

## 16. Managing Trustees of the New Room/John Wesley's Chapel and Charles Wesley's House, Bristol

1. The New Room has now experienced three full years since the new visitor centre in the Horsefair Courtyard was opened in 2017. The expanded facilities reinforce the multifaceted nature of the site which, in addition to the chapel and museum, offers a café, shop, library, and meeting rooms as well as a courtyard garden at the Broadmead entrance.
2. As a result of government legislation in respect of the COVID-19 pandemic, the New Room was required to close from the middle of March 2020. We re-opened the site at the beginning of July 2020 until being required to close again at the end of October 2020. Based on the government's published roadmap, the New Room plans to re-open again in May 2021.
3. During these periods of enforced closure, the New Room has refocused its offer in order to increase its digital output so as to continue its engagement with our visitor base and volunteers. Actions undertaken include the upgrading the website to incorporate more online activities and downloadable resources, offering of spiritual support through an Emmaus Service streamed on a Tuesday via our Facebook page, and a Friday reflection on our social media channels. In addition, we have continued other regular events online, such as our weekly community choir, via Zoom.
4. In 2020, we launched our Wes Talk series, a monthly talk programme inspired by issues that John Wesley wrote about in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that still resonate today. Topics that have been explored include climate change and the environment, women's role in Methodist history, and Wesley's views on slavery. The latter topic has been a particular focal point in Bristol over the last year as a result of the Edward Colston statue in the city being torn down and we have been involved in work with the local media addressing the issues raised by the dramatic events witnessed last June that were broadcast around the world.
5. When the New Room re-opens, we will continue to focus on being a place of pilgrimage, worship, exploration, nourishment, community building and spiritual growth. We encourage visitors to offer feedback on their visit through both traditional and digital formats. This led to us recently being formally recognised as a 'must see' attraction by Trip Adviser and being awarded a place in their Hall of Fame due to consistently positive reviews on their website and maintaining our place as one of the Top 10 visitor attractions in Bristol.
6. The New Room Mission Statement begins with the words; 'a light in the city since 1739' and we seek to live this out through our partnerships with local Circuits, the District, local businesses, charities, and other important stakeholders, such as Destination Bristol. These partnerships enable us to organise and host a wide range of events and activities.

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7. Unfortunately, as a result of the pandemic, we have not been able to run the annual Easter Trail for the past two years. This initiative, offered in conjunction with the Ark Bus Team and Bristol Shopping Quarter, involves a trail of cardboard animals, which have been painted by local schools, being displayed in retail shop windows in the immediate area around the New Room which tell the Easter story. Other regular events which are hosted at the New Room include our Community Film Club, Chat & Craft, and our bi-monthly Folk at the New Room concerts.
8. As a result of the government restrictions introduced in March 2020, we have not been able to welcome any visitors to the Charles Wesley House during the year. This was particularly frustrating as we were unable to run Easter tours of the house which had been planned based on the success of sold-out tours of the Christmas tours of the house in 2019. This had proved to be a popular initiative that brought more local visitors to the house in addition to the many international groups that usually visit the house throughout the year.
9. Our challenge moving forward is how to sustain what has been achieved and seek new ways to expand our offer and engagement with local, national, and international audiences. In light of the pandemic, we envisage that this will be a mixture of our traditional welcome to the site by volunteers and staff, but it will also expand into the digital realm as we seek to engage with an audience that wants to engage with the ministry of the New Room but, because of geography or other restrictions, is physically unable to come to the site. We anticipate offering events and activities that can be enjoyed in person or online.
10. The ongoing financial support from Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) ends in June 2021 and we are grateful for grants that have been given by the Methodist Church for the work delivered by the staff team. In addition, applications have been made to government grant schemes to support our income streams. There will also be a greater focus on encouraging more people to become Friends of the New Room and Michael Eavis, a born and bred Methodist and founder of the Glastonbury Festival, remains an active Patron.
11. We continue to recruit new volunteers, including a significant number of overseas students from the local universities. All volunteers undergo a training programme which includes safeguarding training and teaching about the Wesleys and the early Methodist movement. Work with schools is expanding and raises awareness with both teachers and pupils about our story and addresses such topics as slavery and abolition in Bristol. Finally, the New Room works closely with the South West Learning Network team and regularly hosts meetings and events to support their work.
12. As part of its commitment to good governance, the New Room trustees have

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continued to meet regularly during the pandemic via Zoom and the executive committee meets monthly to ensure that important strategic decisions are made and undertaken by the staff team. This has ensured that we are as well prepared as possible for the site re-opening in May 2021.

13. This past year has been one of the most challenging the New Room has faced since its original construction in 1739; one that went from welcome record visitor numbers to being forced to close its doors for an unprecedented period of time. However, we look forward to re-opening as soon as government restrictions are lifted and serving our community again, including those who are able to visit us in person but also those who have come to learn of our work and ministry through our digital platforms during this past year. To paraphrase one of John Wesley's most famous quotes, the New Room truly looks upon all the world as its parish.
14. The New Room staff team consists of the following members and are funded in the following ways:
  - 1) Director (full-time) - Connexion; David Worthington
  - 2) Education Officer (full-time) - 50% HLF and 50% Bristol District; Mandy Briggs
  - 3) Collections Manager & Community Engagement Officer (full-time) – HLF; Kate Rogers
  - 4) Operations Manager (full-time) - HLF; Louise Wratten
  - 5) Finance Officer (part-time) – New Room; Jo Oyekoya
  - 6) Marketing & Communications Officer (part-time) – HLF; Sophie Evans
  - 7) Cafe Manager (full-time) - New Room; Ewa Littlefield
  - 8) Assistant Cafe Manager (full-time) - New Room; Zdenek Bidsovsky

### \*\*\*RESOLUTIONS

**16/1. The Conference receives the Report.**

**16/2. The Conference appoints the following as the Managing Trustees of the New Room for 2021/2022:**

- a) The Secretary of the Conference or her/his nominated substitute:  
the Revd Dr Jonathan R Hustler
- b) The chair of the Bristol District: the Revd Dr Jonathan H Pye
- c) The Superintendent of the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Circuit:  
the Revd Novette Headley
- d) Dr Wendy Allen, Mrs Jane Allin, the Revd Josette Crane, Mr Gary Best, Mr Geoffrey Gollop, the Revd A Ward Jones, Mrs Linda Jones, Mr Niall Philips,

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Mr Michael Rose, Mr John Savage (Chair), Mrs Aroona Smith, the Revd David G Weeks, the Revd Steven J Wild.

Wendy Allen is the Regional Learning Network Officer, she studied Theology at Wesley College, Bristol and taught RE in the city.

### The New Room/John Wesley's Chapel

#### Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) for the year ended 31 August 2020

|  | Notes to the accounts | General Fund (Unrestricted) | Designated Funds (Unrestricted) | Restricted Funds | Endowment Funds | Total 2019-20   |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|  |                       | £                           | £                               | £                | £               | £               |
| <b>Income</b>                          |                       |                             |                                 |                  |                 |                 |
| Donations, Legacies and Grants         | 2                     | 170,994                     |                                 | 112,073          |                 | <b>283,067</b>  |
| Charitable Activities                  | 3                     | 50,504                      |                                 |                  |                 | <b>50,504</b>   |
| Other Trading Activities               | 4                     | 103,564                     |                                 |                  |                 | <b>103,564</b>  |
| Interest and investment income         | 5                     | 7,425                       |                                 |                  |                 | <b>7,425</b>    |
| Other                                  | 6                     | 2,151                       |                                 |                  |                 | <b>2,151</b>    |
| <b>Total income</b>                    |                       | <b>334,638</b>              | <b>0</b>                        | <b>112,073</b>   | <b>0</b>        | <b>446,711</b>  |
| <b>Expenditure</b>                     |                       |                             |                                 |                  |                 |                 |
| Raising Funds                          | 7                     | 119,355                     |                                 |                  |                 | <b>119,355</b>  |
| Charitable Activities                  | 8                     | 95,234                      |                                 | 144,602          |                 | <b>239,836</b>  |
| Other                                  |                       |                             |                                 |                  |                 |                 |
| <b>Total charitable expenditure</b>    |                       | <b>214,589</b>              | <b>0</b>                        | <b>144,602</b>   | <b>0</b>        | <b>359,191</b>  |
| Gains/(losses) on monetary investments |                       | (923)                       |                                 | 575              | (14,428)        | <b>(14,776)</b> |
| <b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>        |                       | <b>119,126</b>              | <b>0</b>                        | <b>(31,954)</b>  | <b>(14,428)</b> | <b>72,744</b>   |
| Transfers between funds                |                       | (30,000)                    | 30,000                          |                  |                 | <b>0</b>        |
| Other gains/(losses)                   |                       |                             |                                 |                  |                 | <b>0</b>        |
| <b>Net movement in funds</b>           |                       | <b>89,126</b>               | <b>30,000</b>                   | <b>(31,954)</b>  | <b>(14,428)</b> | <b>72,744</b>   |
| Total funds brought forward            |                       | 162,005                     | <b>65,823</b>                   | <b>260,884</b>   | <b>148,647</b>  | <b>637,359</b>  |
| <b>Total funds carried forward</b>     |                       | <b>251,131</b>              | <b>95,823</b>                   | <b>228,930</b>   | <b>134,219</b>  | <b>710,103</b>  |