

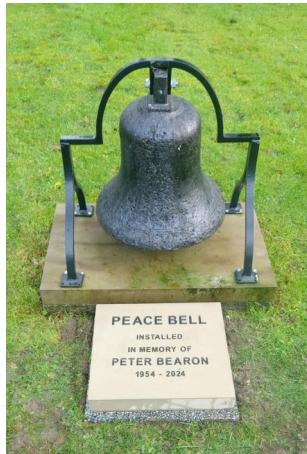


Rivington Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel

Founded 1662

Built 1703

“Here set no one a stranger be”



Feb - Apr 2026

www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk

Facebook: Rivington Unitarian Chapel

2026 Calendar

2026

Sun 1 Feb	Ian Smith and Jimmy Gittins from State of Mind Sport
Sat 9 May	Rivington Spring Festival
Sun 17 May	Anniversary Sermons and Chapel Meal
Sun 7 June	Strawberry Tea
Sat 12 Sep (tbc)	Heritage Open Day
Sun 18 Oct	Harvest Festival
Sun 20 Dec	Christmas Carol Service

Lay Person in Charge's Letter

Happy New Year to you all; here's wishing health, prosperity and happiness to everyone in 2026 .

Last year finished with quite a flourish as Chapel kept busy doing what it does best: serving the community. Chris Martin organised Christmas fairs in conjunction with the Tea Rooms at the end of November which proved to be so very popular - our chalice flame even acquired a stained-glass draft excluder from one of the stalls.

And carols - did we have carols! If you know anything about our Chapel, you'll know we take every opportunity to enjoy them. This started on 10th December, with a midweek evening carol service that we hosted for Rivington Parish Council. With the Rivington and Blackrod Brass Band, the Christmas quiz, home-made mince pies and mulled cider, everything came together for a very festive and

jolly gathering.

Our carol service on 21st December was very well attended with eighty-plus people there. Chris Foley used his influence to bring Santa Claus along to wow the children (and adults too). We saw some new faces from the village and old faces who rekindled old friendships. Derian House very much appreciated the gift bags we took to them along with some selection boxes.

Thank you to Sue Walton who went to great lengths to create such a festive environment. The tree was stunning and the three wreaths suspended from the ceiling were superb and much commented on. Thanks too to everyone who made so much effort in decorating the Chapel window ledges. They were a credit to you all; again they were much admired.

Our theme this year was 'The Homeless' and the window displays reflected this, some with gifts to go to charities including Coffee4Craig. Coffee4Craig is a soup kitchen and homeless hub in central Manchester and on many Sundays is the only place serving hot meals to the homeless. An interesting development here is that, throughout the last quarter, I have been able to take carloads of surplus fresh produce to them, such as respective mountains of spring onions, cos lettuce, green beans, sweetcorn, broccoli and bananas, to mention but a few.

My dealings with the MDA, apart from being the treasurer, have mostly centred around safeguarding and putting it on an effective and efficient footing. This we have been able to do by fully funding all DBS checks and up to date safeguarding training; this is provided through our close links with a group called '31:8'. We also work closely with the GA's safeguarding lead Gavin Howell.

I will now close as we open another chapter to Chapel life and once again wish everyone a happy and fulfilling 2026.

Stay safe and God bless

Vince

Lay Person In Charge

Chairman's Letter

The Congregational AGM will be on Sunday 1 March (see notice below), when we be holding elections for Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and general Committee Members. If you'd be interested in joining the Committee, please let us know. The meeting is being held earlier than usual to avoid clashing with Mothering Sunday.

Bookings have just opened for the 2026 General Assembly Annual Meetings. There is a new venue this year, Hayes Conference Centre near Alfreton, Derbyshire. The meetings will run from Friday 27 March to Sunday 29 March. While I am quite happy to be the Chapel's delegate once again (if the Congregation agrees), if anyone else would like to do this, please let me know. More information can be found at www.unitarians.org.uk/annualmeetings and the venue's website: [The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire](http://The%20Hayes%20Conference%20Centre,%20Swanwick,%20Derbyshire)

The flower rota has been updated, so please check it on the notice board in Chapel. If for any reason you are unable to provide the flowers when it's your turn, please let me know as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made.

A week or so before Christmas I heard from Rawcliffe's of Chorley Monumental Masons that they had installed the memorial stone for Peter next to the Peace Bell in the Garden of Remembrance. The

installation of the bell and stone has been funded using the money donated to the Chapel in Peter's memory.

We have recently purchased some additional copies of the purple 'Sing Your Faith' hymnbook, so there should now be enough for one each on most occasions.

Alison Whitaker
Chairman, Congregational Committee

Notice of AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Congregation of Rivington Chapel
will be held after the service on

Sunday 1 March 2026

A Nomination Form for the posts of Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Committee members will be displayed on the notice board in Chapel.

The closing date for nominations will be Sunday 15 February 2026

A thought (suggested by Iris Wharton)

Like the winds of the seas are the ways of fate,
As we voyage along through life,
'Tis the set of a soul
That decides its goal
And not the calm or the strife.

From 'the Winds of Fate' by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, 1850-1919

Trustees Matters

The last newsletter outlined the contents of the Heritage Statement for the Chapel building which is a prerequisite for being able to prepare and plan for the proposed modifications to the vestry, which, hopefully, will:

- a) Introduce a toilet with disabled access to the kitchen area,
- b) Improve the doorway between the Chapel and the vestry and so enable wheelchair access, and
- c) Improve access to the first floor so that better use may be made of the space, with meetings being of a principal focus here.

Since then, we have had a visit from an Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas at Historic England to view the Chapel and vestry and to discuss our preferred plan. Her report was received just before Christmas and gives advice on how to frame our planning submission and achievement of Historic Buildings Consent as a part of this. As a consequence of our receiving this advice we have now instructed our architect to draw up formal plans. Once these have been drafted, the next phase is to draft the planning document.

It is hoped that a first draft of the application will be ready before the AGM in March.

As I stated in the last newsletter, I shall not be standing for election as Chairman at the AGM and so this will be my last newsletter report.

Richard Horrocks
Chairman of Trustees

(Thank you, Richard, for your many valuable contributions to the newsletter - Ed.)

Beannacht

A blessing by John O'Donohue (suggested by Vince)

On the day when the weight deadens
on your shoulders and you stumble,
may the clay dance to balance you.

And when your eyes freeze behind the grey window
and the ghost of loss gets into you,
may a flock of colours, indigo, red, green and azure blue, come to
awaken in you a meadow of delight.

When the canvas frays in the currach of thought
and a stain of ocean blackens beneath you,
may there come across the waters a path of yellow moonlight to
bring you safely home.

May the nourishment of the earth be yours,
may the clarity of light be yours,
may the fluency of the ocean be yours,
may the protection of the ancestors be yours.

And so may a slow wind work these words of love around you, an in-
visible cloak to mind your life.

From 'Anam Cara', Bantam Press, 1997

New email addresses

Some new email addresses have recently been set up that you can use for contacting the officers of the Chapel Trustees and for other specific reasons. These are:

trustchair@rivingtonchapel.org.uk to contact the Chairman

trustsec2@rivingtonchapel.org.uk to contact the Secretary

trusttreasurer@rivingtonchapel.org.uk to contact the Treasurer

remembrance@rivingtonchapel.org.uk for enquiries about the Garden of Remembrance

estates@rivingtonchapel.org.uk for matters relating to the buildings and the grounds

publications2@rivingtonchapel.org.uk for inquiries about the various publications available

There is also an address to contact Vince McCully, our Lay Person in Charge: laycharge@rivingtonchapel.org.uk

Virtual Tour

If you are not able to visit the Chapel in person, you can look at the 3D virtual tour created by Daniel Stenson from ViewPro360 in conjunction with Chris.

The tour shows a 3D image of the interior of the Chapel, and by clicking on the buttons for the highlighted features you can find information about each one.

You can 'enter' the virtual tour either by following this link <https://rivingtonchapel.org.uk/virtual-tour-of-rivington-chapel/> or using this QR code if you have a reader on your phone or other device.



There are now some QR codes in the Chapel and also at various points in the grounds.

Publications

Please contact Chris Martin (01257 435860 , email: publications2@rivingtonchapel.org.uk) if you would like to buy any of the various Rivington Chapel publications, details of which can be found on the website: www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk/publications

Donations

Please remember that if you are not able to attend services in person, you can donate what you would have put in the collection via CAFDonate. Gift Aid can be added if you are a UK taxpayer.

You can either follow the Donations link on our website www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk or go directly to <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/12556>

A Note from the Editor

If you need to inform us of any change in your details, or if you no longer wish to receive our newsletter, please contact me, either by emailing newsletter@rivingtonchapel.org.uk or phoning 01942 816569.

Also, please email if you would like to help us reduce the cost of printing and posting the newsletter by opting to have an e-mail version rather than a paper copy. You can read this and past issues online at www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk

Alison

Dates for your Diary

Sunday Services at 2:15 PM

01 Feb	Ian Smith and Jimmy Gittins - State of Mind Sport
15 Feb	Jean Clements - Denton Chapel
01 Mar	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel
15 Mar	Pauk Hubbard - Padiham Chapel
05 Apr	Graeme Pilbrough - Padiham Chapel
19 Apr	Rev Laura Dobson - Chorlton Chapel
03 May	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel

Flower Donors

01 Feb	Alison Whitaker
15 Feb	Iris Wharton
01 Mar	Olive Fisher
15 Mar	Frank Ascroft
05 Apr	Linda and John Green
19 Apr	Diane Fairclough
03 May	Sarah, Rose and Ros Williams

Other Dates and Ceremonies

Sun 1 Mar Congregational AGM

If you would like to arrange a ceremony at Rivington Chapel, please contact Alison or Vince
Contact details overleaf

Copy date for next issue: 1 Apr 2026
Issue date: 19 Apr 2026

send to: Alison Whitaker, 14 Church Street, Westhoughton, Bolton,
BL5 3RS

telephone: 01942 816569

email: newsletter@rivingtonchapel.org.uk

Please send your contributions electronically if possible to the email address above. For those without access to the internet I am still happy to receive handwritten copy.

