

Leeds Methodist Mission Management Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at Oxford Place Centre

17th February 2014

1 Welcome and attendance

Present: The Revd Madeleine Andrews, the Revd Philip Bee, Deacon Jenny Jones, Mr Bernard Neville (Treasurer), Mr Tim Newman, the Revd Dr Liz Smith, Mrs Elizabeth Smith, the Revd Sue Sowden, Mr Kenneth Tait (Secretary), the Revd Peter Whittaker (Chair)

Apologies: Mrs Ann Bailey, the Revd Tony Bundock, the Revd Deacon Joseph Cortis, Mr Michael Noble, Mrs Wendy Ribbands,.

In attendance: Mr Trevor Parker

The chair, Peter Whittaker, welcomed everyone. Elizabeth Smith was present as the representative of the Leeds South and Central Circuit. (See 1 (iv) of the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd October 2013). As the interaction with TMCP had only recently resulted in the identification of the managing trustees (Item 6 below) for the Leeds Mission project, the meeting agreed not to add Elizabeth's name to the list of trustees until September 2014 to avoid having to give more time to this matter.

2 Opening Devotions

Peter read from Matthew 5 and I Corinthians 3 before leading the meeting in prayer.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting (4th December 2013)

These were accepted as a true record and signed by the chair.

4 Items of business not covered by agenda items

Three items were presented to the meeting. The following item was dealt with immediately and the other two allocated places in the agenda.

It was agreed that the Oxford Place Centre would become part of the Leeds Safe Places scheme¹ and display its logo so that persons who are members of the scheme know that they can come into the building and find help.

5 Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

(i) *Safeguarding forms* [Item 6]

All members of the committee had completed them with the exception of Tony Bundock.

(ii) *Partnership with Nurture* [Items 7 (iv) and 8 (v) (c)]

- (a) The *Nurture* project was no longer an independent project but was now part of the St George's Crypt project. This meant that there was more stringent oversight of Nurture's finances. As a result of this a scheme would be put in place to provide Leeds Mission with monthly statements which would give a clearer understanding of the performance of the Lounge Café.

1 More information can be found at www.leeds.gov.uk/residents/Pages/LDCSS-safe-places.aspx

- (b) In the discussion with *Nurture* (which is ongoing) concern had been expressed about the quality of what was served in the café and the attitude of the staff in serving customers customers. Also, it was reported that the Leeds Mission staff were having to spend too much time supporting the *Nurture* staff who, it was felt, were not sufficiently monitored from within *Nurture*.

[JJ, TP, PB]

- (c) It was noted that the nature of the café was such that it could not be expected to make much money. However, *Nurture* benefited from supplying catering to the conferencing activities of the Leeds Mission.
- (d) In response to concern from members of the committee not familiar with the nature of our partnership with *Nurture* it was explained that *Nurture* had a licence to use certain areas of the Centre at certain times and was required to contribute to the costs of electricity and gas. In granting the licence it was agreed that any profit at the end of each year would be split equally between the Leeds Mission and *Nurture*. The licence has to be renewed annually (1st September) and *Nurture* were now in the middle of their third year. Only at the end the first year had any money been handed to the Leeds Mission. It was made clear to the meeting that the licence made no reference to such things as support (from our staff) . It was agreed that this should be reviewed and consideration given to modifying the licence for the coming year.

[JJ, TP, PB, BN]

(iii) *Leeds Christian Fellowship Church* [8 (v) (d)]

- (a) It was emphasised that this group was no longer comprised mainly of refugees and asylum seekers, and that their use of the building had increased dramatically, with increased wear and tear.
- (b) At present the LCFC pay £600 per half-year for their use of the premises. In the ongoing discussion with the church elders a payment of £3000 per annum has been discussed, though not finalised. Agreement on the times when they use the building is still being negotiated.
- (c) These discussions are ‘faith talking to faith’ and we are in partnership with them. Those involved in these discussions emphasised that the elders have a prayerful approach and that the dialogue has been positive and we have moved a long way in mutual understanding.

[JJ]

(iv) *‘Superintendent’s Office’* [11 (ii) (d)]

This room (now called ‘The Chadwick Room’) will be cleared of all items belonging to Oxford Place Methodist Church within the week.

[SS]

6 Managing Trusteeship

- (i) The trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP) have agreed that the managing trustees for the Leeds Mission project are the members of this committee as recently supplied to TMCP. As was noted above this does not include Elizabeth Smith, the representative of the Leeds South and Central Circuit who will be added to the list of trustees for the next Connexional Year.
- (ii) TMCP are sending the list of trustees to each of our tenants.

- (iii) TMCP has been informed that all communications relating to the Leeds Mission project should be sent to the administrator or the chair of this committee rather than the superintendent of the Leeds South and central Circuit which has been their practice.
- (iv) This committee will report to the District Policy Committee (DPC). The DPC meets three times each year: October, March and May/June. The DPC will expect a full report of the work of the Mission at its March meeting and updates at each of the other meetings. The chair of this committee can attend meetings of the DPC but will not be able to vote.

7 Property

- (i) A plan for an ongoing programme of routine maintenance is being prepared with costings available by the next meeting of this committee.
- (ii) The rooms along the north side of the basement are being reconfigured as three small counselling rooms to facilitate a tenant moving from their present location (in our building).
- (iii) The Davison Room (formerly Room 1) is somewhat 'dilapidated' and in need of redecoration and would benefit from more substantial furniture in keeping with its use if finances will allow. This was left to the treasurer and administrator to follow up. A 'loop system' has been installed in the room.
- (iv) Some uses of the 'Conference Hall' produce a significant volume of sound which can be heard in the Davison Room and a level that interferes with its use. Consideration is being given to replacing the present transparent door between the Conference Hall and the Davison Room by a soundproof screen and door.
- (v) The Chadwick Room is used almost every day and it needs to be tidied up (see 5 (iv) above) and an alternative home found for the furniture still present.
- (vi) A number of projects require investigation:
 - (a) The lift in the Chambers requires new cables, but a complete replacement would enhance the appeal and utility of the building.
 - (b) It has been noted that on rainy days there is some interference with the lighting in the building and consideration is being given to a full electrical survey.
 - (c) The development of the rear (Oxford Row) entrance in a way that would benefit the use of the café continues to be considered. (Annex A is the document presented to the Leeds Mission Interim Management Committee in February 2013 which gives details of the proposal.)
 - (d) Other work is being considered subject to budget restrictions.

8 Updates

(i) *Use of rooms*

The table on the next page gives some indication as to the use of rooms over the first five months of the current year. The 'Other' column covers all other rooms, but is treated as a single room which explains the figure of more than 100%. (The figures do not include use by the Leeds Christian Fellowship Church.)

This is good use. However, there is a demand for small rooms suitable for one-to-one counselling.

It is hoped that better data can be collected including footfall.

	Conference Hall	Davison	Chadwick	Other
September	33.33%	34.92%	20.63%	59.52%
October	40.91%	31.82%	21.21%	57.95%
November	49.21%	40.91%	22.73%	59.09%
December	53.33%	42.22%	24.44%	80.00%
January	40.00%	30.00%	25.00%	70.00%
February	36.67%	36.67%	36.67%	120.00%

(ii) *Income from sessional use of rooms*

The figures here (and in Annex B where more detail is given) only refer to rooms on the ground floor of the main building. There is contractual sessional use of rooms in the Chambers.

Actual income from the hire of rooms for the first five months of this year is around £7500 a further £4000 anticipated for the next three months. The budget figure for the whole year is £27000 (minus expenses). Income from associated catering and hire of equipment for the first five months has been a little under £3000 with the annual budget figure set at £4750. Overall the income for the first five months is a slight increase on the same period last year.

(iii) Deacon's report

Jenny presented the meeting with a list of events and activities in which she had been involved since the previous meeting (Annex C). In the discussion that followed the following elaborations and observations were made:

- (a) *Oxford Place Children's Centre* This is taking up a lot of Jenny's time. It continues to struggle financially having only receive a grant for six months from Leeds City Council and is proposing to make a bid for funding from the District Advance Fund. The footfall has become less because of more use in the courts of video links obviating the need for people to attend court, and there is increased availability of free child care for two-year-old children. Consideration is being given dispensing with the present afternoon session and offering the time to specific clients, and the issue of whether the Children's Centre continues to be 'the right thing' or has it had its time.
- (b) *Poverty and Homelessness Action Week* Leeds Mission hosted one of the three meetings organised by Church Action on Poverty. The meeting at OPC was a Question-and-Answer session chaired by John Battle (the former MP for Leeds West) with a panel made up of politicians, community workers and activists. (There were no MPs at the actual event.) There was much interaction between the panel and the 'audience' and it is hoped that there will be a follow up.
- (c) *Leeds Poverty Truth Challenge* This involves twelve people who have had experience of poverty telling their stories to the powerful – a very moving experience.
- (d) *Homelessness Mapping / Food Aid Network* This initiative is making food available and signposting sources of food for the homeless.
- (e) *Phoenix Health and Well-Being* is a new tenant. More information about the organisation is available on their web site:
www.phoenixhealthandwellbeing.org.uk
- (f) Plans have been made to have a labyrinth and a French café in Oxford Place Centre alongside the *Grand Départ* of *Le Tour de France* which on 5th July 2014 starts on

the Headrow between Calverley Street and Cookridge Street and heads east on its 190 km roundabout route to Harrogate.

- (g) Leeds Church Institute is hoping to bring the Touchstone Yurt² (Bradford) to Leeds.

9 Financial Matters

Bernard spoke to his Financial review (Annex D) and there was some discussion.

- (i) The division of funds between Leeds Mission and Oxford Place Church had been agreed and the transfers made with the exception of Trust 1141.
- (ii) The Batcliffe Drive Manse had been refurbished and was now on the market for rental at £975 per calendar month. The initial tenancy being offered could only extend until 31st May 2015 in case the manse was needed for a new minister on 1st September 2015.
- (iii) Jenny's current appointment³ ends on 31st August 2015 as does the grant of £10000 per annum from the District Advance Fund (DAF). Application will be made for a further grant from DAF to support an extension to Jenny's appointment or a new minister. This is an urgent matter.

Generally the DAF will fund up to 50% of the costs of a deacon (though more might be available if circumstances warranted it) for three years in the first instance, but with an understanding that a further two year's funding would be available (as diaconal appointments can only be made if funding is assured for five years). It was thought that similar funding would be available if the new minister were to be a presbyter.

[BN, PW]

The process that may lead to stationing will begin at the end of May 2014. The chair agreed to form a small group (two people) to take this forward.

[PW+]

- (iv) The budget figures in the review should be considered as draft or preliminary. It is intended to revise the headings making them more suited to the Leeds Mission work.
- (v) The audit of the accounts 2013/14 was not yet complete.
- (vi) Two resolutions:
 - (a) The meeting was asked to retrospectively approve the increase in the hours of the second caretaker (Mark Brooksbank) in order to retain him. His skills and expertise are such that he can do work which otherwise would require us to bring in contractors. The meeting approved the decision.
 - (b) Now that the issue of managing trustees had been resolved it was necessary to appoint signatories for leases and other legal documents. It was proposed and agreed that the signatories be the Secretary and Treasurer or whoever succeeded them in these offices.

Peter thanked Bernard and Trevor for their work.

10 Requests for free use of the premises

This item was brought up by Jenny under item 4 above.

² Visit www.touchstone-bradford.org.uk for more information.

³ This matter was also discussed at Item 12, but the import of that discussion is minuted here for convenience.

Jenny had received a number of requests from charitable organisations for the sessional use of a room at no charge and asked for guidance in how to respond to such requests. The main points in the discussion that followed were:

- (i) As a general rule, all users should recognise that there were costs in making space available and that it was our usual practice to make a charge and information on these charges is available.
- (ii) Is the group clear about its requirements, how it is going to use the space, and how will their activity affect other users. For example, the use of space late on a Friday might require extra cleaning etc. over the weekend to make the space ready for Sunday worship.
- (iii) Methodist groups or Methodist-led ecumenical groups could have the use of space at no charge for a single meeting (not for a series or regular meetings). The district pay a quarterly charge to cover all district use of the Oxford Place Centre.
- (iv) A lower charge than those advertised could be made if the circumstances justified it.
- (v) In most situations we should not let our heart rule our head.
- (vi) A number of support groups meet (informally) in the café (when it is open) and no charge is made.

11 Schedule for future meetings

It was agreed that the committee should meet three times each year:

- October (Accounts would be presented at this meeting)
- January (District Policy Committee expects the Mission's Annual Report at its March meeting)
- May/June (Budgets would be presented)

In addition there would be meetings of small groups as necessary.

The Secretary would endeavour to fix the dates of the next three meetings by the end of March 2014, taking into account items already listed in the District Calendar.

[KT]

12 Issues to Resolve

A paper by Peter had been circulated with the agenda (Annex E). This paper listed matters to be dealt with. Some had been addressed at this meeting, some were easily dealt with, others would take much longer.

- (i) Item A7 – The (old) Leeds Mission database. Peter and Ken agreed to look at this and consider how to make use of the information.

[KT, PW]

- (ii) Section C – Relationship Building was seen as important.

- (iii) Section D – Future directions for our work (Item 1)

- (a) A conversation should be had across the whole of the district. Of the eight circuits in the district only two did not cover part of the Leeds Metropolitan area.
- (b) Peter offered to talk with the Revd Rob Creamer (superintendent of the Leeds North and East Circuit)

[PW]

- (c) We need to raise the profile of the work *we* do.
- (iv) Sue asked why the phrase 'OP Congregation' in Item 3 of Section C had been used rather than 'Oxford Place Methodist Church'. Peter explained that he was thinking of the congregation as part of the Mission. Sue said it was a church in the Leeds South and Central Circuit and should be engaged in mission in its own right. This exchange highlighted the possibly different views of the relationship between OP Methodist Church and Leeds Mission, a topic that had been discussed at the 'Mission and Vision' meeting for members of OP Methodist Church.
- (v) Item 8 of Section B – Grant support for a deacon or presbyter from 1st September 2015.

The discussion that took place here is minuted at Item 9 (iii) above.

13 Close

After a short period of quiet reflection, Peter closed the meeting with a prayer.