

39. 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 that have been part of the life of the Methodist Central Hall Westminster during 2017/2018. 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 with the leadership of the Revd Dr Martyn Atkins as Superintendent Minister. The ministers are loyally supported by 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 each week. 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, originating from almost every point of the globe, giving rise to the vision statement: "A global Christian family following Jesus at the heart of London".

The pastoral work of the church is led by Deacon Kina Saunders, who has coordinated care for church members and those in our extended church family alike. 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.

Our healing ministry, under the leadership of the Revd Peter Edwards, 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.

The Trust and church work closely to support the St Vincent's Family Project, which meets within the hall premises, as do the mental health and Parkinson's disease drop-in projects. The church is also involved in various local projects, including the Westminster Churches Winter Night Shelter, 'the Passage' (a charity helping homeless people), Westminster Food Bank, 'the Gate' (the Westminster Crisis Pregnancy Centre) and a project involved in visiting and befriending refugees received into the UK.

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Chaplaincy continues to play an important part of the work, with 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. One example is the hosting of an annual carol service for broadcast. Central Hall also served as a venue for the BBC's *Songs of Praise* and for *Gospel Choir of the Year*.

Although Westminster City Council rejected the application to locate outside the hall a sculpture of *the Homeless Jesus* by internationally renowned sculptor Timothy Schmalz, the hall's identification with the homeless has been followed through with the installation of a smaller prototype version of the sculpture in the entrance of Central Hall. The sculpture was dedicated as part of the Good Friday Procession of Witness shared with the congregations of Westminster Abbey, Westminster Cathedral and The Passage charity.

The conference centre

Mr Paul Southern, Managing Director, leads the conference centre team working 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 2017 was very successful, with record turnover of over £7.5 million from events and the café. The Company was able to contribute over £1million 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 our 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:

- CBS's production of *The Late Late Show with James Corden* televised in the US
- The FIFA Interactive World Cup
- The PiXL Club: a not-for-profit partnership of over 2,500 schools who come together to share best practice and raise standards
- Government bodies such as the Department of Health, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Home Office
- Corporate clients including Thompson Reuters, *the Financial Times* and Network Rail

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- Charitable events at discounted rates with Blind Aid, the London Marathon and MacMillan Cancer Support

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. 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. There is also an internal target that all bulbs in the building will be low energy LEDs by the end of 2018.

The building

The building continues to be in good order. 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. A ten-year schedule of maintenance works has been developed along with a £1.2million refurbishment programme that will involve the upgrade of client areas throughout the building. The last year has seen the replacement of 900 chairs in the meeting and conference areas. The old chairs have been donated to other Methodist Church halls throughout the country. The Martin Turner Suite was created in recognition of the former Superintendent Minister of Central Hall. The rotunda areas around the Great Hall have been repaired and decorated. All 165 radiators in the building have been replaced, along with much of the pipe work.

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. The contract between the Trust and the company has been renewed for a further 20-year period from 2019.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

39/1. The Conference adopts the Report.

39/2. The Conference appoints the following Managing Trustees of the Conference Property at Central Hall Westminster:

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The Revd Michaela Youngson (Chair of the Managing Trustees and Convener – ex officio), the Revd Dr Martyn 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 Joe Anoom, * # the Revd Anthony D Miles, * Ms Genevieve Patnelli, * 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.*

Indicates Trustees who have served for six years or more

Reasoned Statements for Trustees who have exceeded six years of service

The Revd Michaela Youngson is a Chair of the London District.

Mr Kojo Amoah-Arko – Chartered Accountant – provides valued financial input

The Revd Anthony D Miles – minister in the Westminster Circuit – good overview of many areas of the Hall’s activity.

Mr Ian Serjeant - Chartered Town Planner and member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation.

Ms Helen Tudor - recruitment consultant, member of the congregation since 1981, Sunday school teacher.

The Revd Jason Vinyard – Methodist minister, formerly in building industry – member of Hall Fabric Committee.