

Leeds Methodist Mission Council

Minutes of the meeting held at Oxford Place Centre

26th January 2015

1 Welcome and attendance

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

Apologies: The Revd Deacon Joseph Cortis, Mr John Goacher, the Revd Liz Smith

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

2 Opening devotions

Peter read from Psalm 8 and as the following day was Holocaust Memorial Day focused the meetings thoughts on the Holocaust and similar events and read Pastor Martin Niemöller's prayer¹.

3 The Way We Work

The agenda (as circulated) was prefaced with a short statement about the way the Council works. There were neither comments nor questions.

4 Further items for the agenda

None.

5 Minutes of the previous meeting (LMM Management Committee 15th October 2014)

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

6 Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

- (i) *Caretaker post:* Christian Howell was appointed (31st October 2014) [4 (iv)]
- (ii) *Leeds Christian Fellowship Church:* Enhanced financial contribution has started. Nothing further to report.
- (iii) *Boiler leakage:* Boiler checked and no leaks found [9 (iii)]
- (iv) *Recovery Cafe:* Jenny reported that the Recover Cafe was happily operating at Trinity Church (Boar Lane) [6 (vii)]

7 Property

Trevor tabled a paper (Annex A) listing work done since the October meeting, an update on the replacement of the lift in the Chambers, a table outlining urgent work and items of work from the Quinquennial Inspection report, with indications of costs. The paper led to the following comments and some discussion:

¹ Pastor Niemöller's prayer has been quoted in various forms and adapted for different contexts (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_they_came_...).

- (i) During the expected disruption in the Chambers while the lift being installed, the Chambers will be decorated from the basement floor, through to the second floor and new signage installed on the ground floor, to create a 'new entrance' to the building. The grant from the DAF should cover this but will need to be properly accounted for. (Annex B – This document was tabled at the meeting of 15th October 2014 and the recommendation it makes to go ahead with replacing the lift was accepted by the Council given that the district had awarded a £35,000 grant from the District Advance Fund. For some reason this is not recorded in the minutes of that meeting.)
- (ii) Cruse are urging the upgrading of the partitioning in their space to improve the soundproofing which is critical to their work. Sufficient funding is thought to be available and the meeting authorised the use of reserves if required. In part this work results from remedying previous work that has been judged inadequate. As a consequence of this, discussions are in hand with David Quick (the District Architect) to look at ways of managing the maintenance of the building without having to use in-house staff either to carry out work (other than minor work) or supervise such work. The possibility of using a property management company was suggested. The meeting took the view that the cost might be prohibitive. Nevertheless, it was agreed to make enquiries to see if similar solutions had been implemented elsewhere.

[JJ]

- (iii) A major item listed in the Quinquennial Inspection report was the repair and repainting of all the windows. A 'ball park' figure of £50,000 had been given for this work and such costs could not be met within the present financial year. However the judgement of the inspectors was that the work must be carried out before the next winter. Trevor was asked to arrange for a more detailed inspection of what needs doing and to look for other sources of funding that might allow the necessary work to be undertaken.

[TP]

8 Cafe

Two papers were tabled: the first (by Trevor) summarised the history of the Lounge Cafe (which opened in 1979) and the situation at present. The other paper was an outline business proposal from No Going Back (a charity based on our premises) to set up, in our premises, a cafe and a sandwich-run around the locality [See item 6 (v) of the minutes of 15-10-2014]. (These papers will be found in Annex C.)

In the discussion of these two papers the following points were made:

- (i) Do we want a cafe? And if the answer is Yes: Who are the clients? Is it sustainable? Not a present, but is there a viable alternative?
- (ii) The view was expressed that a sandwich-run to the offices in our immediate neighbourhood was needed.
- (iii) If our arrangement with Nurture was brought to an end what would happen to their equipment? If they removed it what would we need to replace in order to, for example, continue the catering for conferences and meetings? A conversation (with Nurture) would be required should termination be a likely option.
- (iv) The use of the cafe by community groups, the catering to conferences and meetings, plus the casual customers walking in off the street makes for a complex business. Recognising this led the meeting to propose a small group (that could include others such as a representative from the tenants) to consider the way forward and that the group should report before the next meeting of the Council with the possibility of

the recommendations being circulated by email so that the Council can make a decision.

[JJ & TP with others]

- (v) The No Going Back proposal was seen as a positive contribution to the question of what should be done.

9 Mission Statement

Two papers (Annex D) from Jenny were tabled setting out some ideas for a mission statement and a strapline that could be widely used and could feature on the web site and on other documents and communications. The content of the documents were accepted recognising that there was still work to be done. One specific point was raised: Can we be accountable for maintaining a *Christian* presence in the city centre?

The ideas suggested during the discussion were many and varied, but a small number of points had agreement:

- (i) The web site needed to be upgraded with fresh pictures, material based on documents presented at this meeting.

[KT & TN]

- (ii) Anything that would be seen or read by people external to the project must be simple and convey the essence of what we are about

- (iii) In working towards a mission statement, we should start small and build up to a more comprehensive statement. Specifically, get the strapline right and then elaborate. 'To bring hope' was a possible strapline that had much support though the consensus was that more thinking was advisable. Although Jenny and Peter would take this forward, contributions from all were invited.

[JJ & PW]

- (iv) It was agreed that Jenny could write a temporary mission statement to be used in her application for membership of Voluntary Action Leeds.

[JJ]

10 Finance

- (i) Bernard reported that income was increasing but the situation was still tight. Budgets for the coming period would be presented at our next meeting.
- (ii) It was agreed that all staff should be paid the new rate for the living wage from 1st January 2015.

11 Conferencing and Room Hire

An update on Conferencing and Room Hire was tabled with two supporting documents: a month-by-month summary of income, and details of payments owed (these have been consolidated into Annex E). The need to upgrade furniture in the various conference and meeting rooms was raised:

- (i) the chairs in the conference area (also used for worship on Sundays) are in a poor state with an increasing number falling apart of showing signs of doing so. It was agreed that the cost of purchasing a new set of chairs be investigated.

[TP]

- (ii) projection facilities are needed for the Chadwick room and for the Wesley room.

12 Staffing

A paper was tabled in which the staffing situation in August 2008 is compared with that in January 2015 and some suggestions for the future are made(Annex F).

- (i) At one time the premises were tenanted areas were mainly used as offices. Now the we have tenants who have significant number of clients. The total number of people attending a meeting (of some kind) on our premises in January was in excess of 900.
- (ii) The time taken by our caretakers in setting up for meetings and clearing up afterwards means that there is less time for routine tasks such as cleaning. Another demand on time at this time of the years is people coming in out of the cold and who need to be supervised or managed.
- (iii) The limited overlap when both caretakers are on the premises is insufficient. Some tasks require both of them and an increase in the time when both are present would provide more flexibility.
- (iv) There is a perceived need for a 'reception' person who would fill the hospitality role.
- (v) The preceding discussion prompted questions about the application of the living wage. The following clarifications were offered:
 - (a) The living wage was a minimum, but some employees could be paid more if it was agreed that the responsibilities of their role justified it.
 - (b) Those who were following apprenticeship schemes could be paid less as they were not expected to be living on what they earned.
 - (c) In some situations a contribution is made towards the cost of the training provided for apprentices.
- (vi) In line with the suggestion in the tabled document (Annex F) the Council agreed that from the 1st February the weekly hours of both caretakers would be increased to 37 allowing greater flexibility. It was noted that there would be little impact on the finances as it was expected that less overtime would need to be paid for.

13 Parking

The unauthorised use of our four car parking spaces in Oxford Row is to be addressed by first removing the 'coal bunker', then adding railings to the north side of the adjacent steps, and finally by preventing access to each space with a suitable locking mechanism. Planning consents for the first two of these changes has been obtained.

14 Membership of this Council

- (i) Strengthening of the ecumenical representation might have to wait until a new Rector was appointed to Leeds Minster. However, it was agreed that when someone is appointed as District Ecumenical Liaison Officer that person should be invited to join the Council.
- (ii) It was agreed that for September 2016 the circuits of the Leeds area (two from September 2015) should be invited to each send two representatives to join the Council. One will be the superintendent minister (or an ordained person nominated by the superintendent) and the other a circuit steward. In the meantime the present circuit representation (superintendent plus circuit steward) should be inherited by

the new circuit to be formed from Leeds South and Central, Leeds Wesley, and Leeds Headingley and West.

- (iii) The representation of the Oxford Place Church would continue as a present, being two members nominated by the Church Council.
- (iv) The question of having a person with 'property expertise' on the council was raised.
- (v) It was reported that Mrs Wendy Ribbands had resigned from the Council.
- (vi) The chair and secretary were asked to consider this further.

[PW & KT]

15 Dates of future meetings

- (a) The next meeting is fixed for 7.30pm on 22nd July 2015 at Oxford Place Centre.
- (b) A 'Doodle Poll' will be created to find a good date for the meeting scheduled for October.

[KT]

16 Close

Peter closed the meeting with a prayer.

Actions

Who	Action	Minute	Target date
JJ	Investigate the use (by other city centre churches) of property management companies	7(ii)	By next meeting
TP	Carry out an inspection of the windows and look for sources of funding for their refurbishment	7(iii)	By the next meeting (22nd July 2015)
KT & TN	Rebuild of the web site	9(i)	None
JJ & PW	Continue with the preparation of mission statement and associated items.	9(iii)	Update by the next meeting (22nd July 2015)
JJ	Write an interim mission statement for immediate use	9(iv)	Immediate

Continued on next page

Who	Action	Minute	Target date
JJ, TP (& others)	Determine a way forward for the cafe and report	8(vi)	Before the next meeting – report (and recommendations) to be circulated to the Council by email
TP	Cost the replacement of the chairs in the conference hall	11(i)	By the next meeting (22nd July 2015)
PW & KT	Further consideration of the membership of the Council	14	By the next meeting (22nd July 2015)
KT	Set up poll for date of Summer meeting	15(b)	As soon as possible