builders team continues to provide high quality visits for many primary schools in the locality...The Herts SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) would like to express their gratitude to the Bridge Builders Team for their work in continuing to enhance RE and Collective Worship in Hertfordshire schools.

How can I help? Donate £50 for 12 children to experience The Christmas Journey
Donate £5 per month for 20 children to take part in The Easter Journey



Two local churches supporting the ExploRE programme have extended their partnership with Bridge Builders to host a mid-week club – **Launchpad** - where they can openly share the good news of Jesus and proclaim the Love of God in a real and relevant way that is fun and engaging. Bridge Builders resources and supports teams at St Hugh and St John and St Peter’s Churches.

In Chells this also provided an opportunity to open a Parent’s Lounge where parents were offered support and received hospitality.



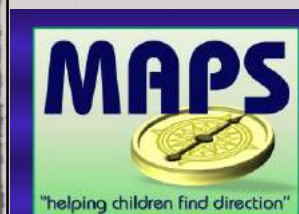
How can I help? Pray that grant applications will be successful and that a new club will be launched in another area of town.



Life brings many challenges. **Whale Tales**, a whole day event for Year 5 classes based on the story of Jonah, helps them understand some of their feelings and provides strategies to cope in a safe way. This year our volunteer base has increased enabling us to deliver **4** Whale Tales. Additional funding would mean we could offer new schools their first event at reduced cost to show the quality and value of the day.

How can I help? There are a wide range of opportunities to volunteer help with Bridge Builders’ activities on a regular or ad hoc basis. Do not hesitate to get in touch if you have time to spare.

40 children, affected by a range of issues at home including divorce, addiction, mental health problems, domestic violence and bereavement, benefited from the skilled help the Mentoring and Pastoral Support (**MAPS**) team provide.



Project manager, John Forster reports:

“We are being seen more and more in the schools in which we work as professional support workers. We are involved in team meetings about the children and our recommendations are taken seriously. Often we see parents of the children and offer them a listening ear and helpful advice too.”

Year on year the requests for this service outstrip the capacity of the team but the number of volunteers is steadily growing and a source of sustainable funding is being sought to employ an additional project leader to work in new schools.

How can I help? Donate £10 per month for a 6 week MAPS programme for a child



Looking to the future

Peter Gordon, Honorary Director

I feel extraordinarily blessed to have been appointed Honorary Director of Bridge Builders Christian Trust and privileged to have joined such a fantastic team of enthusiastic, determined, and fully committed people.

This team and their predecessors have created a wonderful organisation which provides an invaluable service to local schools. All are inspired by their personal Christian faith, are fully committed to the aims of the Trust, and work tirelessly.

Recent years have seen a reduction in some services offered because of funding shortfalls but Bridge Builders Christian Trust is here for the long term. Currently we are in the process of setting a plan for the next few years which will ensure our future sustainability. Our intention is to continue providing all existing services at the highest quality level, and to find the funding, staffing (including volunteers), partners and other resources needed to increase the volume of service, and number of children these services will reach.

More time and energy will be given to grant applications. We will be requesting payment for some of our services at subsidised prices, and introducing some high profile funding events (e.g. the Golf Day event which raised £1,300 in September 2015). "Friends of Bridge Builders" will be keeping in contact and working with our many generous donors and special event organisers.

We will be strengthening the resilience of our organisation by developing succession plans and appointing committed deputies (paid and volunteer) for some of our Core Leadership Team. One of the potential benefits of this will be that we will be able to extend the number of schools and children that we reach, as well as having trained people in place to take over when existing staff members, in time inevitably, have to move away.

In addition Bridge Builders will emphasise the multi-denominational dimension of the Trust by adding trustees, patrons and partners from a wide range of Christian churches; continuing to maintain strict controls over spending and activities, and maintaining the minimum cash reserve required by the Trustees. As required by Government legislation, Bridge Builders will introduce a Workplace Pension Plan in 2016.

Finally I would like to thank all those who help Bridge Builders in its important task; the Trustees, our employees, the ministers of churches in Stevenage and beyond, people who volunteer, those who support us financially, either as individuals or through their churches, those who spread the word of what Bridge Builders does and seeks to do, and those who support us in prayer. Thank you for everything you do to help us in this task, a task which must be one of the most important Christian tasks today.

Accounts

Income	2015	2014
Donations	27,966	31,652
Gift Aid	3,116	4,087
Activities	26,287	29,184
Total Income	57,370	64,923

Expenditure	2015	2014
Staffing Costs	50,469	48,251
Property Costs	4,910	4,200
Office Expenses	3,212	6,481
Legal & Professional	3,442	3,648
Cost of Goods Sold	5,209	3,885
Total Expenditure	67,242	66,464
Surplus / (Deficit)	(9,873)	(1,542)

Income and Expenditure (£) for the Year Ended 31 August 2015



Assets	2015	2014
Cash	29,739	42,139
Stock	-	-
Prepayments	138	15
Sundry Debtors	1,868	2,277
	31,745	44,431

Current Liabilities	2015	2014
Creditors	60	795
Receipts in Advance	131	2,210
Net Assets	31,554	41,427

Represented by General Fund

Balance Brought Forward	41,427	42,969
Surplus / (Deficit) for the Year	(9,873)	(1,542)
Balance Carried Forward	31,554	41,427

Sincere thanks to:

Herts SACRE, St Alban's Diocesan Board of Finance, Stevenage Community Trust, All Saints Church Hertford, Bunyan Baptist Church, Churches Together in Stevenage, Grace Community Church, Holy Trinity Church, Holy Trinity Church Hempton, Longmeadow Church, Luton Christian Bookshop, Oak Church, Sirius Digital Solutions Ltd. St Hugh & St John's Church, St Martin's Church Knebworth, St Mary's Church Graveley, St Mary's Church Shephall, St Nicholas Church, St Peter's Church, Trinity Church Knebworth and individual donors for your generous financial support.

In **2015** Bridge Builders Christian Trust was privileged to work with pupils and staff representing **31** local primary schools. **9** churches hosted special events.

