

UK Lancaster Gate headquarters - Farewell, Joanna; Welcome, Helena!

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Everyone knows Joanna; she has served the Unification communities for 13 years and more in the Accounts Office at the Lancaster Gate headquarters and has now just recently retired from that role while still supporting her successor.



I had been working with her predecessor, Nigel Gresswell, for some years when he decided to step down; Joanna saved the day back in early 2004 by stepping in, having had previous experience in HQ accounts in the 1980s. This started a 13 year long cooperation – particularly intense for herself and myself in various roles – to keep the finances at HQ in order and to deal with and solve the numerous challenges which managing a £1.4 million income charity presents. So many hours on the phone, sorting out situations, making sure the accounting systems were in place all over the country, dealing with the auditors and the banks and other public offices – Joanna taking it all in her stride with a friendly face and very helpful attitude for many years.

However, the demands of the financial regulatory authorities have been becoming ever greater and it got to the point where we needed additional professional capacity in the form of an external accountancy firm, to which we could outsource the more critical work. (Also not to have all of that responsibility on one pair of shoulders with no back up if she got sick.) We could also create some efficiencies in the department at the same time.

Joanna engaged fully with a number of others to set up a new system whereby the accounts company (Natural Numbers, in Chippenham) takes over the whole main bookkeeping tracking and checking responsibility for the whole charity, creating our statutory accounts after each calendar year ends and organising the whole audit process along with our Treasurer and trustee, Neil O'Neill.

This means that the HQ role changed, with much bookkeeping and accountancy outsourced, which is why we created the new role, Accounts Administration Officer. We advertised for that much reduced, 3 days a week, role and finally chose Helena Stout, who performed well in her interview and also has experience – like Joanna – from doing HQ accounts in the 80s.



There may be little bookkeeping left to do but there are still quite a number of tasks left for this role such as:

Daily

- Checking email for new correspondence
- Backing up computers at the end of the day
- Sorting the post and incoming cheques and cash. Recording, filing and storing safely
- Banking payments
- Maintaining records for restricted income/funds** (see below)
- Receiving and recording income**
- Issuing of receipts where necessary
- Maintenance of HQPC and CASH
- Paying any cheques or invoices for payment by HQ
- Maintaining Bankline for HQ accounts

Monthly

- Preparation of Monthly Bank accounts**
- Preparation of Monthly Cash account**
- Posting physical receipts and invoices to Natural Numbers
- Payment of departmental monthly allocations
- Transfer of donations to Korea from members, coordinating with Joanna who is continuing to provide a general CP information service
- Paying any overseas donations to EU for the UK Tithe and other EU donations received from members
- Periodically paying donations received for Ken Shafto to the UK missionary in Brazil

Other Matters

- General consultation currently with Eddie, later with Neil, about financial matters
- Completing the Annual Returns for FFWPU (once a year)
- Dealing with authorities like the bank, HMRC where necessary and the Land Registry (infrequent)
- Possibly completing Gift Aid tax claims for FFWPU (HQ & Regions) based on numbers from N.N. – under discussion
- Dealing with enquiries from Natural Numbers and FFWPU management regarding specific bookkeeping records/matters

** raw data will be into Natural Numbers online accounts in the near future

We are sure that Helena, given the appropriate support and information, can manage all of this.

So we wish Joanna a fond farewell in her new part-time job and other endeavours, and express a huge thank-you for all of the long hours she invested, over and above the call of duty, to ensure we are where we are today.