Looking forward we expect an exciting year ahead as we develop a letter writing competition with our local schools, leading to a community faith trail and prize giving in World Harmony week.

In the summer break we will one again ‘Celebrate the changing face of our community’ but this time at St Augustine’s, utilizing their wonderful new parish hall. Hopefully we'll see you there?

Of course alongside all of this we will to continue to work with Generation Re– United, Tonge Lunch Leisure, other groups, individuals and most importantly the Church at The Centre.

We hope you feel this is an apt celebration of some of the ways we have, and continue, to stand up for the aims and ideals of the Building Bridges Project?

We can't do anything without you!

Mahatma Gandhi

The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others

Building Bridges
Annual Report 2016

Working in partnership, and committed to supporting community development in Tonge Moor

In this annual report, we would like to celebrate all we have achieved together this year.

Thank you!

We hope we can work with anyone who lives works or plays in Tonge Moor. So if this annual report inspires you to get in touch, please contact:

Alison on :07908110121 or email her on: alison.dalton@bolton.gov.uk
Hi all,

This year has been a very different year for all of us involved in the Building Bridges Project. As it began I was lucky enough to go on a period of evaluation and reflection, a time to take stock and reenergise, to refresh my own spirituality.

At the same time Dave had his 60th birthday so we had an amazing family holiday to celebrate, the picture above was taken at this time.

Then as I returned it was realized that I had a very dense cataract in my right eye which meant I lost sight in that eye until I had the routine but miraculous operation to restore it.

As you will see in this report though, the work has continued because of course Building Bridges in not just me the person you see, but rather a whole group of people who are supportive of me personally, of our work and who love Tonge Moor and so care for each other and this our community.

Thank you!

Alison Dalton (Church Related Community Minister with the Building Bridges Project)

The aims of the Building Bridges Project:
• To foster mutual respect, trust, support and kindness between generations, faiths and cultures.
• To help develop Tonge Children’s Centre into a hub for the community.
• By working with others, to support other community activities which address needs in the area.
• That (by 2020) everyone in the local community will feel that Church at the Centre is available for them.

Every successful individual know that his or her achievement depends on a community of persons working together.

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Our Finances

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So the Church at the Centre developed the Building Bridges Project back in 2006 to support our local community, Tonge Moor, a place we have served for over 125 years.

However we too have gained from this way of working, some of our congregation, and the wider community, have grown in wellbeing and confidence because of their involvement in the project. Perhaps they are leading prayers or a discussion group, involved with Generation Re—United, Big Local, Fusion or maybe something else, because of their involvement in this project?

Sometimes when we put on events, or with our worship, we are challenged to think differently because of our involvement with this project.

At our Autumn tea this year we decided to focus on the gifts and talents we all bring to each other. As part of that fun event Alison challenged us with a quiz where we had to work out who people were fusing photos she had collected of us as babies and or young people.

Alison then challenged us to think about how we have changed both externally and internally, to think about all the skills and gifts we have developed in the time that has past and asked how we use those gifts and skills to help others here in Tonge Moor.

We had lots of fun trying to work out who everyone was, but it was very hard as we had all changed so much. There were 27 pictures and even the winner was only able to identify ten people. Well done Maureen!

This year the Building Bridges project continued to celebrate the changing face of our community here in Tonge Moor.

We worked with children from Tonge Moor Community School and Altru Education to develop together a drama piece which they performed throughout the summer across Tonge Moor and at the Great Get Together held at the Central Library and coordinated by Bolton Interfaith Council.

The Video Box filmed this drama ‘Community’ which can be found at: https://youtu.be/KKd63mXXI68

Or speak to Alison and she will let you have a DVD of the piece.

It was well thought out an acted, so well done to them; and they and their parents should be very proud.

I certainly was!
Building Bridges attends Tonge Lunch and Leisure the lunch club held at Tonge Children Centre most weeks. The support, and the enthusiasm of the volunteers, helps to keep the club running and is very much appreciated by all involved.

Together, Tonge Children’s Centre, The Church at The Centre and Age UK provide a wonderful social setting to help isolated older people get together, socialise by enjoying a home cooked style two course lunch with fun activities before and after.

Building Bridges has organised with Moorgate Community Primary School to attend on a half termly basis. The children, accompanied by staff, join us and provide activities for all who attend.

Together they have made beautifully coloured flower pots and placemats for the tables, to make the room bright and inviting. We have also had performances by the children to entertain us.

We run a chair based exercise class before lunch, most of the volunteers join in to help engage with others to take part and enjoy the health benefits of exercise. They also help with the general tasks of serving and clearing away the meal.

Building Bridges volunteers invites the club members to other activities and celebrations they are aware of throughout the year. All this together helps us to deliver a great service for older local residents of the Tonge Moor area.

Things have had to change this year as people have moved on, but we have a lovely crowd to help us cope with all of this change!

About this time last year Building Bridges organised a fantastic celebration at St Andrew’s called ‘Celebrating The Changing Face of Our Community.’ St Andrew’s, as a partner in the Building Bridges project, were pleased to get involved.

This was a voluntary community/cultural/faith group celebration of all the wonderful diversity that our area has created. Over 200 people came and enjoyed it!

There were Swahili singers from St Andrew’s and Melbourne Rd Methodist Churches, African drumming, Salsa dancing, volunteering in Romania and more African dancing. The Interfaith Council’s Young Ambassadors came and encouraged people to try on a sari, whilst Tonge Lunch and Leisure helped us have fun with crafts. There was a Fusion Dance Group too!

There was lots to excite the kids including games and henna painting. On top of this there was all sorts of food from around the globe—all free!

Another way Building Bridges is involved with St Andrew’s is through participation in Messy Church. This is a monthly activity for children, their parents/carers. We attract about 80 people and have an adult per table (about 10) introducing the activity. Building Bridges volunteers have cooked the five loaves, and painted a hundred faces as part of these activities. There is a short time in church followed by a free hot tea.

And yet another way Building Bridges has worked with St Andrew’s is the regular monthly newsletter article written for our magazine. But I think I should stop here! As you can see we have a lot of time for our involvement with the Building Bridges project! It was lovely—can’t believe it was all free—loads to do!

Nice to see all different people coming together getting involved!
Tonge with The Haulgh has received £1 million pounds from the National Lottery to invest in the area. The main criteria for the project to get the desired outcomes is that the project must be resident led and involve people who live and work in the area. Tonge with The Haulgh Big Local Partnership (BLP) has been set up and involves local residents, service providers and councillors.

Building Bridges has been instrumental in linking up with Tonge with The Haulgh Big Local projects and expanding them e.g. Generations Reunited and The Parade. Big Local has been made richer due to increased contacts which have enabled projects to have more depth and a wider reach. It has been able to deliver to residents previously not engaged with. Big Local has funded various projects, one mutually beneficial partnership being the hate crime project. Alison as part of Building Bridges has been very hands-on involved at all levels from grassroots to strategy planning.

The Big Local Partnership recognise Fusion as being Tonge with The Haulgh Big Local Hub. Due to the nature of the Big Local Partnership it was decided that the key positions, Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Finance should be held by residents. Unfortunately residents were reluctant to fill these positions and Alison agreed to step-up from being a member of the Big Local Partnership to being Chair in the short-term whilst being shadowed to allow confidence to be fostered. Alison is a very active Chair and is involved in both project planning and delivery.

Generation Re-United

Our new group Generation Re-United continued to grow and flourished after we launch it in October 2016, through the year. However we are now unable to restart until January 2018 because the Children’s Centre is having the roof replaced. We have used the time well though because our volunteers have undertaken some training to help the group run even more smoothly. Of course throughout the year we had fantastic sessions, fun times with all generations together!

We look forward to seeing anyone who wants to have fun together, older people, grandparents, carers and children of all ages. Join us when we reopen in January on a Monday straight after school for a light tea and fun!

‘Everyone seems to have different skills to share!’
‘I like doing art and the jigsaw!’
‘Really friendly, makes you feel welcome!’

Building Bridges, through Alison, whilst strongly supporting Fusion links in with the Big Local Partnership and creates a positive influence on both groups.
Edna uses our community bookshelf regularly, she writes:

‘I use the bookshelf because it is really easy to relax and browse through the books. It’s not like a library where you need to return the books on a certain date, or renew them. If you are halfway through, you know you can read them in your own time, even if it is 2-3 weeks later. You can also return your book, plus any others you may have lying about the house.

I find a Friday is my best day, as I help out at the Lunch club so have plenty of time afterwards to browse. I often pick up books to read on the train whilst travelling to my family in Scotland.

I also pick books up to read on the plane whilst travelling abroad. The good thing is, if lost I’m not charged for it (like a library does).

We just need your help to keep stocked up with new books to read!

The Building Bridges project aims to support other groups as they develop community activities. Sharon, a Fusion volunteer says:

The Building Bridges project gives us an opportunity to share what is going on in not just our community but the wider community. Everyone who is involved with Building Bridges has a real passion for meeting the needs, and serving the community. We can share skills and knowledge and there is a real sense of unity in the work we are all doing.

Fusion has been used to hold the building bridges meetings and this has helped greatly to highlight this great community hub. The Church Related Community Worker (Alison) has become a great support to Fusion in supporting not just the volunteers but the community as well, and has shared her skills and knowledge to assist with the ongoing success of Fusion. This has also highlighted the local churches and through that, some of the volunteers and users of the centre have become involved and also become members of the Church at The Centre.