

MBC Trustees Meeting: 4th August 2021

Attendees

Present: Silabodhi (SB – Chris Effendowicz) - Chair, Prasadu, (PS), Vishangka (VS – Keith Green), Vidyapala (VP – Paul Whitehead), Dharmakarunya (DK – Ursula Tidd), Aparajita (AJ - Ajay Gilbert), Mary Tait (MT).

Apologies: Suryaka (SK - Helen Ellis), Aryaraksita (AK - Sundeep Grewel), Lilasuri (LS - Claire Morris), Mahahsradha (MS – Mark Leech)

Welcome

SB welcomed all to the meeting.

Apologies

SK, AK, MS and LS sent apologies.

Check In

All present checked in.

Spiritual Welfare of MBC Sangha and Centre Team

- Dharma Day and the Mitra ceremonies were a great success. The joyfulness of the mitras was particularly evident. There were around 20 people in the shrine room and 50 online.
- A men's order meeting was held to discuss some of the men training for ordination.
- There is a lot of energy in the younger sangha and much positivity.
- Suryaka and Aparajita are to lead a young people's study group.
- The uneasy relationships which have arisen in the past in the men's community in Salford are to be explored further with a view to strengthening the connection between the community and the trustees.
- Four women have been ordained on a retreat at Tiratanaloka.

Approval of the Previous Minutes of 7th July 2021

The minutes were approved as a true copy.

Matters Arising:

Ongoing Actions

Analysis of visioning session

Vidyapala/Prasadu
September

Gender inclusivity

Dharmakarunya /
Lilasuri after
September

Discuss Pros and Cons of MBC Future in Building

Outline of Finances

Negatives:

- The MBC has been rerouted into its various businesses, but we are still waiting for the money owed as a result of the city council incorrectly removing our charitable status.
- We are losing £2,000 or more per month.
- The cafe is paying half of the previous rent
- There are fewer courses and no retreats
- Lack of take up of places has meant reduced income from the communities.

Positives:

- Attendance at the led meditation group is going up
- The shop is doing better and is being advertised on social media
- We have more reserves than we have had in the past.

The Trustees have to prioritise what is important.

Areas to consider:

- Disability access: the cost of this is around £75,000 which includes not only access to the building but changes to the building to safeguard disabled people when they are there. It was considered whether such large amounts of money should be spent on a potentially small number of people. It was noted that it is not a legal requirement to provide disabled access and this is an ethical dilemma.
 - It appears that Young people value the Centre and want it to remain.
 - Find accessible venues for retreats and study groups. Possibly develop the past relationship we have had with the city centre
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Quaker venue for larger events if the city centre is given up or reduced in size.

The Roof

This would need replacing in the near future (cost £275,000+) but can continue to be patched up for a while.

Points made:

- What is it that people like about the centre? Could look at this in more depth.
- We would want some kind of inner-city venue.
- Separate centres are hard to manage – does the Centre Team have a view?
- What would we end up with if we did not have the building – would it be something worse? The Leeds sangha had to sell their building which may not have had a successful outcome.
- Give it more time and see if the Centre is delivering on our vision.
- We need to generate a new surge of energy after lockdown.
- May need to distinguish between the building and the Sangha.
- The building enables us to have sangha, right livelihood businesses and a community. There is a sense of something alive going on and benefit the locality.
- A smaller centre with smaller groups would encourage deepening friendships and groups practicing near each other.
- There is potential for projects separate from the building which could be created by order members and encourage people to come to the Centre.
- Why do order members not come to the Centre more?
- Possibility of having own retreat Centre.

It was decided that the finances need to be stabilised, and right now the Trustee's priority is to re-energise the Centre and the Sangha after lockdown and that the sale of the building will not be considered in the short term. The trustees recognise that not everyone feels ready to return to the Centre and are looking at ways in which everyone can share the dharma together.

Date of Next Meeting

It was decided that, in future, Trustee Meetings will be held on the first Wednesday of the month, and that for the foreseeable future, they would alternate between online and in-person

The next meeting will be: Wednesday 1st September **online**