

Highlights from 2016/17

From the Chair:

This year, 2017, we at Signs of God are marking the twentieth anniversary with new transitions and changes, 'change for better' in the sense of moving forward with our two key objects - quality training in BSL and the active participation of deaf people within the Church.

Please do read the Annual Report's activities, the delegation of different aspects of our Administrator, Gill Behenna, to 'new faces' and the continuing dedication of the Core Team members in fulfilling Signs of God's values. We cannot adequately thank her enough for the massive contribution she gave us in the last two decades.

We want to celebrate the two decades of amazing achievements and work by looking ahead, equipped and ready, for the next two decades, with valour and thanksgiving to our God.

Last but not least, we thank every single person - no matter how small or large the part taken - who played a part in Signs of God's development to what we have today.

Penelope Beschizza
Chair Signs of God

Building Capacity – volunteers step up to the task!

The Core Team in 2016/17 numbered 34 people and the Trustees continued their policy of building capacity in Signs of God by recruiting Core Team members to various specific tasks:

- Judith Hillary has taken on the role of Secretary to the Trustees and will be responsible for the administration that goes with running Signs of God. You can contact Judith on admin@signsofgod.org.uk
- Anna Smith has volunteered to be the person who answers enquiries about Signs of God. Anna can be contacted on info@signsofgod.org.uk Anna will also receive any emails addressed to gill@signsofgod.org.uk and will forward them to Gill's personal email address as needed.
- Shaunett Harris has offered to collect information for an occasional Newsletter for Signs of God. She and a small team also keep an eye on the Signs of God Facebook Page and answer enquiries there.

Signs of God Training

Approximately 300 people attended the various training events organised by Signs of God during the year. Below are some highlights.

Our 10th Summer School – innovative, informative, inspiring!

83 students attended the Summer School in 2016 and the feedback they gave showed they had a great time.

We introduced several innovations this year:

- a Summer School app, largely thanks to Tom Pearson, was greatly appreciated and cut down on our mountain of paper!
- a welcome team, (again, thanks to Tom) who were there for new people on day one also kept an eye out for anyone during the week who may have felt a bit lost
- a soapbox event when people could give short presentations on a variety of subjects
- an International Skype conversation with Christian ASL interpreters and students, thanks to Mary Alice Gardner, one of our visiting tutors.

Workshops and Training events

The “bread and butter” part of our work continued during the year with Workshops in Derby, Farnborough, Walsall, and Worcester and a training event for professional interpreters in Darlington.

Roma Parrick does a great job in sorting out all the admin for the workshops (sometimes a real headache!) she can be contacted on workshops@signsofgod.org.uk

Thank you to everyone who taught and interpreted at these workshops and training events.

Bursary Scheme launched

One of the items from our 2015 Vision day was the suggestion of free places for Summer School. This idea has been developed by the Trustees into a Signs of God Bursary Scheme, which was launched at our 2016 Summer School. Details of how to apply to the scheme will be made available via our website.

2017 Calendar launched

Another idea from our Vision Day was to create our own calendar for our 20th year. Thanks to Hannah Robinson, this was available in time to sell at Summer School and was a great success.

Christian Interpreters in demand!

Liz Macartney manages our Christian Interpreters’ Network. She can be contacted on interpreting@signsofgod.org.uk

During the year, we responded to 130 requests for interpreters. This is one of the main ways in which Signs of God seeks to serve the general public. We also provided interpreters for 13 National Christian events, enabling Deaf people to access events of their choice.

We are always looking for people to join the network – it’s open to anyone with a minimum BSL level 6, or equivalent.

Finance

Our Treasurer is Hannah Robinson. She can be contacted on treasurer@signsofgod.org.uk Most of our income comes from individual donations and we were delighted to reach our Vision Day target of £500 per month income from individual donors by the end of the financial year. Some of our training events generate a small surplus, enabling us to continue the work of the charity and plan new events. In addition, many of our tutors give their time freely, or donate back their gifts, to benefit the charity.

The full Annual Report and Accounts will be freely available via the Signs of God website and the Charity Commission Website after the AGM.

From Gill Behenna

As I hand over the administration of Signs of God after 20 years, I am filled with excitement at all God has done, and will continue to do, in and through this organisation. In recent years, the organisation has grown, both in activities and in reputation so that there really is too much work for one person to do. As various people have taken on distinct areas of responsibility, I have felt tremendous pride in knowing that Signs of God is in such safe hands. A skilled and experienced Board of Trustees and an active Core Team means that Signs of God has a great future ahead!