

Leeds Methodist Mission Council

Minutes of the meeting held at Oxford Place Centre

1st February 2016

1 Welcome and attendance

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

Apologies: The Revd Deacon Joseph Cortis, Mrs Rachel McCallam (Consultant to the Council), Trevor Parker (Conference and Property Manager)

Mr David Quick (District Property Secretary) had intended to be present, but was unable to be present.

Peter welcomed everyone, and in particular the Revd Stephen Burgess (District Chair), the Revd Tim Boocock (Superintendent of the Leeds South and West Circuit) and Miss Sarah Cave (Synod Secretary).

2 Opening devotions

Peter reported that the visit of the President and Vice President of the Methodist Conference had been an affirming and encouraging event, and commented that the tenants of the building were our partners sharing in our vision and responding to the needs of the disadvantaged in ways which would recognise the validity of the way we are working. He then read Luke 4:16-21 before leading the meeting in prayer.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting (7th October 2015)

These were accepted as a correct record, subject to a minor amendment, and signed by the Chair.

4 Matters arising from the minutes

Updates and comments on the action points listed in the minutes

- (i) Tools for the production of web sites, and which would allow more people to be involved in maintaining it, were being evaluated. [4(i)]

[TN, KT]

- (ii) The unsatisfactory situation relating to the reclaiming of Gift Aid had been resolved. HMRC would be informed of bank account details. [4(iii)]

[BN, TN]

- (iii) The conversation about the Deacon's role had taken place before Liz Smith's retirement. Jenny has accepted additional support. [4(iv)]

As a further outcome, Trevor has been offered additional support which he has accepted.

- (iv) The second phase (central area) of the electrical testing has been undertaken and provisional dates are being looked at for the Gallery to be undertaken on a Saturday afternoon. Following a discussion with the electrician about the Chambers inspection, and to minimise disruption to the tenants, it is proposed to carry out the inspection over a number of late evenings at dates to be agreed. [4(v)]

[TP]

- (v) The licences for regular users are still being dealt with. It was emphasised that this was important and must be give priority. Bernard agreed to urge Trevor to get this done.[4(vi)]

[BN,TP]

- (vi) The report on staffing issues remains in preparation. This task has been complicated by the situation with regard to the Café (Item 7 below) [4(vii)]

[JJ,TP]

- (vii) It was agreed that we form a Grants Subgroup [4(viii)]

It was noted, after the meeting, that a Grants Subgroup had already been formed (Item 11, of the minutes of the meeting held of 7th October 2015).

- (viii) *Procedure for monitoring repairs* Trevor is working with the staff team on how this might be achieved. He is also having conversations with the tenants . [6(i)(d)]

[TP]

- (ix) *Application by a charitable organisation to hold frequent meetings on the premises.* The situation which led to this application no longer obtained, but a similar situation is likely to occur. It was reported that all the safe guarding requirements have been agreed are in place and we will be able to react positively when required. [13]

- (x) The investigation of the Manchester-based organisation was, in view of the proposed work on building, not appropriate at this time.

There were no other matters arising from the minutes.

5 Notice of Any Other Business

None.

6 Appointment of an Architect

In the absence of David Quick, a meeting was presented with the report of a meeting between David and Ken that had taken place a few days earlier [Annex A].

- (i) The architect appointed was Mr Stephen Calvert of Pearce Bottomley, and he had provided schedules of work and fees to cover two projects: the repair work already agreed by the Council and an outline proposal for work in the Basement. It was agreed that the repair work be put in hand as soon as possible, but that nothing further be done regarding the Basement. The schedules should be initialled and returned to the architect as requested.

[KT]

- (ii) Trevor would be asked to clear the Basement of all rubbish etc to make it usable. Jenny report that there was from time to time short notice requests for space and she, as in the past, would like to be able to agree to such requests.

[BN,JJ]

- (iii) It was also noted that Lighthouse Church – a church for the homeless – had expressed interest in the available space in the Basement.

- (iv) Since the appointment of Stephen Calvert, three tenders to carry out a survey of the building had been received and the meeting accepted the architect's

recommendation to accept the lowest tender of £6370 made by Benchmark Land Surveys. The meeting agreed. In addition David had advised that the meeting should agree to Stephen Calvert engaging a quantity surveyor and a structural engineer to act on the results of the survey so that prices could be obtained and the work progressed.

[KT]

- (v) Bernard informed the meeting that the cost of the survey would be met from the Property Maintenance Account.
- (vi) In a letter to David, Stephen Calvert had expressed a wish to see any records we had (plans and specifications) of the re-modelling completed in 1979. The meeting was informed that copies of such plans were extant in 2010 and it was agreed these should be located, should they still exist, as soon as possible. The architect was to be informed.

[JG]

- (vii) David had requested that the Secretary of the Council should be the person communicating with Stephen Calvert rather than himself. David would continue to act in an advisory capacity.
- (viii) Ken agreed to make contact with Stephen Calvert and inform him of the decisions made by the meeting.

[KT]

7 The Café

- (i) Bernard presented a paper (Annex B) that presented a way forward following the unexpected decision of the charity No Going Back to withdraw on 8th December (at very short notice) from running the café and dismissing the staff.
- (ii) Recognising that the café is a crucial element in the Mission project, the paper proposes that the café continue and offers some indications as to income and expenditure. The meeting was reminded that there had been a number of changes over the years but a recent significant change (since the café was run by Nurture) was that catering for conferences and meetings had been undertaken by the café rather than outsourcing it as Nurture had done (to a linked enterprise). This was to continue as it was a good source of income.
- (iii) In the first full month (January) of its operation under the new arrangements the takings in the café were (at £80 per day) better than target of £50 per day. However, the number of buffet meals (for meetings and conferences) was less than anticipated. The cash takings were greater than forecast, but, as yet, no accurate figure for profit could be given.
- (iv) The following points were made in the discussion:
 - (a) Food standards and other regulations have been met.
 - (b) No Going Back owe a substantial amount of rent for their office space and Jenny is putting pressure on the charity's trustees and will involve the Small Claims Court in necessary.
 - (c) Small self help groups meet in the café at no charge. Such groups have little or no income to pay for a meeting place in the city centre.
 - (d) The meeting was assured that the conditions of employment of the café staff were in order. The District lay Employment Secretary was satisfied

with the current arrangements, recognising that this was an interim situation.

- (v) Jenny and Bernard were thanked for their work in handling this matter at a difficult time of the year.
- (vi) The meeting agreed that the café should continue under the present arrangements until 31st August 2016.

8 Adoption of Mission Statement

- (i) The meeting was asked to adopt the Mission Statement (Annex C) prepared by Jenny and Tim Newman which had been presented to the District Leadership Team who had recommended two changes which had been accepted: in the three statements at the head of the document, 'Christian' had been inserted before 'hope' in the second statement and 'aim to' inserted before 'provide' in the the third. The version presented to the meeting included these changes and was adopted.
- (ii) As yet the 'branding' of the Mission had not been started. Tim Newman reported that he had discussed this with Carly Hill, who is a professional in this area, and a member at Oxford Place Church and was intending to work with her.

[TN]

9 Stationing

- (i) It was proposed to form a small Stationing Group with the following membership: Madeleine, Ken, and Peter from the Council together with Michael Prince (District Lay Stationing Representative) and Dr Helen Reid (Director of the Leeds Church Institute). Jenny would act as a consultant to the group until it was dealing with possible successors.
- (ii) The meeting was asked whether the group would be looking to appoint a presbyter or a deacon. This was a valid question and the appointment of a presbyter would not indicate a reversion to earlier times. The matter was left to the Stationing Group and Peter agreed to initiate the conversation within that group.

[PW]

- (iii) Other comments included:
 - (a) It is important that we get the 'right' person whether deacon or presbyter.
 - (b) The minister appointed would need to be able to build relationships, both within the Centre and outside in the city centre, and with a wide variety of people.
 - (c) Would a 'pioneer' minister (whatever that means) be a possibility?
 - (d) We must not forget that the minister might require a manse. Bernard reminded the meeting of the arrangements for letting 39 Batcliffe Drive which anticipated the need to make it available for a minister. (Financial Review June 2015 – Annex C to the Minutes of the meeting held 22 July 2015). It was noted later in the meeting that the tenant would need to be asked to allow visits required as part of the stationing process.

(iv) Financial Considerations

- (a) The deacon's appointment is funded mainly from DAF grants and from rental income from the Batcliffe Drive manse¹. This grant is possibly the largest awarded from DAF. The income from the Oxford Place Centre has to pay the manager, two caretakers, a financial secretary and associated resources, and, since early December, the costs of the café, leaving little to contribute towards the minister's costs.
- (b) At the moment the District Grants Committee makes a grant of £20,000 per annum from DAF towards the cost of the deacon. Discussion of forecasts of the costs for upcoming years indicated that the project would have a deficit of something approaching £5000 if there was no increase in the grant for the 2018/19 year. It was therefore agreed that we should ask the Grants Committee to consider a grant of £25000 from September 2018 onwards.

[Grants Subgroup]

- (c) The fact that a grant from DAF can only be for three years, yet in making an appointment a guarantee of sufficient founding for the whole period of the appointment, i.e. five years has to be made was discussed without resolving the conflict.
- (d) The possibility of further funds coming to Oxford Place Centre via the district was considered. It was suggested that circuit funds might be a possible source and the meeting was referred to SO 955 (7) of CPD which states:

"The district Policy Committee shall from time to time (and at least once every three years) review the state of circuit model trust funds and their distribution throughout the District and may propose to the relevant Circuit Meeting projects for the application or use anywhere within the District of the capital money of or income from any such fund. The outcome of any review shall be reported to the Synod.

It was agreed that it was not the appropriate for this Council to take the initiative.

10 Other money matters

Bernard reported the following matters:

- (i) An increase in the living wage from £7.85 to £8.25 per hour was announced in November 2015 with a recommendation of implementation by April 2016. The increase has been applied to our staff from 1st January 2016.
- (ii) Annual accounts have not yet been finalised and are still with our accountants.
- (iii) It is intended to purchase a new coffee machine for the café, replacing the present rented Nestlé-branded coffee machine when the current contract, which includes supplies, can be terminated. This will satisfy those who have reservations about the ethics of the Nestlé company, and allow the café to purchase supplies more economically. (See Minute 14 of the meeting of the 7th October 2015).
- (iv) The telephone system is to be transferred to a different provider and equipment installed to manage call transfers etc.
- (v) The 'new' electricity supplier has still not submitted a bill.

¹ It was noted in passing that the manse maintenance fund is healthy.

- (vi) The installed smart meter is unable to report consumption because of its location in the building.

11 Property and Conferencing

Trevor submitted a short report (Annex D) under three headings: Things to rejoice about, Current issues in our day to day working, and Our next priorities.

A small number of comments were made on a report that was well received:

- (i) It could be helpful if the staff were to walk around the building with someone not familiar with it who might point out things that could be changed to improve its appearance.
- (ii) The notes on the Basement do not take into account what was agreed at Item 6(ii) above.
- (iii) The staff handle the variety of people who come into the building very well.
- (iv) A leaflet that could be handed out or distributed potential users of the building would be valuable.

12 Trustee Responsibilities

- (i) From time to time the Council has addressed the issue of trustees, their responsibilities and liabilities. The only certainty is that the members of the Council are the managing trustees of the Oxford Place Centre. A paper (Annex E) was presented to the meeting which brought together items from previous minutes and email exchanges about the matter. In order to clarify the matter it was agreed to contact Laura Wilkins (Connexional Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice) and Methodist Insurance.

[KT]

- (ii) Comments made during the discussion:

- (a) The District trustees comprise every member of Synod.
- (b) Regular users of our building – defined as three or more meetings per year – are required to provide evidence that they have public liability insurance that covers their events. Methodist Insurance no longer allows such events to be covered by the public liability policy for to the building and, in our case, the Mission.
- (c) It was again stressed that the licences for regular uses must be completed and issued as a high priority.

[TP]

- (d) Schedule A which has to be completed annually for each Methodist property provided protection. This is normally completed by property stewards, but in our case this should possibly be the task of the District Property Secretary. The current Schedule A has been completed by Tim Boocock for which thanks were expressed.

13 Future Meetings

- Summer meeting: 16th June 2016 at 7.30pm

- Dates for the three meetings in the 2016/17 to be fixed by on-line poll which must include the Revd Anne Brown who will be chair of the district from 1st September 2016.

14 Close

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

Actions

Who	Action	Minute	Target date
KT & TN	Continue the investigation of tools to aid the development of new web site relating for the Oxford Place Centre consistent with the branding specified as a parallel activity	4(i)	None
TN,BN	Bank details to HMRC	4(ii)	As soon as possible
TP	Progress the electrical inspection of the building and any consequent repairs	4(iv)	Complete by the next meeting (16th June)
TP,BN	Completion of new licences for Regular Users	4(v) & 12(ii)(c)	As soon as possible. This is urgent.
JJ,TP	Report on staffing issues	4(vi)	By next meeting (16th June)
TP	Review of procedure for monitoring repairs	4(viii)	On-going
KT	Inform architect of the relevant decisions of the meeting and return initialled copies of the schedules	6(i) ,6(iv) & 6(viii)	As soon as possible
JG	Locate plans etc relating to the remodelling undertaken in the 1970s.	6(vi)	As soon as possible
TN	Develop the 'branding' for the Oxford Place Centre	8(ii)	On going
PW	Inaugurate the stationing group	9(ii)	As appropriate

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Who	Action	Minute	Target date
Grants Subgroup	Apply to Grants Committee re increase in the grant support the deacon to £25000 from Sept 2018	9(iv)(b)	Not stated
KT	Contact the connexional Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice and Methodist Insurance re trustees liability etc	12(i)	Before next meeting
KT	Fix the dates of the three 2016/17 meetings	13	As soon as possible