

# Leeds Methodist Mission Management Committee

## *Minutes of the meeting held at Oxford Place Centre*

**3rd October 2013**

### **1 Welcome and attendance**

The chair, Peter Whittaker, welcomed everyone and, as this was the first meeting, each person present introduced themselves.

*Present:* The Revd Madeleine Andrews, Mrs Ann Bailey (Oxford Place Methodist Church), the Revd Philip Bee, the Revd Tony Bundock (Leeds Minster), the Revd Sue Sowden (Superintendent Minister of the Leeds South and Central Circuit), Deacon Jenny Jones, Mr Bernard Neville (Treasurer), Mrs Wendy Ribbands, the Revd Liz Smith (Chair of the District), Mr Kenneth Tait (Secretary), the Revd Peter Whittaker (Chair)

*Apologies:* The Revd Deacon Joseph Cortis (Leeds Cathedral), Mr Tim Newman (Oxford Place Methodist Church)

*In attendance:* Mr Michael Noble (Consultant to the committee), Mr Trevor Parker (Conference and Property Manager)

Notes:

- (i) Representatives of Oxford Place Methodist Church are appointed by the Church Council.
- (ii) The Superintendent Minister of the Leeds South and Central Circuit is a member of the committee *ex officio* as is the Chair of the District. The Synod Secretary, is also a member *ex officio*, but has indicated that she intends not to attend meetings.
- (iii) Leeds Minster and Leeds Cathedral are invited to send representatives.
- (iv) A further ecumenical representative and a representative of Leeds South and Central Circuit have yet to be appointed.
- (v) The remaining members are appointed by the Synod of the Leeds District.

### **2 Conversation about the purpose of the Mission and this committee**

Peter spoke to his paper (Annex A) which had been distributed before the meeting. His aim was to clarify what we are expected to do. Our God is a God of mission and we have a mission to the city and its people, not just to those who come through our door. There should be no boundary or border that we should not be prepared to cross to forge partnerships – with churches and circuits, other worshipping groups, and those active in areas that are Kingdom work. We have a particular partnership with Oxford Place Methodist Church. To these ends we must manage the property and finances of this building (the Oxford Place Centre) so that it can be used effectively and sustainably, and address the question: How does this place represent sacred space – a Christian building in the centre of the city?

In the conversation the following points were made:<sup>1</sup>

- (i) The hope was expressed that more churches in the Leeds District would become aware of the work of the mission opening up the possibility of creating partnerships. We might start by making links with churches of the Leeds Circuits.

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<sup>1</sup> In reporting conversations and discussion I will generally not attribute remarks to any particular member of the meeting, nor try to record actual words, but rather to capture the intent and substance of what was said in whatever words I judge to be appropriate, combining contributions for brevity and clarity. KT

- (ii) Points 8 and 9 of Peter's paper were deemed to be particularly difficult.
- (iii) The Mission should endeavour to avoid become no more than a property owner, but strive for interaction with all users of the building.
- (iv) Although there was much knowledge and understanding in this group of what was needed, in some senses we would have to 'make it up as we go along'.
- (v) The mission of Oxford Place Church and of the Oxford Place Centre cross over. Their mission initiatives should be collaborative rather than working in parallel.
- (vi) OP Church has a home in the Oxford Place Centre. The church has not come to terms with this, grieving over what it has lost and not yet able to take advantage of the freedom from responsibility for the building. What has been put in place is also a big change for 'us'.
- (vii) When things have settled down there should be partnership with OP Church and in the wider work of the Leeds South and Central Circuit.
- (viii) Over a period of time we should be able to identify things we have done as fulfilling (in part) items in Peter's paper.
- (ix) There are already things we have done and will continue to do such as the Courts Carol Service – times when people know they are entering sacred space.

### **3 Prayers**

Peter read Acts 1:8, commenting that we must start where we are, both geographically and spiritually and move out in both ways. Peter led the meeting in prayer for the work of the Mission and for the meeting.

### **4 Minutes of the final meeting of the Leeds Mission Interim Management Committee (2nd February 2013)**

The minutes were approved by the meeting and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the meeting. There were no matters arising directly from these minutes.

### **5 Items not already on the agenda**

The meeting was asked to raise items not on the agenda to be dealt with at this or future meetings. (see item 14 below)

### **6 Charity Commission**

The Charity Commission needed to be informed of the change in the membership of the Management Committee as the Leeds Mission continues to be a registered charity (No: 1138731 ). This information needs to be in two parts: the names of those deemed to have resigned (as they are no longer members of the committee), and the names of new members. Ken and Trevor agreed to deal with this.

[KT,TP]

### **7 Vote of thanks**

Jenny proposed a vote of thanks to the lay staff of the centre: Trevor, Tim, Mark and Rhea. This was agreed and Peter offered to write a letter. This offer was accepted.

[PW]

## 8 Finance

- (i) The process of splitting the finances and accounts between the Oxford Place Centre and the Oxford Place Methodist Church was on-going. Some difficulties had arisen with the payment of stipends and salaries due to confusion at the connexional payroll department, but these had been dealt with and the Leeds South and Central Circuit had been reimbursed for payments taken incorrectly from its account.
- (ii) The structure of the new accounts (for reporting purposes) had been determined, but the details had still to be worked out. Bernard was working with Alan Parker (Deputy District Treasurer) on the details as well as how the monies were to be split between Church and Centre.

[BN]

- (iii) New bank accounts had been created. It was agreed that the signatories should be the officers of the committee: chair, secretary and treasurer, with any two signatures required on a valid cheque. Bernard will organise this and inform the meeting of any requirements of the bank as to a formal resolution. The same signatories will operate accounts held by the Central Finance Board.

[BN]

- (iv) Some standing orders and direct debits representing regular giving by OP Church members were still going to the old OP Church account held at the Cooperative Bank. This account was to be closed as soon as practical. The Church needed to change the Gift Aid arrangements and ensure that members changed their direct debits, standing orders. Changing the Gift Aid arrangement would require the signature of the previous Gift Aid secretary (Miss Janet Caswell).

*Note: An email sent by Tim Newman before the meeting but not seen until after the meeting states:*

*I can confirm that my wife Helen [Oxford Place Church Treasurer] has opened a new charity/business bank account with HSBC in the name of Oxford Place Methodist Church. All monies collected from church congregation from Sept onwards are now being paid into this account and we are in process of asking relevant people to transfer standing orders to the new account over Sept/Oct/Nov period. Bernard is aware of this and at some point he will need to move an appropriate amount of money over to the new account based on the split of Church/Mission funds.*

## 9 Tenancies

Trevor tabled a document showing the layout and occupation of each of the floors in the Oxford Place Centre, both in main building and in the Chambers. This was much appreciated by both old and new members of the committee.

- (i) There had been a number of changes affecting tenancies.
  - (a) Recently there had been more interest.
  - (b) Reductions in funding had made some organisations reduce the space occupied.
  - (c) The Centre was endeavouring to remain flexible. Some space that had been designated for session lettings was now on a long lease.
- (ii) Where existing tenants were have difficulty paying the rents a charitable donation was made by the Mission rather than reducing the rent. This meant that the Centre could retain tenants that might otherwise move. This had been done in the past, but the meeting was cautioned that this device had to be used with care.

- (iii) The meeting was urged to find ways of communicating more widely what goes on in the Centre.
- (iv) It was agreed that the committee be supplied with regular information regarding the income and expenditure in respect of tenancies, including details of donations made to offset rent. This would be done as soon as the accounts are sorted out. (8(i) above).
- (v) The committee needed to know the formal agreements entered into with tenants.
- (vi) It was noted that office space was available nearby at £10 per sq foot per annum. Some of our tenants were already paying in excess of that figure.
- (vii) In answer to a question it was explained that the East Leeds Food Bank leased space in the basement of the Chambers to store their stock of food. This space was leased under a special low-cost arrangement.
- (viii) Jenny had set up a 'Tenants Forum' where representatives of our tenants could meet. Already this had led to some tenants working together. It was suggested the OP Church should be represented at this forum and the idea was accepted with enthusiasm.
- (ix) All leases have been submitted to TMCP<sup>2</sup> and they have been agreed with tenants. Work on getting the exact wording of leases and agreements acceptable to both TMCP and to the solicitors representing tenants continued to progress slowly. Solicitors responded more quickly than TMCP. TMCP often did not respond for weeks and was difficult to contact by telephone. However, tenants are paying their rents.
- (x) Annual rent increase are based on changes in the Retail Prices Index (RPI).<sup>3</sup>

## 10 Property

- (i) A request was made that Oxford Place Church congregation be provided with a room for their exclusive use. With the removal of responsibility for the property the congregation had lost its anchor to the building. The locking away of things after each worship service made them feel homeless. This situation would be ameliorated by having space that the congregation could call its own. Such a space would also serve as a place for small groups to meet. The congregation needed to feel that this is their church. At the moment there is nothing labelled 'Oxford Place Methodist Church'.
  - (a) The meeting was informed that work was to be done on the cloakroom and the adjacent small room. When the work had been completed this issue could be properly addressed.<sup>4</sup>
  - (b) The meeting was reminded that as part of the changes that have occurred there was a firm intention to have and support a Methodist congregation worshipping in the Centre.
  - (c) The meeting asked that the congregation be reassured that the Centre would accede to the request, allocate space, and make it fit for purpose.
- (ii) Repairs and renewals
  - (a) Work on the fall-pipes on the Westgate (South) side of the Centre was outstanding and had been for some time, and the problem continued to cause damage to the fabric. The necessary approval had been received but the

<sup>2</sup> Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (often just referred to as 'Manchester').

<sup>3</sup> RPI is general greater than the increasingly used CPI (Consumer Prices Index).

<sup>4</sup> These two rooms lie at the northern end of the main foyer and are entered through the same door.

original contractors were no longer interested. Quotes from a new contractor were slightly higher. The VAT inclusive cost was £9600 (but it was expected that VAT would not have to be paid.) The meeting agreed that the work should proceed.

- (b) The passenger lift in the Chambers had failed and needed new rollers at a cost of £1300. The meeting agreed to this.

The meeting was informed that servicing cost for the lift was £5000 per annum and the cost of a new lift would be £45,000. Discussions were ongoing as to costs of continuing with the present lift or installing a new lift.

- (iii) Re-configuring of the rear entrance<sup>5</sup>
- (a) The project had been conceived in partnership with Nurture<sup>6</sup> who wanted to make the Lounge café more easily available to the people who passed the rear entrance in Oxford Row which was often busy with people concerned with what was going on in the Combined Courts.
- (b) The proposed changes would enhance the rear of the building.
- (c) Some consents had been obtain but nothing in respect of listed building consent. At the moment there was no clear picture as to the source of funding and so the meeting agreed to wait until funding was established.
- (d) It was noted that although there was an arrangement by which the Centre received a share of the profits from the café there had been nothing in the last year (£1000 in a previous year) . It was pointed out that Nurture provide catering for conferences and meetings. The profit made from this is not counted as part of the café profits. Perhaps it should be.
- (e) Trevor, Jenny and Philip are to meet with Chris Field and David Pilling (both of Nurture) to discuss the issues relating to the rear entrance development.

[TP, JJ, PB]

## 11 Safeguarding

- (i) Jenny circulated a paper setting out the policy of the Mission on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults (Annex B). The committee were asked to read this and respond to Ken within 14 days. No response would be taken to indicate approval of the document.
- (ii) Jenny also circulated two further documents:
- Person-to-Person Listening Service – Main Responsibilities and Duties [of volunteers] (Annex C)
  - Oxford Place Children’s Centre – Volunteer Job Description (Annex D)
- Again the committee were asked to respond within 14 days and that no response would indicate approval.
- (iii) Members of the meeting (excepting presbyters) were asked to sign Safeguarding Form C and return the completed form to Jenny.

<sup>5</sup> Plans relating to this proposal will be found in the minutes of the meeting of the LM Interim MC held on 2nd February 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Nurture is a St George’s Crypt project which provides training in catering for those who have been or at are at risk of becoming homeless. The Lounge café is a place where trainees can begin to interact with the public.

## 12 Conferencing

- (i) Trevor spoke to a document ( Annex E) reporting on Conferencing and Room Hire. The document includes:
  - (a) The month-by-month income from conferencing and the hire of rooms for the years 2011/12 and 2012/13 with actual figures and expected income for the current year up to January 2014. The totals for the preceding two years were:
    - 2011/12 £23726.88
    - 2012/13 £30117.80
  - (b) The appendix to the document sets out the current charges for rooms and the proposed charges January 2014.
- (ii) Trevor was asked to collect and report the use of the rooms.
- (iii) The meeting was informed that it was generally accepted that 40% use was the normal expectation.
- (iv) Some concern was expressed that the space used for worship by OP Church was called the Conference Hall in the promotional material. After a short discussion this was deemed to be an appropriately neutral name in this context. The meeting agreed to leave this as it was though there remained a degree of concern.

## 13 The entrance to the centre

- (i) Jenny is giving some thought to what could be done to make the entrance and foyer 'speak to those who come in'. Including 'advertising' what goes on in the building. [J]
- (ii) The book *Hybrid Church* by Chris Baker<sup>7</sup> was recommended to the meeting.
- (iii) It was suggested that professional advice be taken and that there be conversations with Oxford Place Church.

## 14 Other business of this or future meetings

- (i) *Items suggested at Item 5 above*
  - (a) Possible changes to the constitution of the Oxford Place Children's Centre
  - (b) Plans to change the rear entrance to Oxford Place Centre
  - (c) Pioneer ministers
  - (d) Information to be sent to the Charity Commissioners
- Items listed on the agenda*
  - (e) Development of budgets and authority to spend
  - (f) Robust line-management arrangements and salary review
  - (g) Development of sub-groups and devolved responsibility
  - (h) Advocacy of the work done through the Oxford Place Centre by us and our partner organisations
  - (i) Development and support of the work undertaken by the Deacon
  - (j) A proper approach to the stewardship of these buildings

<sup>7</sup> *Hybrid Church in the City – Third Space Thinking* Christopher Richard Baker (William Temple Foundation) published by Ashgate ISBN 978-0-7546-5513-8 (Hardback – there is a paperback edition) Amazon price: £22.99.

- (k) Development of a robust and regular conversation with all the Leeds City Methodist Circuits
- (l) Maintaining our awareness of and contact with other Church and Christian organisations that are also active in the city.
- (m) Future meetings – a regular cycle for meetings and completion of financial matters

*Item (a) was dealt with at Item 10 (iii) above.*

*Item (d) was dealt with at Item 6 above.*

*Items (g) and (m) were dealt with at Item 15 below.*

- (ii) Item (a) Jenny would discuss this with Gill Jewell, chair of the Children’s Centre Management Committee
- (iii) The comment was made that the future business was about ‘business’ and that none of it addressed the first two points of Peter’s list (Annex A). This led to a comment about the involvement of the Mission in the night-time economy of the city centred. It was explained that there are three pioneer ministers funded by the Anglican Church and the Methodist Church. One of these, Beth Tash, works in the night-time economy. She organises Street Angels (which is the successor in Leeds to Street Chaplains. Street Chaplains an ecumenically supported initiative of the Leeds Mission active in the period before Beth was appointed. Beth has organised ‘Festival Angels’ at the Leeds Festival and ‘Club Angels’.
- (iv) It was agreed that this committee needed to be a ‘visioning group’.
- (v) Items not yet addressed would be the business of future meetings.

## 15 Future Meetings

It was agreed that the next meeting would be in late November and that the following one in March and that the members would be canvassed for a suitable date through the Web (e.g doodle.com).

[KT]

The November meeting would (in particular) address Item (g) under 14(i) , and continue the discussion under item 8(ii) above.

## 16 Close

Peter thanked the meeting , led the meeting in prayer and the meeting closed by all present saying the Grace.