

19. Managing Trustees of John Wesley's Chapel, the New Room, Bristol, and 4-5 Charles Street, Bristol

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The New Room has seen a step change in its operation, as it seeks to maximise its potential as a place of pilgrimage, delight, worship, exploration, nourishment, community building and spiritual growth.

The new building, now open in the Horsefair Courtyard, has some snags still to be resolved and the final cost has not yet been established, but is likely to be around £2.3m (original contract £2.058m). It has been widely praised and has transformed the New Room aesthetically and functionally. We can now offer state of the art museum and library space, meeting rooms for education and training, a cafe and delightful atrium, associated shop, office accommodation for staff and up to date toilet facilities, as well as the incomparable chapel itself. Charles Wesley's House at 4 Charles Street has been refurbished too as part of the overall project. The scale of activity both at and instigated from the New Room since last summer has been remarkable, and media interest continues to be keen. Increasingly, the staff are developing productive partnerships with other organisations, such as the Bristol Record Office, the District and local Circuit, Wellspring Healthy Living Centre and Second Step, a mental health charity. Monthly folk concerts are well-attended and the weekly lunchtime community choir has proved popular.

The challenge now is to ensure that what has been achieved can be expanded and sustained beyond the point at which the ongoing financial support from Heritage Lottery Fund ends – February 2020. The current income from the museum needs to treble, while that of the cafe, the shop and the events/room rental needs to double. Whether this can be achieved in the timescale remains to be seen. We will seek additional grants including those which support particular initiatives involving “hard to reach” groups. We call on Methodism to recognise not only the New Room's worldwide significance but also its proven potential for mission and to respond with appropriate ongoing financial support.

The current New Room staff are funded in the following ways:

Director (full time) - Connexion; David Worthington
Assistant Manager (part time) - Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF); Elizabeth Worthington
Education Officer (full time) - 50% HLF and 50% Bristol District; Mandy Briggs
Community Engagement Officer (part-time) - HLF; Lucie Connors
Visitor Services Officer (full time) - HLF; Louise Wratten
Collections Manager (part time) - HLF; Kate Rogers
Cafe Manager (full time) - New Room; Ewa Kozdeba
Assistant Cafe Manager (full time) - New Room; Niamh Archbold

The senior staff member, previously called the Manager, has been renamed *Director* and, though accountable to the Trustees, is accorded wider executive powers, being trusted to run the New Room in accordance with its aims and ethos.

New volunteers continue to be recruited: a significant number of overseas students among them. They all undergo a training programme which includes safeguarding training and input about the Wesleys and Methodism. Work with schools is expanding and brings in a modest income as well as raising awareness with teachers and pupils about Wesley, Methodism and other issues such as slavery and abolition in Bristol. The New Room enjoys a positive relationship with the Bristol and West Midlands region of the Learning and Development Network and often hosts events with them, especially book launches and talks.

The cafe has established itself as a delightful space in which to relax, promoting Fairtrade products and developing speciality snacks with great customer service. There is scope to encourage more events to take place with in-house catering, especially in the early evening. We are still facing some reluctance of casual or occasional visitors to visit the museum, for which there is an entrance fee. Previously, one could visit the Preachers' Rooms without charge, though donations were expected. The exceptional quality of the museum is attested by all who experience it, and many plan a return visit, as they have not allowed enough time to do it justice.

Overall visitor numbers since we opened the new facilities have remained higher than ever previously recorded and it is expected that in the first year of opening some 36,000 visitors will be welcomed. The Friday lunchtime communion service continues to grow with a good number of regulars, and many groups schedule their visit in order to play an active part in it. To do so provides a highly valued spiritual experience.

It has become clear that our system of governance, which had only been slightly tweaked over decades, is no longer appropriate. Our Chair, the Revd A Ward Jones, the Warden, Gary Best and our Manager (now recognised as Director), David Worthington have worked diligently to devise a system much better suited to overseeing a complex enterprise relying on a varied team of staff and volunteers. This has been adopted by the Board of Trustees and will come into force from September 2018, subject to the Conference's approval. The addition of the Secretary of the Conference or his/her nominated substitute as an ex-officio Trustee would provide a strong wider connexional link, and says a great deal about the significance that British Methodism now accords to mission through heritage.

Gary Best, in his roles as Warden, historian, author and the person who developed the concept of the new museum in the Preachers' Rooms, has been key in the transformation of the New Room. Along with the Manager, David Worthington, he has devoted an enormous amount of time and energy over the years of the Horsefair Project, and now needs to moderate his input. He will remain in a capacity for which he is eminently fitted: that of Historical Consultant. The Trustees recognise that the name of *Warden* failed to describe Gary's role. From September 2018 the name and the role will be discontinued. The role of Chair of the Trustees requires a person of faith and foresight, preferably living in the vicinity, with proven leadership skills and the ability to steer and champion the New Room through the next few years.

A number of Trustees who have served faithfully for years will be stepping down at the end of this connexional year, though some will continue to be involved with the New Room in other voluntary capacities. The following will be leaving: David Bainbridge, Jennifer Carpenter, Philip Carter, Mike Culshaw, Stephen Duckworth, Martin Hunt, Jong-Sin Lee, Peter Knowles and Bob Wood. We are particularly grateful to Peter Knowles, who, as Treasurer, has coped with the vastly increased scale and complexity of our finances, and nonetheless has agreed to serve as Assistant Treasurer, dealing with day-to-day transactions.

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2017

	General Fund (Unrestricted) £	Designated Funds (unrestricted) £	Restrict ed Funds £	Endowmen t Funds £	Total 2016-17 £
Income					
Donations, Legacies and Grants	53,574		1,570,604		1,624,178
Charitable Activities	40,273	2,123			42,396
Other Trading Activities	42,232				42,232
Interest and investment income	6,354		1,466		7,820
Other	9,589				9,589
					1,726,215
Total income	152,022	2,123	1,572,070	0	5
Expenditure					
Raising Funds	66,478				66,478
Charitable Activities	82,785	43,736	2,276,979		2,403,500
Other					2,469,978
Total charitable expenditure	149,263	43,736	2,276,979	0	8
Gains/(losses) on monetary investments	-185		-1,721	13,717	11,811
Net income/(expenditure)	2,574	-41,613	-706,630	13,717	-731,952
Transfers between funds		112,875	-112,875		0
Other gains/(losses)					0
Net movement in funds	2,574	71,262	-819,505	13,717	-731,952
Total funds brought forward	73,263	0	1,286,102	129,342	1,488,707
Total funds carried forward	75,837	71,262	466,597	143,059	756,755

*****RESOLUTIONS**

19/1. The Conference adopted the Report.

19/2 The Conference amended Standing Order 220 as follows:

(i) the Secretary of the Conference or his or her delegate appointed under Standing Order 114(1E);

19/3. The Conference appointed the following as the Managing Trustees of the New Room for 2018/19:

Chair - Mr John Savage

- (i) The Secretary of the Conference or her/his nominated substitute.
- (ii) The Chair of the Bristol District – the Revd Dr Jonathan Pye.
- (iii) The Superintendent of the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Circuit – the Revd David Alderman.
- (iv) Mrs Jane Allin, Mr Gary Best, the Revd Josette Crane, Mr Geoffrey Gollop (Treasurer), Mr John Hirst, the Revd A Ward Jones, Mrs Linda Jones (Secretary), Mrs Rachel Newton, Mr Niall Philips, Mr. Michael Rose, Mrs. Aroona Smith, Ms Anne Topping, the Revd David Weeks, the Revd Steven Wild, Mr Bob Wood.

Reasoned Statements:

The Revd Josette Crane undertook a placement at the New Room during her training and is currently “Without Appointment” and resident in the Bristol District. She brings her experience of serving as a trustee of Dorothy House Hospice.

Mrs Rachel Newton is trained in drama and has performed in the role of Susanna Wesley. She has contributed to the furnishing of Charles Wesley House and to activities there. She has previously served as a New Room Trustee.

Mr Niall Philips is the architect who fronted the Horsefair scheme.

Mr John Savage is a lay canon of Bristol Cathedral and a member of its governing body. He has recently retired after serving for 13 years as chair of the University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust.

Ms Anne Topping brings a wide range of experience, including earlier consultancy to the New Room.

The Revd Steve Wild is Chair of the Cornwall District and a former President of the Conference. He has a passion for mission through heritage and serves on the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee.