

# Leeds Methodist Mission Council

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

**22nd July 2015**

### **1 Welcome and attendance**

*Present:* The Revd Madeleine Andrews, Mr John Goacher, Mr Bernard Neville (Treasurer), Mr Tim Newman, the Revd Liz Smith, Mr Kenneth Tait (Secretary), the Revd Peter Whittaker (Chair)

*Apologies:* The Revd Deacon Joseph Cortis, Deacon Jenny Jones, Mrs Elizabeth Smith, the Revd Sue Sowden.

*In attendance:* Mr Trevor Parker (Conference and Property Manager)

*Absent:* Mrs Rachel McCallam (Consultant to the Council),

### **2 Opening devotions**

Peter read from Genesis 12 picking up the ideas of stepping out with God not knowing the destination, being on a pilgrimage, and suggesting that this is the point we have reached in our journey. He then led the Council in prayer.

### **3 Minutes of the previous meeting (26th January 2015)**

These were accepted as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **4 Matters arising from the minutes**

- (i) *Use of property management companies* Having contacted a number of city centre churches no model that could easily be applied to our situation had been found and, while recognising that having a company that knows the building would be advantageous, for the moment no action would be taken.

It was reported that much of the work in hand or recently completed has been carried out by the same company, so, in effect, we may be making progress towards having a property management company. The Council was cautioned about getting into the situation where a single company felt confident about being awarded contracts and was no longer offering competitive prices. [4(i)]

- (ii) *Windows refurbishment* As yet no source of funding had been identified (but see item 9 (iv) below). A survey had been made, but a more thorough one was advisable. The District Property Secretary, Mr David Quick, was aware of the situation and was involved. (See Annex D)

During the discussion the Council was reminded that a copy of the Quinquennial Report should be sent to the District Property Committee.

[TP]

- (iii) *Web site* No progress had been made on this. However, it was reported that the Web address [www.oxfordplacecentre.org.uk](http://www.oxfordplacecentre.org.uk) was registered to the Leeds Methodist District Office, but was not currently been used. It was agreed that the transfer of the address to the Leeds Methodist Mission should be effected as soon as practical so that it could be used for a new web site.

[TN, KT]

- (iv) *Mission Statement* A small amount of work remained to be carried out on the mission statement. When this is completed the statement will be circulated to the Council through the Secretary

[TN, KT]

- (v) *Gift Aid* Since the Mission had become a district project and the Oxford Place Methodist Church (OPMC) had become part of a new circuit, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) continue to view the Leeds Methodist Mission as the single entity to which reclaimed Gift Aid can be paid. At the moment Gift Aid claimed by OPMC ends up in the Mission's bank account and has to be transferred. The Council asked the Mission Treasurer and Church Treasurer to work towards the rectification of this matter. It was agreed that the Mission Secretary could sign (on the Mission's behalf) any statement or letter of authorisation required by HMRC to achieve this end.

[BN, TN, KT]

## 5 Informal subgroup meetings

- (i) In June and July the Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Deacon met to prepare matters for this meeting of the Council. The Chair could not attend the first meeting, the Deacon could not attend the second.
- (ii) The meetings were prompted by the view that, since the establishment of the Mission as a district project in September 2013, we have successfully completed two phases (transition and stabilisation) and are now in a third phase: future planning. For this current phase to be successful the Mission needs support from the district and elsewhere, in particular from the two Leeds circuits: Leeds North and East, and Leeds South and West. (The latter will be inaugurated in September of this year.) Both circuits must have an interest in the city centre, and along with the district could provide funding and other resources.

## 6 Deacon's Report

The Deacon's Report (Annex A) was distributed at the meeting and discussed in her absence. The following points arose:

- (i) The report was wide-ranging and will be useful in underpinning, planned for the Autumn, conversation between Jenny, Liz and Peter which among other things will look at support for Jenny and how to give her work a stronger focus.

[PW,LS,JJ]

- (ii) Jenny fills many of the places on district committees where a deacon is required.
- (iii) Many of the activities reported point up the areas of work that the church should be looking at.
- (iv) Should the deacon's role be consider a city-centre chaplaincy? Would this make her role clearer. (When it comes to writing a profile – in September 2016 – to inform potential replacements for Jenny we will need to be clear about the role to be filled.) There was no agreement on this.
- (v) Jenny's comment about her conversations with tenants being more about property than faith prompted a discussion about demarcation between Jenny's responsibilities and Trevor's leading to the agreement that in any team there are times when strict adherence to the boundaries of roles is unreasonable, and that

there is an overall responsibility of the team to do what is needed, particularly in a situation which is unpredictable and changing.

- (vi) The Council recognised that the team of Deacon, Conference and Property Manager, and Caretakers is hard pressed to do all the work required in running what is a significant project and the absence of one member cannot be adequately covered by the others.

## 7 Precepts and Protocols

The draft document (Annex B) was discussed for some time, but with only minor changes being suggested. The Council was asked to give the document further consideration and communicate any suggestions for improvements to the Secretary (preferably by early September) to allow a final version to be adopted at our next meeting.

[All]

Specific discussion points:

- (i) The document was intended as internal to the Council and to represent an agreed way of working.
- (ii) The inclusion in the membership of the superintendents of the two Leeds circuits (Articular 3, Item 3, (d) and (e)) was in response to the view that both circuits have an interest in the city centre. The superintendent of the new Leeds South and West would be a member of the Council in any case as the successor to the superintendent of the Leeds South and Central circuit.
- (iii) A concern was expressed that members of the Council, who were not directly concerned with the day-to-day work of the Mission, might, as has happened with similar groups in the past, be observers rather than participants in the work. It was repeated (see 5(ii) above) that the Mission needed real support from the circuits (and district).
- (iv) The District Administrator would be provided with as much information about membership as was possible by the end of July 2015 for inclusion in the Synod Handbook (2015-16) with a request to add a note indicating that further members were being sought.
- (v) The proposal to form subgroups to tackle (either short-term or long-term) specific areas of work was welcomed, and the following were suggested as subgroups that could be formed in the immediate future:
  - (a) Finance
  - (b) Property
  - (c) Fund-raising (application for grants)
  - (d) Person-to-Person (its future)
  - (e) The Children's Centre (responding to changes in demand)

## 8 Grants

It was agreed to set up a subgroup to consider fund-raising and the application for grants.

## 9 Financial Review including Budget for 2015-16

The Treasurer's Financial Review (Annex C) was received by the Council.

- (i) A question was raised as to the suitability of 39 Batcliffe Drive (currently let until the end of June 2016) suitability as a manse should it be needed, possibly in 2017. The main concern was the large size and terraced terrain of the rear garden which might not be acceptable to a minister.
- (ii) The budget figures in the Review are calculated using an inflation figure of 1%, roughly in line with the official index figure of 0.9%.

The Council approved:

- (a) the budget which indicated an expected surplus in excess of £8000 and the increase of 1% in charges to tenants.
- (b) the appointment of Hentons LLP as auditors for the year ending 31st August 2015.
- (iii) In response to a question it was stated that such a surplus would be retained as a reserve as we do not yet yet have a reserve of the size recommended by the Methodist Church.

## 10 Property

A report (Annex D) by the Conference and Property Manager was received by the Council detailing works completed, works in progress, and planned works. Some selected points:

- (i) The installation of the passenger lift in the Chambers is almost complete with one invoice for £1678.40 awaited. Total cost expected to be met by the grant from the District Advance Fund (DAF).
- (ii) An application has been made to DAF for of £9500 for the purchase of new chairs.
- (iii) An electrical inspection of the whole building has been started. The Council gave anticipatory approval to any work arising out of the inspection subject to the appropriate consents being obtained.

[TP]

- (iv) A an application has been made to DAF for of £25000 towards the cost of refurbishing all the external windows in the building.

*Additional item*

- (v) Permission was sought to install a railing on the north side of the rear steps to facilitate the removal of the 'bunker' which in turn will allow the widths of the four parking places to be increased to allow easier parking. The Council approved the action subject to the necessary consents.

## 11 Conferencing and Room Hire

The Council received an update from the Conference and Property Manager. The document is in three parts:

- (i) *Summary* (Annex E)

Comments:

- (a) Users of rooms in our premises (as distinct from tenants) will have to sign one of two licences depending on whether they are Regular Users or Other Users (i.e. occasional users). The licence for Regular Users (Standard form of Licence for Third Party Use) has been replaced by a new version and preparing conforming licences for each of the Regular Users by 1st September 2015 is a major task.

[TP, BN]

- (b) Managing the simultaneous use of our rooms effectively has practical difficulties. Among these are the need for more equipment (such as tables and display systems). Additionally the need to prepare rooms puts demands on the staff which stretch resources to the limit.

[TP]

- (ii) *Review of the current year's figures* (Annex F) – for information
- (iii) *Debtor Aged Debt Summary* (Annex G) – a total of £2481 currently outstanding with only £55 outstanding for more than three months. This was agreed to be a good performance.

## 12 Next steps

- (i) Reflecting on the foregoing discussions and that the next review of the Leeds Methodist Mission (under Standing Order 440 of the Constitution, Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church) is due in 2016, the Chair indicated that the review would provide an opportunity to have a conversation and to take a long-term view.
- (ii) Part of this could be a feasibility study to inform the Mission as to possibilities for the building. A suggestion had been made by that an application be made to the District Advance Fund of £30,000 to enable this work to be undertaken. Such an application should be made as early as possible in the connexional year.
- (iii) An organisation initially set up in the Manchester and Stockport District should be approached regarding our feasibility study.

[PW, LS, TP]

- (iv) In the meantime we get on with the planned work.

## 13 Dates of future meetings

- (i) The next meeting is fixed for 7.30pm on 7th October July 2015 at Oxford Place Centre.
- (ii) Two 'Doodle Polls' will be created to find good dates for meetings at the beginning of 2016 and in the Summer of 2016.

[KT]

## 14 Close

Peter reminded us of Genesis 12:1 and then closed the meeting with a prayer.

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*A list of actions and responsibilities will be found on the next page.*

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**Actions**

<b>Who</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Minute</b>	<b>Target date</b>
TP	Copy of the recent Quinquennial Report to the District Property Committee	4(ii)	Immediate
KT & TN	Investigate obtaining control of the web address: <a href="http://www.oxfordplacecentre.org.uk">www.oxfordplacecentre.org.uk</a> and build of a web site relating solely to the Leeds Methodist Mission and Oxford Place Centre	4(iii)	None
TN & KT	Complete the preparation of mission statement and distribute to Council members	4(iv)	Before next meeting
BN, TN & KT	Clarify and rectify the situation as seen by HMRC to separate the reclaiming of Gift Aid by Leeds Methodist Mission and Oxford Place Methodist Church	4(v)	As soon as possible
PW, LS, JJ	Conversation about Deacon's role	6(i)	Autumn 2015
All	Suggestions for improvements to the Precepts and Protocols document	7	To the secretary by early September.
Not decided	Form 'Grants' subgroup	8	Not specified
TP	Progress the electrical inspection of the building and any consequent repairs	10 (iii)	Report on progress at the next meeting (7th October)
TP, BN	Completion of new licences for Regular Users	11(i)(a)	1st September 2015

*Continued on next page*

<b>Who</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Minute</b>	<b>Target date</b>
TP	Report on staffing issues	11(i)(b)	By next meeting (7th October)
PW, LS, TP	Investigate Manchester-based organisation re feasibility study	12(iii)	Not specified
KT	Set up polls for dates of 2016 meetings	13(ii)	As soon as possible
BN,TP	Grant application to Yorkshire Historic Churches Trust	Added after the meeting	Late September