

BOARD OF YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Convener: Rev JONATHAN MOXEN

Director: Miss ROZ STIRLING

1. The Board of Youth and Children's Ministry exists to support local Congregations in every aspect of their mission and ministry to and with children and young people.

2. The vision of the Board is that every Congregation will have the capacity to develop and grow this vital ministry among children and young people in Christ-centered, biblically-based communities of believers where parental responsibility for the spiritual formation of their children is nurtured and where whole life discipleship, which equips children and young people to take their place in the world, is fostered within a faith community where integration of the under 25's into the life of the Congregation is lived out.

3. The Board delivers on its remit and vision through the work of five busy Committees: Ministry Opportunities, Ministry Events, Research and Education, Training, and Ministry Resources.

4. The Board's Committees work in close partnership with one another as they bring an integrated approach to all aspects of the work of the Board. To this end, the Committee Conveners, along with the Board Convener, Director and Director of Programmes have been progressing a 'frameworks' document which details the underpinning values, purpose and practice of the Board. It is anticipated that this framework may be developed for use in congregational ministry. The current consultation with Church leaders, youth and children's leaders and ministry professionals, when completed will form the basis for this development.

5. The work of these five Committees is delivered by an army of volunteer committee and working group members and the professional staff of the Board. Alongside the Director who oversees every aspect of the work of the Board, the programme staff team include the Director of Programmes, Barbara McDade, who carries responsibility for the wide array of activities and programmes of the Board, the Children's Development Officer, Ruth Mitchell, who oversees work relating to 0-11 age group, Youth Development Officer, Graeme Thompson, who looks after ministry support for those working with the 11-18 age group and Young Adults' Development Officer, Carol Johnston, who oversees the ministry development for the 18-25 year old age group. This diverse team of staff and volunteers brings to Congregations support in the development of covenant based family ministry through their partnership with Kirk Sessions, parents, and volunteer youth and children's leaders.

6. The Board continues to know God's blessing in this demanding work. The task assigned to it is a challenge as it undertakes the support of Congregations in their immense responsibility to evangelise, disciple, serve and equip the largest group of people within the Presbyterian Church. The Board

however is grateful to God that although the task is onerous, those who serve within the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry are a God-given fit 'for such a time as this.'

7. The workload for each of the five Committees is considerable. Thanks are due, in no small measure, to the Conveners who give of their time willingly to support the ministry of the Board. Their commitment has been rewarded by the many evidences of the work of the spirit of God in their ministry endeavours.

8. The Board records its thanks to the Rev Graeme Kennedy for his dedication and hard work as the Convener of Ministry Resources and wishes him well in his ministry in Ballygrainey Congregation.

9. During the past year there were many high points. The Board rejoices in the goodness of God in all of the work in 2010 and draws attention to a few of those high points.

10. Under the Ministry Opportunities Committee, the Summer Outreach teams seek to draw alongside Congregations enabling them to do outreach work among children and young people within their community. This is an important part of the Board's work which provides opportunities for young people and young adults to live out the gospel and to grow in their confidence to share Christ with their peers. Some three hundred volunteers are needed each summer to serve our denomination on these teams. In the lives of many of the team members and those they minister to, there is a testimony to the work of God's grace.

11. The Ministry Events Committee is a very busy Committee with many large events being planned and delivered by their working groups, supported by the departmental staff. The MAD weekend continues to be a very important event which each year is booked out within weeks of being advertised. MAD 12 saw a reduction in capacity from that normally available due to the development work at the venue, University of Ulster, Coleraine. The greatest difficulty that resulted from this was the need to turn down even more applications than normal. It was an immense privilege nonetheless to see God move in the lives of many young people in October. MAD 13 will be held from 28-30 October, 2011.

12. A new event for young adults (18-30 year olds) is in an advanced planning stage and publicity material is available. 'The Word', a Bible focused conference, is planned for August 2011. It will continue the tradition of its predecessor, 'Route 66', by providing the opportunity for young adults to explore the relevance of scripture in every area of their lives from the knowledge in their head, to the love in their heart, to the action of their hands.

13. The volunteers on the Volunteer and Intern Programme (VIP) have completed a first very successful year. This programme, which is a development from the former Year Team scheme, encourages young adults to take the opportunity to serve the Lord through this gap year programme. During the past year young adults were placed in Congregations in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, while two interns have made a significant contribution in the YAC Office. The gifts and dedication of these young people are greatly appreciated by the Board. One Minister who has enjoyed having a VIP comments: *"It has been incredibly encouraging to see a young adult being able*

to easily relate to the young people within the youth groups of our Church. We have benefitted greatly through the VIP programme.”

14. The Board records its gratitude to the vast number of volunteer youth and children’s leaders working in Congregations and to the growing number of youth and family workers. The many hours of work carried out by these people who give sacrificially of their time and talent in the service of God is deeply appreciated. Many Congregations could not provide for their youth and children’s activities without the many volunteers who bring leadership and facilitate programmes that are meaningful to our young people and children.

15. The work of SPUD Youth Assembly continues to be a very significant and important ministry within our denomination. SPUD (Speaking, Participating, Understanding, Deciding) has enabled young adults to take up their place within the decision making structures of our Church. SPUD has settled into a rhythm of pre General Assembly events through which they formulate resolutions for the General Assembly. In 2010, SPUD sent their report ‘Young People and the Church’ to Presbyteries for consideration. They will bring the findings to the 2011 General Assembly. The Board congratulates these young adults and gives particular thanks to the SPUD working Group for their hard work during the past year. The Board encourages Congregations to send delegates to the Youth Assembly and to commit to the involvement of young people within the decision making processes of their Church.

16. The Board is deeply grateful to those employed to serve the Church though the Board of Youth and Children’s Ministry. Miss Roz Stirling, (Director), Miss Barbara McDade (Director of Programmes), and the team of administrative staff, Mrs Lois Gibson (Senior Administrative Officer), Mrs Claire Child, Mrs Janet Maxwell, Mrs Donna Thompson, Mrs Kathy Brown, Miss Pamela Patton and Miss Liz Harrison. The Board is indebted to them as it is to Mr David Pattison for his support and assistance with Board finances.

17. The work of the Development Officers, Ruth Mitchell, Graeme Thompson and Carol Johnston, drawing alongside Churches in congregational consultation and strategy development, training and resourcing congregations and leaders and mentoring and encouraging full time staff already in place in Congregations, is deeply appreciated. Their work in seeking to see sustainable, Christ-centered ministry in Congregations across our land is crucial to the future of our denomination. The Board extends their thanks to them for their dedicated work during the past year.

18. The Board encourages Congregations to draw on the professional support available to them through our Director, Director of Programmes, and team of Development Officers. The expertise and guidance available to Congregations through this team is considerable. Whether the need of a Congregation is growth in children’s ministry or a frustration that youth ministry is hampered through a lack of leaders, the YAC staff team will bring insight and wisdom to these challenges. They can be contacted through the YAC Office.

RECOGNISED MINISTRIES

The Rev David Stanfield, Centre Director of the Centre for Youth Ministry Ireland, reports:

I am pleased to report another successful year in my role as Director of the Centre for Youth Ministry Ireland. The partnership between Youth Link and Belfast Bible College continues to prove fruitful and the nature of the qualification fits well with the ethos and value base of both organisations. During the past year the courses received professional endorsement which means that the students graduate with JNC professional status as well as an honours degree in Youth and Community Work and either Applied or Practical Theology which enables them to be employed in any youth or community work context, not just within a Christian Church or organisation. While there are a number of such courses in other parts of the UK, this is the first Christian faith based course in Ireland to receive such recognition. This is important because it recognises that the student has been able to evidence that they have the understanding and skills to engage with young people in ways that help their development as individuals and within communities, regardless of the nature of those communities. The fact that at every level we seek to encourage and enable students to inter-relate theology and youth work theory and apply both to their practice contexts means that our graduates should be better prepared to minister to young people in communities of faith (Churches and Christian organisations). While most of our students have a sense of vocation to work within a Christian context some believe they are being called to work in secular contexts and want to be better equipped to know how to express their Christianity appropriately in work situations where there is not the freedom to explicitly share their faith.

The course is practice based with students working in a Christian/Church based context for 14 hours per week as part of the course assessment. They each have a personal practice tutor to support their development and meet regularly in facilitated small groups for professional formation. We are very grateful to the increasing number of Churches that recognise the value of the course and the benefit that a student can add to their ministry amongst young people. Currently there are placements in 38 different Congregations (18 Presbyterian, 11 Church of Ireland, 5 Methodist, 2 Baptist, 2 other) and 11 other Christian contexts.

The training of students for ministry is a very labour intensive process and a team of over 100 people have been actively involved in teaching, supervising and supporting the students this year. Module tutors include people with recognised expertise in certain areas such as: Roz Stirling (PCI YAC) on spirituality; Dr David Rock (Methodist DYCW) on missiology in a youth work context; Dr Angie Minion (The Big House) on pastoral care; Peter Lynas (EA) on ethics; Derek Poole (The Linc) on working within the community; and Edith Bell (Community Works) on the development of young people.

This summer will see the majority of our first cohort of students graduate and while some have already found employment or are planning to undertake further study most at the time of writing are in the process of seeking employment.

Once again I wish to record my gratitude to the large number of Presbyterians from across our Congregations who have supported the development of this work in the last 12 months through prayer and encouragement, as well as those who have worked as module tutors, professional practice tutors or line managers in Congregations who have taken students on placement.

The Rev John Peacock, Community Relations Manager at Youth Link: N.I., reports:

1. Youth Link's core aims are:
 - **Meeting Churches Needs** – Youth Link, through dialogue, will be constantly aware of the changing needs of the Churches with regard to youth work and ministry and will respond effectively;
 - **Training** – Training in youth work and ministry, peace building and reconciliation, informed by the latest theory and practice, will be available to all those involved in work with young people;
 - **Active Citizenship, Peace Building & Reconciliation Strategies for Young People** – Youth Link will work with others to provide opportunities for young people of different traditions and cultural backgrounds to develop mutual understanding, tolerance, acceptance and respect and to be agents of transformation in a divided society;
 - **Prophetic voice** – Youth Link, through dialogue, will be constantly aware of critical and emerging issues in youth work and ministry, peace building and reconciliation, providing a prophetic voice to the Churches and the wider community;
 - **Networking** – Youth Link will network strategically with agencies, Churches and youth workers at local, national and international level to enhance best practice in youth work and ministry, peace building and reconciliation.
2. As chairperson of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry Reconciliation Working Group, I continue to have the opportunity to keep the importance of peace and reconciliation at the forefront of the Board's work and to also look at how the area of peace building needs to develop in the broader Church in a post-conflict situation.
3. The year has been an exciting one as Youth Link moved to its new training and resource facilities on the Springfield Road, which will enable us to further develop the Centre for Youth Ministry degree programme, our OCN accredited Youth work and Community Relations training and our active citizenship work with young people. It will also place the Centre in a situation of socio-economic need as a witness of the work of the Churches. Youth Link thanks the General Assembly that 25% of the 2009/2010 Youth and Children's Project income was allocated to this new Training Centre.
4. Youth Link's work has developed through the work of three staff members, funded through the Peace III monies, to build community capacity in Belfast and the border regions through youth work and community relations training in these areas. The project has focussed on areas where the infrastructure and confidence of the Protestant community has traditionally been weak i.e. Armagh, Monaghan, Fermanagh, Londonderry and Donegal.
5. I would like to thank the Presbyterian representatives on the management council of Youth Link for their ongoing support and encouragement, in particular Barbara McDade who has just stepped down from the position of Chairperson.

TRAINING COMMITTEE

1. The Training Committee continues to assess its current work in order to bring it into line with the aims of the Board which are to enable Congregations in the development of covenantal ministry with children, young people, adults and families. The work of the Committee has concentrated its efforts in the training of leaders for youth and children's ministry. Future developments will see the work of the Committee expand to include training for ministry with parents, families and young adults.

2. The Committee thanks God for His guidance and blessing on the Committee and the working groups during the past year.

Certificates in Youth and Children's Ministry

3. The Youth Ministry Certificate Course has again been facilitated this year in Belfast. The course has run on Monday nights with 28 in attendance. A residential weekend has again been central to the implementation of the course.

4. The Children's Ministry Course ran at Union Theological College and Annalong with 36 participants attending.

Road Trip

5. Road Trip is a one evening, six seminar event, which makes high quality training available to Presbyterian Congregations at a local level free of charge. In 2010-11 Road Trip has been in 10 different locations around Ireland. With a more comprehensive publicity leaflet and a concerted effort to raise the profile of this excellent resource, approximately 650 participants have been trained in a variety of topics including subjects as diverse as: *Ministry with Under 5s, Equipping Young People for Everyday Service and Witness and C21 Young Presbyterians*.

6. Throughout 2010/11 YAC staff have supported the training of new trainers as they have delivered Road Trip seminars, hence allowing the Board to offer an even greater number of seminars than in previous years. The staff team bring considerable expertise to this task allowing the Board to grow the number of volunteers who are equipped to deliver particular lectures in the future.

7. In the proposed Road Trip cycle for 2011-12 there has been an attempt to return to each geographical area at approximately the same time of the year in order to allow Ministers and youth leaders to become accustomed to this high quality localised training and to encourage them to build it into their Congregation's annual calendar.

Communicators' School

8. In October 2010 the Board hosted a Communicators' School with Duffy Robbins as keynote speaker. Duffy worked with 27 course participants training them for better communication with young people. With the repeated success of this event it is hoped to run it on a bi-annual basis, with the next course provisionally scheduled for October 2012.

‘Building Blocks’ Conferences

9. The two Conferences were held on Saturday 13 November 2010 in Dublin (200 in attendance) and Saturday 20 November 2010 in Belfast, at Orangefield Presbyterian Church (190 in attendance). Ivy Beckwith, author of ‘Formation of Children’s Ministry’ was the keynote speaker.

Ad Hoc Training

10. The Board continues to be entirely committed to the Children’s Ministry Certificate Course, the Youth Ministry Certificate course and Road Trip as the flagship training experiences on offer. The Board recognises however that training requirements occasionally arise in Congregations which are not immediately addressed by the material on offer in the current courses or Road Trip. As a result the Board has set about developing a database of approved trainers who could deliver training on a wide variety of topics on an ad hoc basis as the need arises. It is our aim that any Congregation requesting training in a particular area of youth and children’s ministry should be able to contact the YAC department and be pointed to a trainer who could meet their need.

Summer Mission Training Day

11. For many years a training day has been organised by the Summer Outreach Working Group for all those going on Summer Outreach teams. In 2011 this event has become part of the work of the Training Committee (in consultation with the Summer Outreach Working Group). The first Summer Mission Training Day will be held on 18 June 2011 and will be open to anyone throughout our denomination preparing for a summer mission team or holiday bible club.

Youth Link

12. The Board extends their thanks to Youth Link personnel who continue to support and complement the work of the Board through their input into the working groups and Committee.

CHRISTOPH EBBINGHAUS, Convener

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

1. The Ministry Opportunities Committee seeks to provide opportunities for service for Presbyterian young people and leaders through summer missions work and year long volunteer programmes. During 2010/11 the Committee have explored partnerships with other mission boards within PCI in order to maximise the opportunities available to young people, young adults and leaders.

Camps

2. The Committee has undertaken a review of the camps ministry. Recent years has seen the loss of PCI owned facilities to host camps and falling

numbers of attendees. The Committee therefore decided that in the summer of 2011 the Tech camp would be the only camp hosted by the Board while the review of the future direction of camps is undertaken.

Summer Outreach Opportunities

3. The opportunities provided for service in the summer at home now include a wide range of contexts between inner city and rural. This has required an increased number of teams and therefore a larger number of volunteers to service these teams. Summer Outreach is a very good training ground for young people as they seek to grow and mature in their faith.

4. In 2011 the Board will host a Summer Mission Training Day. This is a new venture which offers all young people and leaders within PCI an opportunity to be trained for any summer mission work they plan to undertake. The Board's Summer Outreach personnel will attend the Summer Mission Training Day.

5. At a meeting of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry in March 2011 it was agreed that a review of home mission opportunities be undertaken. This will include a review of summer outreach work.

Overseas Opportunities

6. In partnership with the Board of Mission Overseas YAC will support two teams in the summer of 2011. A team of eleven will partner with PCEA in London and nine team members with Csaba and Ilona Veres in Romania. In the summer of 2010 the Board supported three teams – the London PCEA partnership, the Romania partnership and a team of teachers who supported the work of Diane Cusick in Malawi. These were very successful teams which both served the overseas context and were an exciting discipleship opportunity for those who participated.

Volunteer and Intern Programme (VIP)

7. The VIP Scheme will complete its first year in the summer of 2011. This scheme, which is a development from the previous Year Team opportunity, has expanded its possibilities for young adults seeking a gap-year experience. As these young adults look to their own future service, the working group are considering next year's volunteers and how a broader range of opportunities, possibly including an overseas placement, may be provided to enhance the scheme. The working group, with the assistance of Carol Johnston, are seeking to draw up plans for the future.

7. Thanks are extended to the many people who organise and run the various aspects of the Committee's work and often give countless unseen hours to facilitate the opportunities for service.

JOHN FLAHERTY, Convener

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

1. The Research and Education Committee during 2010 picked up the work associated with a resolution that came through the SPUD Youth Assembly: 'to raise awareness within the denomination and among young people themselves regarding the pressures and issues affecting young people during the adolescent years.' With the help of one of the YAC Interns, Lindsay Witherow, the Committee has carried out a sample survey among young people and young adults in the 11-25 age groups. The focus of this has been in eight locations within Northern Ireland, primarily with Church youth groups alongside one school group. The next stage is to expand the survey to include more and varied groups including a spectrum of groups within the Republic of Ireland. The findings will be presented in a variety of forms and become a source of insight for our work with children and young people, hence improving their well being and enabling them to be credible Christian witness in the world.

2. The role of the Committee is also to educate and consideration has been given to the implications of the initial survey for parents, youth leaders, elders and Ministers in local Congregations. The Committee plans to put forward concrete ideas for resources and events that will raise awareness of the pressures and issues affecting our young people.

3. The Research and Education Committee wishes to record its thanks to Lindsay Witherow for her excellent contribution as a YAC Intern and wishes her well in her new appointment with Scripture Union.

LYNDA GOULD, Convener

MINISTRY RESOURCES COMMITTEE

1. The Resources Committee continues to seek to identify and develop helpful resources for those involved in youth and children's ministry across the Church. Youth and children's leaders and others are encouraged to share with one another resources which have proved to be helpful. The ultimate resource for ministry remains the work of God, by his Holy Spirit, to whom deep gratitude is due for His guidance of this Committee and Board over the years.

The Website

2. The new website has seen significant changes and developments over the last twelve months. Laura Crossett, the VIP Intern, and Pamela Patton from YAC Office have been working on the accessibility of the information already on the site. This has been a very helpful piece of work and it has been extremely valuable to have an intern focusing on the development of the website.

The Youth and Children's Project

3. **2011/2012 Stand by Me:** The charity, Kids' Alive International was introduced to the Board at the MAD weekend through the work of the project 'Stand by Me' which supports street kids in Ethiopia. There are a number of links with Kids' Alive within the work of YAC and so it was agreed that Kids'

Alive would form the overseas focus of the 2011/2012 YAC project. The countries to be focused on will be Ethiopia, Peru and Haiti. The 'home' focus will be on a breakfast club which operates from Friendship House on Sandy Row in Belfast.

4. 2010/11 SAT-7 KIDS: Money is continuing to come in for the current YAC Project. Two people from SAT-7 will be visiting Dublin in early May and Ruth Mitchell and Ruth Elkin hope to meet up with them. Prayer is requested for the work of SAT-7, especially as they minister in countries such as Egypt, Tunisia and Libya where broadcasting has become more difficult in the turbulence of recent weeks.

5. 2009/10 Missing Peace, Nepal: Thanks are expressed to the Church for their support of this project which raised a total of £90,000. £25,000 has been given to the Youth Link project which was used for their new premises. The rest of the money raised will go to support peacemaking projects in Nepal.

6. 2008/09 Treasure Box, Livingstonia: Money raised by this project continues to be fed into the Livingstonia Synod. Personnel changes in the Synod have had an impact on the speed at which resources can be distributed and the Board are working with BMO as to the next phase of the project.

Youth and Children's Workers

7. Youth and children's workers continue to provide high quality youth and children's ministry across our Church and the Committee is grateful to them for the work they do among our children and young people. Congregations, Presbyteries and the General Assembly are encouraged to continue to support them and other Additional Pastoral Personnel in meaningful and relevant ways. Graeme Thompson, Youth Development Officer, continues to hold a monthly meeting for full time youth and children's workers and a retreat has been planned for 15-17 June.

8. The Union Commission are about to produce a new handbook giving guidelines on the Appointment of Additional Pastoral Personnel. It is anticipated that this latest document will be an aid to continued improvement in employment practice across the Church.

Youth Centres

9. **Lucan:** This centre has been leased to the Dublin and Munster Presbytery since October 2010.

10. Rostrevor: This centre was handed back to the local Church at the end of 2010. A thanksgiving service was held on Saturday, 15 January, 2011 at which the Moderator and local dignitaries were in attendance. There was a great sense of celebration and thanksgiving for the years of ministry at the centre during the time that YAC had responsibility and great optimism for the future under the vision and direction of the Rostrevor Congregation.

11. Guysmere: This centre remains closed. Catriona Ross, the warden, who was on maternity leave has accepted redundancy as of the end of December 2010. Her husband, Jonny, who had been appointed to the temporary grounds and buildings management role, will continue in this post for 3 months. The Committee is deeply grateful to Catriona and Jonny for the excellent job they

have done in caring for the site. Plans are moving forward to lease the centre while work is done to find funds to refurbish it.

Reconciliation

12. The Reconciliation Working Group are continuing to seek ways to develop and grow the work of PYP. Training has been made available and the working group will continue to provide this for those who want it. Peacemaking continues to be a major area of concern for young people and is a gospel imperative in which the Church must be seen to be active.

Discipleship Resources:

13. **Presbyterianism Course:** This course has been completed and its publication online and in hard copy will be available in the coming months.

14. **Youth Issues (Discipleship):** A working group has been set up to develop a specific resource in this area. It will take the form of a course structured around four core areas of relationship – relationships with God, Self, the World and Other People. From these core areas of relationship it is hoped that this course will help young people to deal with some of the specific issues they face from a biblical worldview. The work is in its early stages but is progressing well.

15. **Generate magazine:** The Board's newest resource is the newsletter, 'Generate', which will be circulated three times a year from the YAC Office to Ministers, youth leaders, Sunday School Superintendents, youth workers and General Assembly Board Secretaries. The aim is to provide a good source of information about the work of the Board. Additional copies will be available in the office for Ministers to request for circulation within their Congregation.

16. **Special Needs:** In addition to existing work, the committee plans to make contact with a number of teachers and youth leaders who are currently involved in special needs clubs to initiate a conversation around the issues that YAC need to consider regarding ministry with Special Needs children and young people. This is an important and challenging part of ministry with children and young people which will enable the Board to stand alongside leaders, parents, children and young people who are struggling with at least some of the many issues around special needs

17. **Faith Based Sub Group on Sexual Health** is an inter-denominational sub-group formed at the request of government to provide materials on this issue from a faith perspective. Over a number of years the YAC board has been represented on this group by Michelle McCauley, who has been part of the production 'The Unique' material on sexual health. This valuable resource has now been used to create a website for youth workers, teachers and parents (www.unique-ni.org). Andy Howard has agreed to take over from Michelle McCauley as part of this group.

GRAEME KENNEDY, Convener

MINISTRY EVENTS COMMITTEE

1. The Ministry Events Committee continues to organise and promote a series of events which are relevant to the needs of children, young people and young adults across the denomination. Dedicated working groups have been putting preparations in place for various events this year. As well as the well established events running throughout 2011, the Committee is very excited about the launch of the new Bible-teaching conference for young adults, 'The Word', which is planned for late August. The Committee is grateful to God for all that He has done through events in the past and waits eagerly in prayerful anticipation to see how He will bless the work in the coming year.

Kids' Praise Party

2. It is hard to believe that this event is already into its fifth year and this year's Kids' Praise Party is planned for the afternoon of Saturday 21 May in Carnmoney Presbyterian Church. The themes for this event have carefully built year on year and in 2011 it has taken the theme "Loved by God". The lively programme of praise and interactive discovery will seek to remind children how precious each of them is in the sight of God, just as they are – this is an important message in a culture which would seek to make them believe from an early age that they need to conform to a certain body shape, style of dress or pattern of behaviour to gain approval or acceptance. The programme will culminate with a short talk by David Gray, a Ruling Elder in Kirkpatrick Memorial Presbyterian Church, who is a gifted communicator to that age group.

Youth Night

3. Youth Night is planned for Church House on the evening of Saturday 11 June, 2011, at the climax of General Assembly week. It is again hoped that there will be a tremendous turnout of young people from all parts of our island, gathering for worship led by Mr Jag, as well as to hear what God would say through the speaker, Paul Bowman, Youth Director in 1st Saintfield Presbyterian Church. The theme for the evening will be "Glimpses of Grace" and the interactive programme is being put together by the working group under the leadership of its new chairman, Rick Hill. Thanks are extended to Rick's predecessor, Michael Wylie, for his wise and energetic direction of the Youth Night working group in recent years.

MAD Weekend

4. The MAD working group is also under new leadership. The Committee wish David Penney well as he takes over the reins from our Board Convener, the Rev Jonathan Moxen. Jonathan has been the driving force behind MAD throughout its history and the Church owes him a debt of thanks for all he has contributed in that role. Many young people have come to faith or re-committed their lives to the Lord down through the years at MAD. The Committee's prayer is that God will move in power once again at "MAD 13" on 28-30 October, 2011. Alastair Bennett and his band will again lead the worship, in a supporting role to the Rev Andy Carroll who will be this year's main

speaker. It is expected that there will be the usual demand for tickets as many young people from all over Ireland descend on the University of Ulster campus in Coleraine to enjoy the varied programme of worship, teaching and activity.

The Word

5. This new event is a Bible conference for young adults aged 18-30 years and it follows on from the very successful Route 66 event which ran for ten years. The vision for 'The Word' is to 'equip a generation to be transformed, not conformed' – giving our young adults the tools to handle correctly the text of the Bible and apply its teaching to many of the serious issues with which they are grappling. The conference will also enable them to defend the truth of God's Word in the 'marketplace' of today's culture. A working group, chaired by Lachlan Webster, has been working hard to put the building blocks of this exciting event in place. 'The Word' will take place at Castlewellan Castle from 26-28 August 2011 and the keynote speaker will be Rev Andy Hickford, a long-time friend of the Board and now senior Minister at Maybridge Community Church in Worthing. It is anticipated that a strong line-up of local speakers will also be recruited to lead the seminar programme. It is planned that the weekend will culminate with a celebration service in Newcastle Presbyterian Church which will include thanksgiving for the work of camps and summer outreach teams and an act of commissioning for those embarking on the Board's VIP programme.

6. The cost of attending 'The Word' will be £85 per person. The Board encourages Congregations to consider financially supporting their young people to attend the conference.

Future Plans

7. While remaining committed to delivering the present schedule of events, the Committee is constantly exploring new opportunities which will best serve the Board and the Church in fulfilling its remit to reach and nurture children and young people. At present some preliminary work is being done to investigate the possible provision of an event for pre-school children.

Thanks

8. As well as our indebtedness to God for His gracious leading and provision, thanks are also due to our committed working group members, as well as the hard-working and efficient YAC staff team.

ANDREW THOMPSON, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That a grant of £9,736 be paid from the Incidental Fund to Youth Link: NI.
3. That the General Assembly approve the Youth and Children's Project to support the work of Kids' Alive International and Friendship House in Sandy Row.

4. That the resignation of the Rev Graeme Kennedy as Convener of the Ministry Resources Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that the Rev David Brownlow be appointed in his place.

5. That the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry, with its associated working Committees for the ensuing year, be appointed as follows: