

Leeds Methodist Mission Council

Minutes of the meeting held at Oxford Place Centre

7th October 2015

1 Welcome and attendance

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

Apologies: Miss Sarah Cave, The Revd Deacon Joseph Cortis, Mrs Rachel McCallam (Consultant to the Council), the Revd Liz Smith, .

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

Peter welcomed everyone, and in particular Mr David Quick (District Property Secretary) who had been specially invited to contribute to Item 9.

2 Opening devotions

Peter read from Genesis 45 (the account of Joseph announcing who he was to his brothers). Peter drew from this that we are where we are to fulfil God's purpose and that everything works for good. He then led the meeting in prayer.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting (22nd July 2015)

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

4 Matters arising from the minutes

Updates and comments on the action points listed in the minutes

- (i) The domain name *oxfordplacecentre.org.uk* had been successfully transferred to the control of the Secretary. A new web site at this address was planned. Council members had been invited to make suggestions as to its content and purpose. [4(iii)]

[TN, KT]

- (ii) Precepts and Protocols (see Item 10) below. [7]

- (iii) The problems about reclaiming gift aid, which had arisen from the 2013 re-organisation, had made some progress. The last stage was to provide HMRC with evidence of a necessary resolution from the Church Council of Oxford Place Church. This was in hand, and some £9000 was expected to be received. [4(v)]

[BN, TN, JG (as secretary of the Oxford Place Church Council)]

- (iv) A meeting was to take place to discuss the role of the Deacon. [6(i)]

[LS, JJ, PW]

- (v) It was intended that the required electrical inspection will take place in the next couple of months. It would be in two phases: the Chambers on one occasion and the rest of the building on another. Both would take place on Saturdays to minimise disruption to work. [10(iii)]

[TP]

- (vi) Issuing new licences was on-going with some waiting to be signed. [11(i)(a)]

[BN,TP]

(vii) The report on staffing issues was in preparation. [11(i)(b)]

[JJ,TP]

(viii) There was nothing to report regarding the application to the Yorkshire Historic Churches Trust. [Listed in the actions, but no corresponding minute.]

[BN,TP]

5 Notice of Any Other Business

- Introduction to Circle (Item 13)
- A donation of £1250 (Item 6(iii))
- Attitude to Nestlé (Item 14)

6 Finance

The meeting received two documents:

- Treasurer's Financial Review (Annex A)
 - The unaudited accounts for the year ending 31st August 2015 – Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure (Annex B)
- (i) Bernard admitted that the situation at the end of August was not as good as he had expected and made the following comments:
- (a) There had been problems with catering supplies, as a result of one company ceasing to trade, another proving very expensive, but the situation had improved.
 - (b) The coffee machine had proved far more expensive to rent and operate although the charges made to to organisation meeting in the building could be set against this.
 - (c) Gas and electricity costs were had increased by 31% but it had been discovered that some bills had been estimated rather than based on meter readings. British Gas had been approached and was dealing with the matter. A new supplier had yet to submit a bill.
 - (d) There was a need to ensure that repairs were monitored to avoid duplication. Current practice would be reviewed.

[TP]

(ii) Other comments:

- (a) The end of year figures might not be as budgeted, but they were on the right side and there had been expenditure on improvements to the Centre.
- (b) The space occupied by the District Office had been vacated.
- (c) The basement needed thinking about and the opportunity might arise to review lighting etc. when space, presently occupied, was vacated. One advantage of the basement was that it provided discreet access.

(iii) Donation of £1250

Although this was dealt with later in the meeting it properly belongs here.

Jenny outlined the background to the donation and felt that the appropriate use would be to provide funds for Person-to-Person. In particular the provision of a computer so that access to the internet would allow better support to be given to users of the service through help with on-line form-filling, and access to local and national government sites.

It was agreed that the purchase of a computer should be made from the donation and the remainder reserved for purposes linked to Person-to-Person.

7 Mission Statement

The meeting received two documents:

- Leeds Methodist Mission – our vision, mission and values (Annex C)
- Draft Mission Statement (Annex D)
 - (i) The first document (our vision, mission and values) had been prepared using a process similar to that used in commercial companies. The result was agreed to be immensely valuable and that its value would persist and be a starting point for the production of other documents such as the mission statement, possible leaflets, the web site and so forth. It should also feed into the discussion of the building at Item 9 and any consequent discussion.
 - (ii) The draft Mission Statement was a first attempt to derive a mission statement from the first document and the meeting was asked to read the document and address comments to Jenny and Tim in the next week or two. The final version would be sent to the District Policy Committee as a clear statement of what we are and do. It will also make clear the three aspects of the work based in our building: Oxford Place Methodist Church, Oxford Place Centre and Leeds Methodist Mission.

[JJ,TN]

8 Property and Conferencing

- (i) The September 2015 income from conferences and meetings was as anticipated and it was noted that it was not always possible to accommodate requests.
- (ii) The basement had been cleared of rubbish.
- (iii) The housing of exhibitions was a further source of income.
- (iv) The Refugee Council were now meeting twice a month in the Centre.
- (v) Storage space had been provided for work (by the City of Sanctuary movement) to support refugees both here and in other countries. No charge had been made for the use of the space.

9 Repairs to and renovation of the external fabric of the building

- (i) Since the previous meeting the following resolution had been agreed by email:
That we obtain a quote for professional fees, and appoint an architect to undertake the following works.
 1. Prepare a schedule of work for Mission Council (this will include painting, repairs to any windows, re-pointing where required, renovation of stonework, etc.)

2. Prepare tender documents and obtain quotations from suitable contractors for (a) erection/removal scaffolding to the whole building, and (b) the work set out in the schedule of work.
3. Oversee the contractors during the work.
4. Report to the Council, on completion of the work, that the works have been carried out satisfactorily.

Further information will be found in Annex E.

- (ii) The meeting received a schedule of work (Annex F) prepared by Graham Farmer in accordance with Item 1 of the aforementioned resolution. It was noted that the work detailed therein had been determined from ground level and that scaffolding and other safety equipment would be required to complete the work. Such improved access would allow further inspection which might reveal additional necessary work. However, the document was reassuring to the extent that the proposed work could be considered as catching up on routine maintenance. It was noted that Mr Farmer was about to retire.
- (iii) In the discussion the following comments were made:
 - (a) The building and its heritage evidenced the continued importance of its role in providing a Methodist presence in the centre of the City of Leeds.
 - (b) That building is the most valuable asset of the Leeds District and needs to be maintained whatever its future might be.
 - (c) That the 'vision, mission and values' document (Item 7 above) pointed to the future work that might reach out from the building and that the building would need to 'react' to that vision. The work set out in Mr Farmer's schedule was only the first phase.
 - (d) It was suggested that if the cost of the work was, for example, in the region of £250,000 plus a contingency fund to cover unforeseen work, then such an amount would have to be raised through successful applications for grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the like. However, such bodies could not be approached until an accurate figure was determined.
 - (e) Not proceeding with work was not an option as we have a custodial and stewardship responsibility for the building as well as a duty of care under its Grade II Listing as being of special architectural and historic interest.
 - (f) It was noted that consents for work on district listed buildings must be obtained from the Connexion (that is TMCP).
- (iv) In the light of the discussion it was agreed that:
 - (a) David Quick should review the proposed schedule and, if necessary, render it suitable for presentation to an architect who might wish to tender for the work.
 - (b) He was also asked to draw up a list of suitable architects to carry the work forward. He indicated that such architects should be experienced and qualified in work with heritage and church buildings.
 - (c) Before going ahead, Mr Farmer must be paid for his work and asked for permission to show his work to other architects.
- (v) The Council was advised that it would be unwise to go out to tender around the Christmas period, that an indication should be given as to when the work would be done, and that tenders do not have to be accepted but that tenders cannot be accepted after 90 days.

- (vi) A subgroup was established to work on this with the following members: PW, JJ, BN, TP and KT (if required). David Quick agreed to be involved when candidate architects were interviewed.

10 Precepts and Protocols

There being no amendments (suggested or agreed) to the document as presented at the previous meeting (22nd July 2015) and attached to the minutes of that meeting as Annex B, it was adopted as the framework in which the Council operated,

11 Grants Subgroup

A subgroup was formed with the following membership: BN, JJ, PW, KT. Its remit was to make bids to appropriate grant-awarding bodies to obtain funding for particular projects, in the first instance the work agreed in Item9 (iv).

12 Visit to Leeds of the President and Vice President

The President and Vice President of the Methodist Conference will visit Leeds from 3rd December to 6th December of this year. They will arrive at the Oxford Place Centre for lunch with Jenny on Friday 4th December. At 3pm they will have tea in the Sunday School Tearooms with the congregation of Oxford Place Church, staff of the Oxford Place Centre, and members of the Leeds Methodist Mission Council. (This is an expansion of the entry in currently available timetable and may change.)

Comments raised by the outline timetable for the day were:

- (i) Was the time spent on the proposed viewing of the blue plaque commemorating the formation of the Methodist Missionary Society justified?
- (ii) The time available at Oxford Place should include a tour of the building and the provision of information about what happens in the Centre.
- (iii) Clarification of the timings would help.
- (iv) Should our MP and/or the Council CEO be invited?

This was left in Jenny's hands.

[J]

13 Application by a charitable organisation to hold frequent meetings on the premises

The organisation is referred to as 'Circle' for the purposes of these minutes.

This application was considered very sensitive and the documents (from Circle and from the District Safeguarding Officer) presented to the meeting were discussed and then destroyed. (The secretary has kept electronic copies appropriately secured through encryption and passwords.)

It was emphasised that the work of Circle was consistent with our vision, mission and values as set out in Annex C, and the meeting agreed that a positive response be given to the organisation subject to practical and safeguarding issues relating to its use of the building being resolved.

[J],TP]

14 Attitude to Nestlé

Comments had been received concerning our Nestlé-branded coffee machine as there was a strong lobby within the Methodist Church in favour of divesting from Nestlé and boycotting some or all of the company's products. The debate is still finely balanced and the feeling of the meeting was that we keep a watching brief.

15 Future Meetings

- Winter meeting: 1st February 2016 at 7.30pm
- Suggested dates for the Summer Meeting: 16/20/23 June 2016 and online poll was available for members to indicate their availability

16 Close

Peter thanked the Council and closed the meeting with a prayer.

Actions

Who	Action	Minute	Target date
KT & TN	Make proposals for a new web site relating for the Oxford Place Centre	4(i)	None
BN, TN & JG	Rectify the situation regarding the reclaiming of Gift Aid by Leeds Methodist Mission and Oxford Place Methodist Church	(ii)	As soon as possible
PW, LS, JJ	Conversation about Deacon's role	4(iv)	Autumn 2015
TP	Progress the electrical inspection of the building and any consequent repairs	4 (v)	Report on progress a the next meeting (1st February)
TP,BN	Completion of new licences for Regular Users	4(vi)	As soon as possible
JJ,TP	Report on staffing issues	4(vii)	By next meeting
Grants Subgroup	Grant application to Yorkshire Historic Churches Trust	4(viii)	Unspecified
TP	Review of procedure for monitoring repairs	6(i)(d)	On-going

Continued on the next page

Who	Action	Minute	Target date
JJ & TN	Complete the preparation of mission statement	7(ii)	Comments on the draft from all members to JJ and TN within two weeks
Property Subgroup	Oversee the proposed renovation and repair work	9(iv)	On-going
JJ,TP	Application to meet in the Centre	13	As soon as possible
KT	Fix the date of the Summer 2016 meeting	15	As soon as possible
PW, LS, TP	Investigate Manchester-based organisation re feasibility study	22nd July 2015 12(iii)	Not specified