

Rivington Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel



Founded 1662

Built 1703

"Here let no one a stranger be"



May - Jul 2026

www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk

Facebook: Rivington Unitarian Chapel

2026 Calendar

2026

Sat 9 May	Rivington Spring Fair
Sun 17 May	Anniversary Sermons and Chapel Meal
Fri 29 May	Oak Apple Day Music Session
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

In our Chapel's Trust Deed, which we have a copy of by the organ (the original is in the Lancashire Archives), we are described as '*... a chapel or oratory for the practice of piety and worship*'. I would like to think we live up to both descriptions and that our significance extends well beyond our walls and into the local community.

We are fortunate enough to be well thought of by the wider Unitarian community and that we are a popular place for preachers to visit and indeed orate. Perhaps we are taking a leaf out of Unitarian College's book, whose motto for the last five years has been 'growth from within'. Over the past few years, Rev Frank Williams and Geoff Newey have taken services and more recently our whole congregation and our organists Tanya and Margaret have all had significant input. In fact, Tanya led worship in October last year and January this, with notable contributions from her dad

Jason, sister Hannah, plus a musical dimension from Alison Whitaker and Linda Green. The really good news is that Tanya has embarked on the first step of the Worship Studies Course at Unitarian College and is making tremendous headway. Tanya will also be leading worship on Sunday 16 August.

Our involvement in the local community, though low-key, is nevertheless significant and is basically in the local DNA. One of our strengths is that we are always here and ready to give whatever support the community needs, and when they need it. Even though rites of passage are less sought after than in previous years, there are many whose connection with Rivington in general and our beloved Chapel in particular still means they want to use us. My neighbours in nearby Adlington, Heath Charnock and Anderton and friends in Rivington parish like to be kept abreast of our comings and goings too.

For the last ten years I have been organising a Spring Festival in Rivington, with the Chapel very much at the centre of things. For one reason and another this year it will be a more scaled down affair and has morphed into a Spring Fair cum Open Day, something I happily got on with a good ten years before that. Dr Irvine Delamore, our friend and sometime preacher from the parish Church, used to send folk our way after their Spring Fair, I would put together some produce, raising, consistently if predictively, £50-£60. With just a few tabletops, I wonder what we will raise this year?

Wishing everyone a blessed and happy summer season; you are all always in my prayers.

Stay safe and God bless

Vince

Lay Person In Charge

Chairman's Letter

I'm writing this shortly after returning from the GA meetings, which were as usual very enjoyable. A full report on the proceedings will appear in the next newsletter.

The Bay Horse at Heath Charnock has been booked for our Anniversary meal. This will be on Sunday 17 May at 4:00 pm, following the service. There is a form on the notice board for you to sign up and copies of the menu so that you can choose your meal beforehand. This is particularly important if you would like a roast meal so that the Bay Horse can make sure that your choice is available. If you are not able to get to Chapel for the next service, please let me know and I will send you the menus.

The cover features another of David Southern's photos of the Chapel taken using a drone.

Standing Orders

It has become apparent over recent months that the income of the Congregation is not sufficient to offset the rising costs of expenses such as water and heating bills. We would therefore like to encourage members who do not already do so to consider setting up a standing order to help us build up a more regular source of income.

We have recently opened an online bank account with CAF Bank, and it would be useful if any new standing orders could be paid into that account. If you would like to help in this way, please let me know and I will send you the account details.

Alison Whitaker
Chairman, Congregational Committee

AGM Report

As many of you know already, we were not able to appoint a new Treasurer to succeed Frank Ascroft who has stepped down due to ill health. This means that, following the re-election of Alison Whitaker as Chairman, the Congregation has only one officer in post. While Alison and Vince, as signatories on the bank account, can deal with day-to-day finances in the short term, it is neither desirable nor feasible for one person to attempt to undertake the duties of all three officers on a permanent basis.

Alison announced that, having been Chairman for ten years, she would be willing to continue for this year and possibly next if the Congregation so wished, but that members should be starting to consider now who could take on the role from 2028 onwards.

All the existing Committee members were re-elected. Tanya Smalley said that she would be willing to stand and was duly elected. The full committee is: Alison Whitaker (Chairman), Diane Fairclough, Paul Fairclough, Olive Fisher, Geoff Newey, Tanya Smalley.

Vince McCully was reappointed as Lay Person in Charge.

It was decided that we should organise a collection so that we can buy a gift for Frank Ascroft who has recently retired from his long-held post of Treasurer for the Congregation. If you wish to make a contribution, please contact Diane Fairclough (details on back cover).

The minutes and the accounts have been distributed by email or in person. There is a copy of each on the notice board in Chapel.

Trust Matters

It is my pleasure to contribute to this newsletter in my new role as Chairman.

At the March A.G.M. this year Richard Horrocks and Chris Haighton stepped back from their previous roles but remained as Trustees.

Their experience, gathered over many years, will continue to provide an invaluable font of knowledge and advice for the future.

A new member on the Trust, Mr Joe McCully, has joined us and I have no doubt that his skills and input will prove to be very useful...welcome, Joe.

Over a decade ago, the Trustees decided that the best way to preserve the Chapel and Grounds was to devise and work to a plan. That plan was developed with the aid of Ivan Wilson and his team of conservation architects. It was the first of two schemes, each one known as a Quinquennial Revue. In the near future we may embark on a third one.

The Chapel is now acknowledged to be in good condition, but there is more to be done in the Vestry. In particular, the Chapel lacks one essential feature...A TOILET! It is our intention to have one put in, along with alterations to the stairs and doorway and an upgrading of the kitchen facilities. Meetings are being held and plans being drawn up that will support a planning application to bring about these changes.

I will keep everyone informed as to our progress in due course.

Paul Fairclough
Chairman of Trustees

Oak Apple Day

Traditional Music Session



Friday 29 May
1:00 - 4:00 pm

Rivington Unitarian Chapel
Donations towards the upkeep of the
Chapel

A thought (suggested by Iris Wharton)

Each home where love abides is even so,
A steadfast joy beneath a changing sky;
And all the storms of life that round it blow
Are but its cradle and its lullaby.

From 'The Hut by the Sea' by Ethelwyn Wethered, 1857-1940

10 Years as Chairman of the Trustees; but looking forward as well!

When I assumed the position of Chairman of the Trustees about 10 years ago from the late Peter Bearon, who at the time was both Chairman and Honorary Secretary, the passing of the baton was both a challenge and a privilege. At the time (2016), he and the former Treasurer, Michael Hough, together with other Trustees, had assembled an impressive collection of documents which would establish the proof required for the Land Registry to register the Chapel estate in our name. Because of their work and diligence, the application went through with no problems. This was shortly to be followed by the transfer of the previously leased area containing the Garden of Remembrance from United Utilities to the Chapel for the princely sum of £1.00.

At the same time, for the first time for many years, the need for a full architectural study of the Chapel and its estate was considered by the Trustees to be essential. As a consequence, the first ever Quinquennial Review was commissioned and the report received at the end of 2016. This identified a number of serious issues including the need to replace external drains on the north wall of the Chapel and all the guttering to prevent overflow with the changing climate. In addition, the Chapel roof space was accessible by birds and years of nest building provided a home for insects and vermin as well as being a fire hazard. Furthermore, serious issues were identified in the Tea Room, not least the need to replace all the windows.

During the next 4 years or so these issues were addressed, often with significant grants from the Gregson Trust and Manchester District Association. Furthermore, the Tea Room was relet on a more commercial basis to the current incumbents who started to invest in

the maintenance and improvement of the building. With the award of a 10-year lease in 2021, the tenants then fully replaced all the previously rotten window frames to a standard demanded by our architect and in line with the listed status of the Chapel and its estate. The current appearance of the Tea Room and its windows is testament to these investments.

A second Quinquennial Review in 2021 acknowledged the improved status of the Chapel and further recommendations were addressed during the next four years. This brings us to the present day, when the Chapel and its estate is in an extremely well-maintained state and with the Tea Room being run more successfully by our tenants than hitherto.

Much of this work was overseen by Paul Fairclough, who was the Trustee responsible for the estate, and so his election to be Chairman of Trustees at the March AGM 2026, will ensure that the Trustee body and especially the character of the Chapel and its estate are in safe hands for the immediate future. I would like to thank him for supporting me during my tenure as Chairman and wish him all best as he assumes the chairmanship mantle.

Richard Horrocks, former Chairman and current trustee.

A thought from The Craftivist Collective, used as an example of Gentle Protest

If our lives are ruled by fear, we will make innocent people our enemies.

If our lives are ruled by love, we can make strangers our friends.

Thoughts for the Summer Solstice – Litha, 20 June (suggested by Vince)

A Guide for Reflection and Growth **Sunrise and Sunset Reflections**

Initiate and conclude the day with moments of meditation. Greet the sunrise with intentions for the day ahead and express gratitude at dusk. This practice of reflection roots us in the present, reminding us of life's cycles and the splendour of each fleeting moment.

Nature Immersion

Forge a connection with the Earth by spending time in the great outdoors. Whether it's ambling through a park, trekking through the woods, or simply sitting by a stream, immersing oneself in nature can profoundly align you with the Solstice's essence of vitality and growth.

Journaling Your Journey

Set aside time for introspective journaling. Musing on your triumphs, the hurdles you've surmounted, and the wisdom gained since the last solstice also paves the way for setting forth intentions for what you aspire to bring to fruition in the months ahead.

Community Connection

The Solstice reaffirms our interdependence with each other and our surroundings. Take part in or coordinate collective celebrations such as communal meals, group meditations or rituals honouring the day. These communal activities solidify our ties and reaffirm our collective aspiration towards growth.

Creative Expression

Let the Solstice motivate your innate creativity. Engage in expressive activities like painting, crafting poetry, or making music that mirrors your inner luminosity and goals. Creative expression serves as a potent conduit for personal growth and spiritual union.

from The Interfaith Foundation

Walk Slowly

It only takes a reminder to breathe,
a moment to be still, and just like that,
something in me settles, softens, makes
space for imperfection.

The harsh voice of judgment drops to a whisper
and I remember again that life isn't a relay
race; that we will all cross the finish
line; that waking up to life is what we
were born for.

As many times as I forget, catch myself charging forward
without even knowing where I'm going,
that many times I can make the choice
to stop, to breathe, and be, and walk
slowly into the mystery.

Danna Faulds, American poet

[Thanks to Lizzie Kingston Harrison who read this poem at the start of a recent Admin Network Meeting.]

Email addresses

Please use these email addresses to contact 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

03 May	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel
17 May	Anniversary Service Rev Danny Crosby - Altrincham and Urmston Chapels
07 Jun	Jean Clements - Denton Chapel Strawberry Tea
21 Jun	Graeme Pilbrough - Padiham Chapel
05 Jul	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel
19 Jul	Rev Lynne Readett - Chowbent Chapel
02 Aug	Rev Amanda Reynolds - Kendal Chapel

Flower Donors

03 May	Sarah, Rose and Ros Williams
17 May	Jacqueline Dagnall
07 Jun	Judith Crompton
21 Jun	Jacqui and Tim Kershaw
05 Jul	Frank Ascroft
19 Jul	Jacqui and Tim Kershaw
02 Aug	Elsie Kent

Other Dates and Ceremonies

- Sat 27 June Wedding of Lisa and Graham
 Conducted by Vince Mc Cully
- Sat 11 July Naming Ceremony
 Conducted by Vince McCully

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

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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.

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