

MBC Trustees Meeting: 6th September 2023

Present:, Aparajita (AJ - Ajay Gilbert), Vishangka (VS – Keith Green), Upekshapriya (UP - Jeff Cole), Suryaka (SK – Helen Ellis), Lilasuri (LS - Claire Morris) Treasurer, Silabodhi (SB (Chris Effendowicz), Chair, Aryarakshita (AK – Sundeep Grewal, Mary Tait Prasiddhi (from 11.30)

Apologies: None

1. Check In

All those present checked in.

2. Welcome Back

Silabodhi was welcomed back from his sabbatical. Silabodhi responded by saying how much he has benefited from the sabbatical and how grateful he is to have been able to deepen his practice by further study and engaging in a solitary retreat. He has returned refreshed and determined to work with focus towards the end of the MBC Future project. He has been updated by other members of the team and has decided that, in the future, his energies are best placed in the more practical aspects of the project, rather than the consultation process. He is looking forward to returning to his mentoring and study group activities. He has been inspired by Ratnaprabha to look at the role of Chair in a different way and that the an important aspect was to 'bless' the members and the Sangha i.e nurturing them through kalyanamitrata.

3. Project Update/Feedback from Elders Meeting

Prasiddhi's Report

A document was presented which links what the sangha has been telling us to our vision under the following headings:

- Vision – does the solution deliver our vision?
- Sangha – does the solution support the development of our community?
- Include - does the solution support accessibility and inclusivity.
- Engage - does it engage both the Sangha and the wider community?
- Beauty - Is the solution inspiring and aesthetically pleasing?
- Sustain – does the solution promote environmental sustainability?
- Viable – is the solution financially viable and sustainable?
- Practical - Does the solution meet our practical needs.

We need to start using the criteria to generate options and to do this, the Trustees must agree the criteria.

The purpose of the document presented is to get feedback on the criteria. The question was asked as to whether everyone was happy with all the criteria from 1 – 8?

This document was agreed in principle subject to the changes noted by Silabodhi being included.

Action: Silabodhi

The Trustees were requested to return to all the available documents held and familiarise themselves with these in order to agree common options for the way forward.

Action: All Trustees

- The Trustees need to communicate their own vision (even if these views do not come through strongly from the feedback), whilst being interested in the responses of the Sangha.
- The process for reaching consensus on the subjective elements was discussed.
- Conversations around finance

When the options have been decided they must be:
communicated in ways which inspire.

- Make sure people feel their comments have been heard.
- There is an emphasis on continuity e.g continuing the Sangharakshita legacy
- The information is waiting to be expressed in a vision and a decision from the Trustees.

There are three issues on which we might want to go back to the Sangha:

- What level of accessibility is acceptable.
- Fundraising.
- Information on the financial position.

Trustees could answer questions on these and take the conversations back to the project team.

Next Steps

- Project team work up options in more detail and identify viable options to be agreed with Trustees
- Final round of consultation.
- Trustees discuss financial risk.
- Budget and projections.

What is the view of Trustees on fundraising? What are the options?

Check with Mokshapriya on move from Chorlton.

Action: Suryaka/Vishangka

Prasiddhi was thanked for the document which felt to provide clarity and a pointer to the next steps.

It was agreed that Vishangka and Suryaka should continue to lead on the process work for the project.

It was agreed that the Project Team notes should be listed with the latest first.

The question was raised as to how we are continuing to communicate with the Order and the Sangha.

A video with a financial update

The themes and content of the consultation as a video plus paper summary.

The next significant consultation with the order will be when firm options have been decided.

The question was raised as to whether this should include Order Members outside the Manchester sangha.

The plan is to have personal talks with those most involved outside the Manchester Sangha who have experience and expertise which would contribute to the decision. For example, Silabodhi has been talking to the Chairs at the ECA. Need to make sure that it is OK to share their opinion

Consultation with Elders

Below is some of the advice of those consulted:

- Kalyanamitratra is central.
- Trustees there to provide vision and leadership. There is a time to listen and acknowledge but the practical decisions must be made.
- The myth of Turner Street is an inspiring archetype but needs to be seen alongside practical needs.
- Need to be clear about what comes next.
- May lose people if the decision is to leave.
- Myth of right livelihood and communities lies in people not buildings.
- Income must generate a surplus.
- The vision is there, articulate it clearly and tell the story.
- Tiratnaloka is moving although not as yet fully funded.

- Getting feedback generates more confidence in the decision.

It is felt that the Sangha has on the whole offered support to the project and feels we are on the right track.

4. Spiritual Welfare

Candradipa has been away on long term sick leave and is about to start a phased return with support to work alongside him. The team are communicating well and discussions will continue with them as they move forward. A request was made that Trustees communicate more frequently with the Centre Team to promote better dialogue on decisions. The team are growing spiritually and there is a real feeling of generosity. The members of the team are a precious resource.

The possibility of setting up a gender diverse Dharma group is to be discussed.

Action: Suryaka/Upekshapriya/Aryarakshita/Vishangka

5. A.O.B

Suryaka indicated that she is happy to continue to chair the meetings unless anyone else wanted to do it. Lilasuri offered to support Suryaka when needed.

An order member has indicated a willingness to talk about becoming President of the MBC. To be discussed further.

Action: Silabodhi

There is possible interest in renting the basement. This may be pursued in the future, but we need to keep the options as to how we use the space flexible at the moment.

The Risk Register is in the Trustee directory and any other known additions need to be made.

6. Date of next Meeting

Wednesday 20th September 10.00a.m. to 1.00p.m in the Library