

MBC Trustees Meeting: 20th September 2023

Present: Aparajita (AJ - Ajay Gilbert), Vishangka (VS – Keith Green), Upekshapriya (UP - Jeff Cole), Suryaka (SK – Helen Ellis), Silabodhi (SB (Chris Effendowicz), Chair, Aryarakshita (AK – Sundeep Grewal) Secretary, Arthapriya, President, Mary Tait
From 11.30 - Prasiddhi and Arthavadin

Apologies: Lilasuri (LS – Claire Morris) Treasurer

1. Check In

All those present checked in.

2. Minutes of the Last Meetings

Minutes of the meetings of the 23rd August and 6th September to be agreed at the next meeting.

3. Project Update/proposal re Viriyanaga

Viriyana was appointed to a Centre-support role in the Triratna Development Team late last year. SK and VS met with him to discuss whether he could help with the MBC Project. Three areas were identified:

- Fundraising: how, what and where
- Succession: who will take the project into the future
- Vision: help clarify aspects of vision

Viriyana would not be available to give substantial time until Dec/Jan but could comment on documents before then. His consultancy rates are £110 per day.

Pros:

- It was felt that it would be useful to have an 'outside consultant' view
- Might think of other options.
- Important to consult widely

Cons:

- Potentially delays decision.
- Costs

As the consultancy costs will be minimal, it was agreed that payment could be made to Viriyana for feedback on where we are now.

Decision

Project Update

Prasiddhi has designed a 'Task and Finish' Plan of what needs to be done to reach a decision in December. It covers:

- What are the tasks?
- When will they be finished by?
- What has been completed and what is outstanding?

Work in progress:

Conversation with VS about themes with link to notes.

Review of costs of 'stay' options.

Review of Heritage funding bid has provided useful information on costs at that time.

Review of report on accessibility and levels required.

Kevin Neary to be consulted about the lift.

SB pitched to LandAid which does some pro bono work for Charity around buildings. No response as yet.

Abhayanara to be consulted on specific conversions e.g., building upwards, reconfiguring the space. He will be surveying the MBC next Tuesday and attending the project meeting the day after. UP expressed a desire to attend.

A 'Risk Register' has been set up for the project to:

- brainstorm the level of risks.
- how likely they are to happen.
- effect on the project

To be reviewed over time.

Project team will discuss risk register and report outcome at next meeting.

Trustees to look at risk register and bring questions to next meeting.

Action: Trustees

Prasiddhi has provided focus in the drive by grouping documents together.

4. Engaging Membership

The question was raised as to how we can continue to engage the Manchester Membership. This was in a general and not necessarily a constitutional sense although it was raised at the AGM.

The purpose could be:

- Find ways to have a dialogue with Order Members when needed.
- Establish a sense of connection with the local Order.

A possible way forward would be to have local Order Member days.

May not be permanent but arise in response to particular situations.

A way forward would be to look for a list of appropriate options.

Action: Vishangka & Aryaraksita

Arthavadin: 'Reaching Consensus'

Arthavadin (on zoom), shared some of his conclusions on the work he has been doing for the International Council on decision making and consensus.

Bhante made it clear that consensus is important but in the Order experience also counts.

The reality is that decisions are reached through a combination of consensus and hierarchy.

This does not compromise dharmic principles.

What will help Triratna thrive?

- Leadership and being prepared to take responsibility for decision making.
- Operating based on consensus (the love mode).

What is Consensus?

- Definition: need a common definition which everyone agrees with.
- Body to be included in the final consultation process: needs to be decided e.g., Order Members, Mitras, Trustees, Order Members, Mitras, wider Sangha.
- Defining this who decides who decides? Legally, the final decision is for trustees only.
- Consensus is ideal, but some pragmatism is needed.

There are many models of consensus. Below are some examples:

Consensus -1 (or -2 etc)

There is a proposal and one dissenter. The onus is then on the dissenter to build a comprehensive case that persuades the others. The emphasis is harmony and moving forward i.e., the love mode.

Consensual Decision Making

Consent rather than agreement. A person may have reservations but agree to allow the decision to go ahead. It is possible to explore the degree to which people will consent e.g., on a scale of 1 – 6. This gives an indication of the strength of agreement or dissent.

Points made:

- It is useful to share with people how decisions are made.
- There is likely to be a combination of consensus and the pragmatic mode.
- Consenting but not agreeing brings with it the responsibility not to subvert the decision.
- People who dissent should be given the space to be heard.

Date of Next Meeting

Silabodhi to check attendance for 4th and 25th October

Action: SB

25th October is the next budget meeting

A request has been made that the Meeting in Progress sign be put on the door.