

54. Managing Trustees of the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster

Contact name and details	The Revd Michaela A Youngson Chair of the Managing Trustees michaela@methodistlondon.org.uk
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Introduction

This report from the Managing Trustees gives an overview of the varied activities and events which have been part of the life of the Methodist Central Hall Westminster during 2016/2017. The church and the Conference Centre reach out to a vast number of residents and workers in London and the South East, as well as to over 9,000 visitors from all over the UK and from 60 different countries around the world.

Ministry of the church

The team ministry has continued to thrive. The ministers have the support and loyalty of church officers and other volunteers in carrying out a diverse range of tasks. The key focus and meeting point for the congregation is Sunday morning worship, where visitors join a gathered community of regular worshippers. Mid-week worship and Bible and fellowship groups offer opportunities for a deepening of discipleship in an atmosphere of hospitable welcome. Membership now stands at around 450.

The pastoral work of the church is coordinated by Deacon Kina Saunders. Work amongst children and young people continues to flourish. All-age worship services are a welcome feature of Sunday morning worship. 'The Sanctuary' – a creative contemporary worship service for young adults meets on Thursdays and includes members who have volunteered to assist at a winter night shelter run by Westminster Churches Together. The Revd Tony Miles continues his valuable work in broadcasting, in both Christian and mainstream media.

Healing Ministry continues to be an important part of the life at Central Hall and is valued by the many who attend. As well as regular monthly services, an annual Healing Conference is held at the Hall, as is an annual conference by 'Westminster Women'.

As part of our serving the local community in Westminster, we are involved in various projects including drop-ins for those living with mental illness and those with Parkinson's Disease, both organised in partnership with ecumenical and NHS contacts.

Another long-standing partnership has been with the Sisters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul, as together we run the St Vincent's Family Project, which is based in an extended community suite at Central Hall.

Chaplaincy continues to play an important part in the work, with the Revd Dr Martyn Atkins sustaining and creating pastoral links with Members and workers in the Palace of Westminster, Tony Miles as Media Chaplain and Kina Saunders as Chaplain to the St Vincent's Family Project.

A key role for the church at Methodist Central Hall is acting as a facilitator for events led by a whole range of different ministries and charities, thus the building is used to serve the London District, the Connexion and the wider Christian community. Examples of this are the hosting of an annual carol service for broadcast, 'Society Sunday' worship and a service of remembrance for miscarried, still-born and early-death babies in partnership with the Mariposa Trust. Of particular

significance this year was a poignant visit by 17 Muslim young adults from Palestine, organised in partnership with the Amos Trust.

As reported in the British media, the appeal against the rejection by Westminster City Council of the application to locate outside the Hall a sculpture of the *Homeless Jesus* by internationally renowned sculptor Timothy Schmalz was refused. Other ways are now being sought to express the Hall's identification with the homeless.

The Conference Centre

Mr Paul Southern, Managing Director, leads the Conference Centre team as it works tirelessly to market the facilities of Central Hall, which forms the largest conference venue in Central London, with over 25 rooms. The year ending August 2016 was very successful, with record turnover of over £8 million from events and the café. The Company was able to contribute over £0.9m for the Trustees to maintain and develop the building and support the ministry at Central Hall.

The Conference Centre team is working to develop links with new markets and to maintain standards as a world class conference and events centre – demonstrating a welcome that reflects the Methodist identity to all who use the building. Together with our onsite production partner, we have invested heavily in making Central Hall one of the most technically capable venues in the UK. A new three year contract was finalised with the BBC for the New Year's Eve concert.

The range of events that takes place at the Hall continues to be exciting, with particular highlights:

- Working with Channel 4 on the *Stand Up to Cancer* charity fundraising event;
- Hosting the BBC's New Year's Eve Concert with Robbie Williams;
- Accommodating the final of *The Choir with Gareth Malone* (BBC);
- Using the Lecture Hall and Library in the launch of a new range of clothes by DAKS;
- Hosting corporate events for *the Guardian*, the Hilton group, Shell and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation;
- Working with a range of government departments including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, plus public bodies such as the PiXL Club (partnership of schools), the National Union of Teachers, BUPA and the NHS;
- Graduation ceremonies for Brunel University and the Royal Veterinary College among others;
- Charitable events with Blind Aid, the Salvation Army, MacMillan Cancer and a campaign event #YouAreNotAlone, highlighting the plight of Syrian refugees with a concert by Yusuf Islam (Cat Stevens).

All events are judged against ethical criteria and proposed events have been rejected from organisations promoting violence, alcohol, tobacco or other subjects conflicting with Methodist principles and/or Standing Orders. Central Hall and our onsite partners have been *London Living Wage* employers since 2013 and we have extended our ethical approach to environmental issues and have attained Gold level for green tourism, with the ability to calculate the carbon footprint for each event and then give the client a choice of ways to offset it. In addition we have partnered with the Toilet Twinning charity which builds toilets in countries where they are lacking. So far over £7,000 has been contributed.

The building

Maintaining a building of the status and complexity of Central Hall is a constant challenge and the Trustees are committed to an effective and efficient programme of maintenance and refurbishment. Dealing with general maintenance and decoration is a permanent and on-going

task, alongside particular major projects. The last year has seen completion of the external redecoration of the building and refurbishment of the Business Centre and Visitor Services. The building continues to be in good order.

The future

The Sunday congregation continues to flourish and the community engagement of the church demonstrates the Methodist commitment to an outward oriented mission, with God's love at its heart. The business is in a much stronger position than in recent years, with many clients returning and new clients being added, with some booking two and three years in advance.

The Trustees ensure that both church and company operate within their means financially. A percentage of any surplus on Trust income is passed to the 'Centenary Fund' which is to be developed for social needs. Progress is being made on the renewal of the contract between the Trust and the company for a further period from 2019.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

54/1. The Conference adopted the Report.

54/2. The Conference appointed the following Managing Trustees of the Conference Property at Central Hall Westminster:

The Revd Michaela A Youngson (Chair of the Managing Trustees and Convenor – ex officio), the Revd Dr Martyn D Atkins (Superintendent, Westminster Circuit – ex officio), Mr Nevil Tomlinson (Treasurer to the Trustees), Mr David Morgan (Secretary to the Trustees), * Mrs Ama Ackah-Yensu, Mr Kojo Amoah-Arko, Mr Joseph Anoom, * the Revd Anthony D Miles, * Ms Genevieve Pantnelli, * Ms Grace Sangmuah, Mr Ian Serjeant, the Revd Graham Thompson, * Ms Helen Tudor, the Revd Jason Vinyard.

** Indicates the people nominated by the Westminster Circuit Meeting.*

New Trustees

Mr Nevil Tomlinson – nominated as Treasurer. Qualified Chartered Accountant retired from career in industry. Five years as Treasurer of Development Programme at Teddington Methodist Church.

Mr Joseph Anoom - barrister, Church Steward and a Methodist advocate in complaints cases.

Mrs Ama Ackoah-Yensu – Treasurer Westminster Circuit. Financial expertise and knowledge of the work of the Hall.

Ms Genevieve Pantnelli – circuit steward Westminster Circuit.