

Parish of Christ Church Ainsworth



Diocese of Manchester
Deanery of Bury and Rossendale

Annual Report Volume 2: Uniformed Organisations, Groups and Committees for the Year Ended March 2025

Vicar: Vacancy

***Celebrating, encouraging, proclaiming and supporting faith, hope and love in Jesus
Christ our Lord...
..... by helping people throughout the community to grow in faith, to love God with all their heart, soul, mind
and strength, and their neighbours as themselves.'***

Ainsworth Scout Group Annual Report for April 2024-March 2025

During the year we have had several changes within the group, and it has proved to be another successful year. The annual census shows that we continue to have large numbers of Young People in each of our sections with waiting lists in Beavers, Cubs and Scouts and growing numbers in Explorers. Over 100 young people are in the Church Hall most Friday evenings – just listen for the noise if you pass by.

The Explorer group now share their meetings with the whole district, meeting at Ainsworth one week and at District Headquarters the next. This allows them a wider variety of tasks. There have been bronze, silver and gold awards presented at various times during the year.

It is good news that we now have a new Akela – Suzanne is a qualified leader running both Rainbows and Brownies as well as being a helper in our Scouting section. Gwen continues in the role of Baloo.

It was a great time for the Scout / Explorer trip abroad. In July / August 2024 they visited Adelboden in Switzerland and had a great time completing a wide variety of activities. Fund raising is already taking place for the trip to Denmark in 2027 with the original “Legoland” site a number 1 trip planned on the itinerary.

Ian Watts, our treasurer of many years, died in December and the group decided to complete a sponsored walk for Bury Hospice who cared for him. Along with ‘Just Giving’ pages from his family we raised almost £4,000 for the Hospice – thanks to all who supported the event.

Ainsworth Scouters.

12th Radcliffe Guides Annual Report to March 2025

With the last Brownie moving into Guides at Easter 2024, we are now wholly a Guide unit. We have maintained a steady number of about 18 girls in the unit, most of whom join from Brownies, but some are new to Girlguiding. With the support of 5 dedicated leaders and some young leaders, we provide girls aged 10 to 14 with the opportunity to experience a wide range of activities and to develop their key skills.

Activities include craft, cooking, sport and games, as well as considering wider social issues such as the environment, and more personal ones such as how to stand up to bullying and internet safety. As they are older, the Guides take a more active role in the planning and delivery of the Guide programme than they did when they were Brownies.

With more things planned, including a sleepover, we are looking forward to the next 12 months.

Leaders, 12th Radcliffe Guides.

16th Radcliffe Brownies – Annual Report to March 2025

The group has 23 brownies aged 7-10, 2 young leaders and 5 adult leaders. We meet every Thursday in Ainsworth Church & Community Hall.

In the past year we have given out 4 gold awards and lots of bronze awards also.

We attended the pantomime in the village this year. We also took a trip to Meadowcroft alpacas which the girls loved. We’ve done some community work in the village, litter picking and helping on the Delph.

Each year we work towards interest badges and skills badges as a pack and add in a couple of fun challenge badges. A favourite this year was the castaway adventures challenge and our bake-off badge.

We ran a human fruit machine at the church fair, ran the cafe at another event and have attend church parade throughout the year. We also have contributed to a harvest display in the church and the Christmas tree festival which is held at Ainsworth Methodist Church.

We love being a part of the church community and are grateful for all the support we get from the church and village and of course from the volunteer leaders - it means we can continue to thrive.

Yours in Guiding

16th Radcliffe Brownie Leaders

Churchyard Team

The routine over the year at the churchyard remains the same – mowing in spring and summer, leaf collecting in winter, interrupted by the beautiful display of flowering snowdrops then crocuses then daffodils and bluebells. This year we collected 700+ 120L bags of leaves to clean the churchyard – it takes some doing. So, anyone who fancies a morning's exercise would be more than welcome to join us.

The team is a little different to last year. We welcomed one new member – Joyce – so that we are usually between six and eight in the group on a Wednesday. As with last year, only three of those are below retirement age. We have been greatly helped by Holly – a Year 11 student from Canon Slade who lives near the church. She approached us with her mum to ask if she could help maintain the churchyard for the “service” element of her Duke of Edinburgh silver award. She has spent every Saturday morning since the beginning of December clearing leaves from different parts of the yard. We hope that this might lead to more young people offering their help in the same way in the future.

Continuing to support the ecological efforts of the Church, we produce our own organic compost which we use in the churchyard on a three yearly cycle of composting, leaving leaves to break down and then using around the church yard. We have to empty the oldest section each year to create the pile of compost, and to give space for the next lot of leaves. This is done the old way – spades and wheel barrows. It is likely that in future at some point, we will have to get mechanical help on this given the capacity of those in the group. If anyone wants to buy compost, if they bring a bag we will fill it on a Wednesday morning at a reasonable cost.

The area at the far end of church (near the compost heaps) has been used as a dump for grave spoils for a while, and also for branches. It has become unkempt. As Holly has done such a good job over many weeks with leaf cleaning, it has given us some time ahead of mowing. We have been digging it out, and pushing that area of spoil back, levelling off the land. It looks much neater now, and we will be sowing grass seed there to take back lawn that had been lost to the spoil.

The churchyard, due to its age, is seeing a lot of sinkage and as a result we have had to dig up turf from many graves and back fill them. Each grave takes about an hour, so again very time consuming, and many still need to be done. We do what we can in the given time, but people must appreciate that we are volunteers; if an area is untidy, we will get to it - in time. It would be helpful if people putting flowers on graves, if they are able, could also spend a little time and keep the area around their own grave tidy – moving dead flowers and leaves when the situation arises and digging over the soil on non-grassed graves. This is rarely done currently.

The churchyard team have also checked the tower regularly for leaves, and kept the roof area clear. We have been able to avoid the drains getting blocked through diligence on this. In addition, Lesley fixed the church bell after the rope had come off.

We still clean a significant number of gravestones, the cost of which is £30 per year, and offer a service for putting flowers on graves each month, at Christmas and special anniversaries etc. Anyone interested can contact myself to arrange this.

We are aware that the back gate area remains a problem when it rains and have tried to alleviate that with flags and soil. It remains an issue, but we simply haven't got the people and equipment to sort the issue out. We need a digger that can help dig a trench outside the gates, which we can then fill with gravel as a sink. We know how to resolve it. but we need help to do it.

The paths around the churchyard are in need of repair. For some this probably means new gravel; for the back path, it will need new tarmac as there are two areas which need attention.

Finally, just 'a big thank you' to the team we have got, who turn up in all weathers, and I think do an amazing job to keep the church yard the way it is.

Jan Hayes – on behalf of the Church Yard Team.

16th April 2025.

Christ Church Ainsworth Mothers' Union
Annual Branch Report for 2024
Presented for the APCM 27th April 2025

At the start of 2024 we had 10 members in the branch, plus 1 member of the Indoor Members Prayer Circle (IMPC).

We met together in the Church Hall on the first Tuesday of the month 10 times during 2024 for various activities.

All meetings start with worship and sometimes there is a longer and more formal style of service. At our Easter meeting, we used the MU Thursday Prayers taken from the MU Manchester, YouTube recording from 2023.

Two meetings were 'All Members Meetings' when we discussed the programme, members expressed ideas, and opinions and information was passed on. These take the format of the Committee meetings and are very well received.

We had 7 meetings, on the third Tuesdays, at local coffee houses or hostelrys and enjoyed our Summer Lunch and Christmas Celebration at the Rose and Crown. We spent one afternoon visiting our Indoor Member in her Care Home and were pleased to note that she had been receiving current communications from London and Manchester. Another visit had been planned for November to include a Service of Holy Communion but had to be cancelled due to the inclement weather.

The Branch was represented at the Archdeaconry Festival on August 9th at St Maxentius in Bolton Deanery, and at the Deanery Advent Carol Service at Canon Lewis Hall, Holcombe.

We also had representation at Spring and Autumn Council with the Manchester Diocesan MU AGM being immediately preceding the latter.

We observed the Wave of Prayer in our own homes, using the leaflet that was provided by the Diocese.

We were glad to take part in the Mothering Sunday Service in March, providing the readers, intercessors, lay assistance, and providing and distributing Mothering Sunday Cards. These were also given out at Midweek Praise, at the 8.00am Service and at Homes where Revd. Elaine would be visiting.

16 Days of Activism was the subject when we were invited to have the 'Sermon slot' at the Morning Service on the 24th November. We also introduced the MU RISE UP Campaign and explained how the branch was hoping to get involved and achieve our Bronze Level Award.

After the service, we distributed literature about these subjects and gave everyone a purple lapel ribbon to represent their support for Ending Gender Based Violence. We took a retiring collection and raised nearly £100 to spend on items for Fortalice refuge in Bolton and Bury.

We were pleased to welcome Tricia Stokes, our Deanery Leader to that Service to present Enid Horrocks with her Certificate marking 60 years of membership of Mothers' Union. That's not just a simple membership as Enid has been, and still is, ACTIVE in many positions at Branch and Deanery level. We congratulate Enid and thank her for her service and loyalty.

We would like to put on record, our thanks to Revd. Debra, the Church Wardens and the PCC for supporting our efforts for this Campaign.

Members have been very supportive of projects throughout the year. We held a tea and cake afternoon to raise funds for the 'Make a Mother's Day' appeal and Fortalice. We supported the Summer of Hope Appeal, and some members have made individual contributions to other Mothers' Union appeals throughout the year.

We were saddened to learn of the death of Jean Clifford on June 10th 2024; Jean has been a member for many years and was generous in her support of our many activities and appeals.

At the end of 2024, we had 10 members, including 1 member of the IMPC.

We thank God for the guidance and blessings that we have received in 2024 and pray that we can build on these foundations in 2025.

The Committee

Social Committee

There are six members of the Social Committee, all of whom are also volunteers at ABC. This enables the exchange of ideas, discussions and meetings to take place when matters arise, rather than having set meeting dates. Committee members do not have specific roles on the Committee but take on any of the tasks when required.

The Committee plans, advertises, organises and coordinates the Church Spring and Christmas fairs, as well as the McMillan Coffee Morning which takes place annually in September. As the Committee runs most of the stalls at the fairs the links with ABC have proved to be invaluable, with many of the parents and carers donating items to stalls and attending the events with their children. Last Christmas, some of the grandparents at ABC made a very generous offer to the Social Committee to design, create and set up a grotto for Father Christmas at the Christmas fair. This proved to be a big attraction and contributed to the overall success of the event.

The McMillan Coffee Morning always takes place on a Friday morning, which clashes with ABC's usual slot. Once again, the links between ABC and the Social Committee help to facilitate the success of the event. Whilst ABC doesn't take place in its usual format, a side room in the Church Hall is always set up with toys and books available so that parents and children from ABC wishing to attend the Coffee Morning can make use of it if they wish, thus encouraging some to come along who perhaps otherwise wouldn't do so.

All of the events run by the Social Committee continue to be popular and successful.

Kate Russell on behalf of the Social Committee.

ABC Report for APCM 2025

ABC First Steps, Parent / Carer and Toddler group have continued to meet on Friday mornings during the school term time. We have 9 staff volunteers, each having a specific activity within the group. However, we can all adapt to cover each other's activities if the need arises.

Between 15 and 25 children, aged newborn to 4 years, and their families have enjoyed the sessions, which consist of free play with supervised craft work available. This is followed by a short act of worship before activity songs and rhymes, mostly chosen by the children themselves. Those leading the activities have had to keep up to date with the words and actions of today's young world and both parents and children participate enthusiastically. Light, age-appropriate refreshments are served before a closing session of songs and rhymes.

We continue to sell toast at refreshment time and send the money from this to chosen charities supporting children. In 2024, we supported Winston's Wish, Fortalice (to be spent on the children of families who were in residence) and Porch boxes who needed funds to buy children's beds. We continue our tradition of sending our total takings on "Children in Need" day to their appeal. We support the Church by funding several stalls and various activities at both the Spring and Christmas Fairs.

The ABC team.

Ainsworth Church & Community Hall, Chairperson's Report

AGM REPORT – CHAIR ACCH – 17/04/25

The building usage is very good with groups in every day. We have had some new groups including Chair Yoga on Wednesdays which seems to be proving popular. All evenings are occupied, with church connected groups and outside groups providing a vital service for the community for people of all ages.

The building has also been used for local election voting in May last year which brought in extra income.

There have been several after-funeral gatherings with donations given by all families involved.

Last October and December we tried two Artisan Markets hosted by 'Evergreen Events' from which the feedback was that the stall holders loved the venue, and the Refreshments put on by ACCH committee was a huge success. Further events for April just gone and October are also booked. We have also pencilled in an Artisan Food Market for December 2025 which is something different nearer to Christmas.

The building has also been booked for private parties again adding to the income. All these extra events help us to keep rents as low as possible and keep the building in a good state of repair. My thanks go to all committee members (and others) for helping to staff these events and for making cakes which are all donated.

Secondly, the upkeep of the building continues to need a lot of hard work, and time to keep it up to standard. Inside the building has again been decorated over last summer - thanks to

Jan Burrow for all her time and effort with this. The building looks fantastic. At the same time Ian has spent a significant number of hours in ACCH keeping the building ticking over. Much of his work we don't actually see – from updating electrics to issues with heating, woodwork etc. This work however is essential and very much appreciated. It must be noted though that we are volunteers; any issues raised will be dealt with as soon as we can, but we are not 'on-call' to dash up to sort any issue immediately. These jobs are a continuous necessity to maintain the building.

The costs of heating the building is also a concern – for example the bill for last December for Gas alone was huge. Group's heating is on individual timers, so we are looking into charging block booked groups for all their termly sessions whether they attend for that session or not. The heating can't simply be changed on an ad-hoc basis. Losing rent money means we are running at a loss which cannot happen as well as trying to keep rents down.

The Health and Safety Policy for ACCH is in place, and is available to read on request; highlighted sections have been sent out to all group leaders - these have been signed and returned to me as proof of receipt and reading. All parts of this must be adhered to at all times. The Fire alarm and extinguishers checks have also been done in line with the safety requirements.

Lastly, may I take this opportunity to thank all of the Committee for their hard work again this year; to keep the building physically up and running but also in relation to the money that is saved on a weekly basis, through jobs being done by ourselves. Without this and the many hours of volunteering time, this would not be possible. Again, as with most years our own monies are used on many occasions and this good will is appreciated.

Jan Hayes – Chair ACCH – 17th April 2025