

Leeds Methodist Mission Council

Formerly the Leeds Methodist Mission Management Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at Oxford Place Centre

15th October 2014

1 Welcome and attendance

Present: The Revd Madeleine Andrews, the Revd Deacon Joseph Cortis, Mr John Goacher, Deacon Jenny Jones, Mr Bernard Neville (Treasurer), Mrs Elizabeth Smith, the Revd Sue Sowden, Mr Kenneth Tait (Secretary), the Revd Peter Whittaker (Chair)

Apologies:, Mr Tim Newman, the Revd Liz Smith

In attendance: Mrs Rachel McCallam (Consultant to the Committee), Mr Trevor Parker (Conference and Property Manager)

- (i) The chair, Peter Whittaker, welcomed everyone and reminded the meeting that the Revd Philip Bee and the Revd Tony Bundock had both moved to new appointments and had resigned from the Council.
- (ii) It was noted (and discussed later) that Mrs Wendy Ribbands had missed a number of meetings and that despite attempts to communicate with her no response had been received.

2 Opening devotions

Peter read from the Letter to the Galatians 6:22-23 – The fruit of the Spirit ... Peter suggested that the list in these two verses can be seen as describing our currency – our Kingdom capital. He then led the meeting in prayer.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting (LMM Management Committee 26th June 2014)

With a small number of minor corrections these were accepted as a true record and signed by the chair.

4 Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

- (i) The invitation process had been successful with Deacon Jenny Jones accepting an invitation to continue for a further two years from 1st September 2015. [Item 9]
- (ii) The bid for a grant of £20,000 from the District Advance Fund to cover the cost of employing a Deacon had been successful. Bernard pointed out that in making the bid it had been assumed that the person in the appointment would require a manse and therefore the rental income from Batcliffe Drive manse would cease. Hence there was the possibility of an adjustment to the grant in the light of the preceding item.
- (iii) The Property and Conference Manager's appraisal had been completed. [Item A5, Annex E of the Minutes 17th February 2014]
- (iv) *Recruitment of a caretaker* The proposed procedure (in Annex A) was agreed. The advertisement through Job Centre Plus had been delayed because of queries received

from the Job Centre. Despite this five applications had been received. The dates for interviews will not change: 31st October and 3rd November.

- (v) *Leeds Christian Fellowship Church* The feedback from the caretakers has indicated that things have improved, but with occasional problems. The elders have admitted that they are having some difficulty managing their young people. [Item 4(i)]

5 Any other business

Two items were raised and dealt with immediately.

- (i) There had been a request to see our Mission Statement. The only one available was from the period before September 2013 and hence related to Leeds Mission Circuit and Oxford Place Church. Jenny and Peter agreed to draft a new version for consideration at our January meeting.

[J], PW]

- (ii) The Oxford Place Church Council had requested that a representative from this Council be appointed to the Church Council. After recognising that the Church Council had two representatives on the Mission Council and that the Minutes of the Mission Council were a matter of public record it was agreed that the two representatives be encouraged to report back to the Church Council. Peter offered to speak to the Church Council (or possibly the Annual Church Meeting) summarising the (recent) achievements of the Mission.

6 Deacon's Activities

A list of the activities will be found in Annex B and are numbered. Jenny expanded on the items in the projects section and there were comments from Council members:

- (i) *Le Tour de France* This had been exhilarating and exhausting.
- (ii) The Festival of Cribs and Christmas Trees will occur again this year, possibly involving the agencies.
- (iii) *Oxford Place Children's Centre*
- (a) This takes a large portion of Jenny's time. It's future funding is uncertain and without the Leeds City Council grant (a distinct possibility) it will not be possible to continue this project unless replacement funding is found. (The Centre's annual report is available through our web site.)
- (b) Steps have been taken to raise the profile of the Centre – 'business cards' and posters have been produced and sent to MPs, Councillors and law firms using the Courts
- (c) There has been an increase in numbers using the centre particularly during school holidays and by children who are two years and under. Also, court staff are being discouraged from looking after children for short periods.
- (d) At last year's Ofsted visit the centre was told to introduce a policy banning mobile phones and any device capable of taking photograph. Many older children bring smartphones (for example) to play games. Following enquiries to Ofsted the Centre has been informed that the ruling has been relaxed and devices can be used for gaming provided that no photographs are taken.
- (e) A group within the Oxford Place Centre, which counsels refugees, has booked and paid in advance for a number of places.

- (f) More volunteers are required as childcare assistants and possibly to help with administration. Jenny has written to Church Stewards in the Leeds city circuits about the need for more volunteers. She has also approached Voluntary Action Leeds.
- (iv) *Person-to-Person*
- (a) We are struggling to provide this service. Volunteers are getting older and have more commitments elsewhere. Jenny covers absences when possible.
- (b) There is a need for people to sit alongside those who need to fill in forms (for benefits and so on). The knowledge of Citizens Advice Bureau's (CAB) staff is stretched supporting those with complex issues and offering this service will free up their expertise.
- (c) We need to search more widely for volunteers. It was suggested that university students were a possible source. This raised questions of confidentiality and Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS) in relation to person information on forms, but training would cover these issues. This matter needs further consideration and it was pointed out that as many of these activities would require internet access our ability to support this would need improvement.
- (v) *No Going Back* This is a new charity to be based in the Centre from mid October. It is led by a Christian magistrate to provide counselling and legal support for asylum seekers who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transsexual (LGBT) who are (often) at serious personal risk if returned to their own country.
- (vi) *Leeds Citizens* This group hopes to launch next Summer and will be involved in 'community organising' which encourages people to look at the needs of their community or neighbourhood and with existing organisations and groups – not governmental, not market-oriented, not political. An organiser has already been appointed and we have offered them the use of the counselling room (at no charge) after 2.30 pm each day (currently Person-to-Person use it from 10am– 2pm, Monday to Thursday). Being linked to this project will bring a wider range of people into the Mission, connecting the Mission with the wider city.

Note

*Leeds Citizens is a chapter of Citizens UK. Their web sites will be found at:
leedscommunityorganising.wordpress.com/
www.citizensuk.org*

*More information on 'community organising' can be found on Wikipedia:
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_organizing*

KT

-
- (vii) *A Recovery Café* under the auspices of *Spacious Places* providing a safe space for those recovering from addiction was discussed at our previous meeting (Item 8(v)(d)). Having looked more closely at this it is now thought more sensible to have 'pop-up' events

(viii) *Other points*

- (a) Over the past year the Minster has lost all its existing ordained staff. The Revd Charles Dobbin will minister the congregation for the next nine months until the Diocese makes a new appointment.
- (b) The pioneer ministers group continues to be an inspiration.
- (c) The casino to be built on the new city-centre development between Eastgate and the Kirkgate Markets was required to make a £1 million upfront donation to the Social Inclusion Fund. A minimum of £450,000 per annum once the casino is operating will be paid to this Fund, which will be administered by the local Community Fund. Jenny has been asked to sit on the Distribution Panel
- (d) As a result of further funding cuts Leeds City Council will no longer be able to give out food parcels next year and is looking for the Food Aid Network along with FareShare and Food Banks to provide this service.
- (e) The East Leeds Foodbank has struggled but now has a new organiser
- (f) The Dreaming Group is very rewarding. The group is developing a theology for the city centre.
- (g) Because the Mission team is small, cover for absent colleagues is a problem.
- (h) The Oxford Place Centre acts as a hub and the Mission is engaged in partnership with many others.
- (i) It was noted that we need to ensure that Jenny is not overstretched.

7 Accounts

- (i) The unaudited Annual Accounts for the year to 31st August 2014 were presented by Bernard (Annex C).
- (ii) Bernard provided an explanation of the item of (£33,069.21) under Accumulated Funds on the Balance Sheet. This represents an expected increase in the equity residing in the manse at 167 Otley Road arising from the significant upgrade of the property in 2002. As that manse has been transferred to the district as a consequence of the Universities' Chaplain becoming a district appointment, that equity is no longer available to the Mission and hence must be subtracted from our Accumulated Funds.
- (iii) In the light of Jenny accepting an extension to her appointment (Item 4(i) above) it was proposed that the manse at 39 Batcliffe Drive, currently let until the end of June 2015, should be available for letting until the end of June 2016. This was agreed, with the matter to reviewed before then.

8 Conferencing and Room Hire

Trevor presented a report to update the Council (Annex D). He answered questions and emphasised certain points:

- (i) The income shortfall had been against an optimistic budget figure, and upgrading the conference equipment was the main reason for the expenditure exceeding the budget figure. It was recommended that the budget figures for 2013-14 should be retained for 2014-15.
- (ii) Bookings for September 2014 were higher than for September 2013 and enquiries are on the increase.

- (iii) One intention for Conferencing and Room Hire maintain the flexibility of our space. To enhance this the room which forms an extension to the Lounge Café is to be adapted to make a further meeting room with the folding doors closed. The comfortable furniture has been moved out into main area of the café and the extension will be carpeted and furnished with appropriate chairs and tables.

9 Quinquennial Inspection

This had taken place since the previous meeting as agreed. The Council was presented with a summary of the inspectors' recommendations (Annex E) and a list prepared by Trevor of urgent work in hand (Annex F*). The inspector's summary provoked the following comments and questions:

- (i) The visible damage to walls and plaster would be treated more urgently than recommended because of the concerns of the tenants using the rooms.
- (ii) The work on the outside of the build (particularly re-painting) would require scaffolding (or possibly a 'cherry-picker') both expensive.
- (iii) Had the boilers been checked for leakage (as an explanation of water that had been seen)? No, but this would be done as soon as practical.

[TP]

- (iv) The splits in the roof timbers was thought to be cause by movement in the building, itself a consequence of extra weight in the Gallery but although investigation was recommended no immediate action was thought necessary.

10 Nurture

The staff expressed concern at the way the Lounge Café was being run and its effectiveness.

- (i) Among their concerns were:
 - (a) Poor supervision of staff.
 - (b) Over ambitious menu.
 - (c) A noticeable reduction in footfall.
 - (d) That it was making a loss – though it had been agreed with Nurture that they would bear all of the loss rather than it be borne equally between Nurture and the Mission.
- (ii) Steps are being taken to improve matters: Pinnacle People (one of our tenants) would use the café for training with successful trainees being awarded a diploma through Nurture that would enhance their prospects of employment.
- (iii) At our next meeting in January a review of the progress would be made. In order to help with this Trevor was asked to keep a daily log of the work and effectiveness of the café.

[TP]

11 Membership of the Council

- (i) Mrs Wendy Ribbands – The secretary to write asking her if she wishes to continue to be involved.

[KT]

* This document also includes a short list of actions since the previous meeting which were not discussed at this meeting.

- (ii) Does the District Policy Committee think we need further representation (from outside the Mission)
- (iii) It was noted that ecumenical representation was currently minimal and that to expect representation from the Minster at the moment was unrealistic.
- (iv) Are there parallel organisations with which we could form links?
- (v) What kind of a Council membership do we want?
- (vi) Should we be asking circuits across the district: Do you want to engage with the city?
- (vii) We need to be involved with the city. Should we have a subgroup that deals with the building?
- (viii) Being linked to the Dreaming Group would help.
- (ix) The nature of this group is not fixed.
- (x) It was agreed that we take this up at our next meeting.

[All]

12 Dates of future meetings

- (a) The next meeting is fixed for 7.30pm on 26th January 2015 at Oxford Place Centre.
- (b) A 'Doodle Poll' will be created in the next few days to find a good date for the meeting scheduled for late June or July.

13 Close

Peter mentioned that on his recent visit to Epworth he had he had been struck that from a place so on the margins something amazing had come. He then read out John Wesley's Rule:

*Do all the good you can,
by all the means you can,
in all the ways you can,
in all the places you can,
at all the times you can,
to all the people you can,
as long as ever you can.*

placing special emphasis on the last line.

Peter declared that we are on a journey of witness and work during which we have overcome challenges and found our direction before he closed the meeting with a prayer.

Actions

Who	Action	Minute	Target date
KT	Write to Wendy Ribbands	11(i)	Soon
KT	Set up poll for date of Summer meeting	12(b)	As soon as possible

Continued on next page

Who	Action	Minute	Target date
JJ & PW	Prepare draft mission statement	5(i)	By the next meeting (26th January 2015)
TP	Check boilers for leakage.	9(iii)	As soon as possible.
TP	Keep a daily log of the work and effectiveness of the café during the period up to the next meeting	10(iii)	By the next meeting (26th January 2015)
All members	Consideration of the membership and nature of the Council	11	By the next meeting (26th January 2015)