

MBC Trustees Meeting: 16 Jul 2020 Minutes

Attendees:

Present: Silabodhi (SB -Chris Effendowicz) - Chair, Acharashraddha (AC – Judith Tomlinson), Aparajita (AJ – Ajay Gilbert), Chandana (Ch - Stuart Orvis), Dayanandi (DN – Christine Robertson), Dharmakarunya (DK – Ursula Tidd), Mahasraddha (MS – Mark Leach), Vishangka (VS – Keith Green).

Guests: Suryaka (SK – Helen Ellis), Varasakhi (VK - Nicki Cowburn)

Apologies: Prasadu (PS – Andrew Porritt)

1. Welcome	Actions
SB welcomed all to the meeting.	
2. Check in	
All present checked in.	
3. Presentation by Suryaka & Varasakhi - proposed initiative on impact of racism	
<p>SK and VK initially sought the personal responses of trustees to their initiative. SK then gave an overview of her recent approaches towards persons of colour in the local sangha, as well as some less local Order members, and the resulting dialogue. She described her wish to invite sangha members into a 'safe space' in which they could discuss their personal responses to issues of race – and also to be in close dialogue with the trustees.</p> <p>VK added that she felt it important to set the sort of conversation described in the context of broadening diversity in the MBC's communication of the dharma. They sought the approval of the trustees to proceed with their initiative, through a variety of channels.</p> <p>It was agreed that SK and VK would slightly revise the wording of their suggested communication, then maintain contact with SB (and the trustees) as to their suggested next steps.</p>	
4. Spiritual welfare of the Heart Kula	
<p>VS gave an update on the process to look at the future of the Heart Kula. Shantigarbha has recently agreed to be external facilitator of this process and will be attending Heart Kula meetings over the next few Wed mornings. VS described the process (which he is guiding) in terms of the need to balance an urgent financial imperative with the emotional responses of Heart Kula members to possible reduced hours or job losses. SB stated that he is happy to take the patient, gradual approach that this entails, even though he recognizes the likely eventual need for management of the outcomes on the parts of himself, Ch and the trustees.</p>	
5. Minutes of meeting of 18 Jun and matters arising	
<p>The minutes were agreed; it was noted that the intended re-opening date of 01 Sep has subsequently been communicated to the sangha. SB has asked Sthirajyoti to initiate the necessary risk assessment, after which Kevin Statham and Steve Hodson-Ridgway would be employed to work on necessary modifications.</p> <p>SB noted that the intention to invite VP to a meeting is still 'live' and he will endeavour to arrange a date in the near future.</p>	<p>SB to invite Vidyapala to a trustees' meeting soon</p>

6. 'Hybrid' approach to in-person and online activities?

SB asked whether trustees would support the piloting of such an approach, which had recently been discussed in the Red Lotus Kula. Although it was agreed that there will be a clear need for such an approach in the foreseeable future, it was also acknowledged that the options are very varied, and sometimes complex. One of the important factors in play is the availability of approved teachers, who can already be in short supply.

7. Alternatives to physical retreats this year

SB reported on a recent Red Lotus Kula discussion which suggested that it would be unfeasible to run the intended two retreats (men's in Sep and women's in Oct) this autumn. It was agreed that further discussion would be required in order to identify suitable alternatives.

8. A more 'business-like' approach to rented spaces

SB described his desire for a more realistic relationship, in the short- to medium-term, with our commercial tenants in various parts of the building. AJ informed the meeting that one of these, Clear Vision, will be ceasing to trade by the end of Aug. Interest in the office space currently occupied by Clear Vision & Abhayaratna Trust has been expressed by a commercial partner of the MBC.

It was felt that, in various respects, the MBC could seek to make considerably better commercial use of the spaces it rents. Also, any future relationships with tenants should be governed by more systematic contracts than has been the case so far. However, the point was also made that we should be thoughtful about the subtle effect on the sangha that the choice of new tenants is likely to have.

9. Any Other Business

None.

Next Trustee Meeting – Thu 30 Jul 2020, 13.30 to 15.30