

**REPORT to METHODIST CONFERENCE 2020**  
**by MANAGING TRUSTEES of the NEW ROOM/JOHN WESLEY'S CHAPEL**  
**and CHARLES WESLEY'S HOUSE, BRISTOL**

The New Room has now been through two full years since the new visitor centre in the Horsefair Courtyard 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. We continue to receive recognition for what has been achieved since 2017; the most recent award we received was 'Small Attraction of the Year' in the Bristol, Bath and Somerset Tourism Awards for the second consecutive year in 2019.

Our visitor numbers have doubled over the last two year to over 50,000 per annum which we believe strongly reinforces our focus on the New Room being a place of pilgrimage, worship, exploration, nourishment, community building and spiritual growth. We actively encourage visitors to offer their feedback which we receive through traditional channels as well as our social media accounts and online review platforms. The feedback is overwhelming positive, and visitors always reference the warm welcome they receive from both staff and volunteers.

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 activities.

One of our most popular events is the annual Easter Trail which is run in conjunction with the Bristol and South Gloucestershire circuit's Ark Bus team and Bristol Shopping Quarter. The trail is an opportunity for children and adults to hunt for over 60 cardboard animals, which have been painted by local schools, around the Broadmead shopping area and, when complete, we hand out a small 'goody' bag which includes Methodist Church booklets and New Room leaflets. The 2019 trail attracted over 1000 participants and has now become a mainstay of the Easter programme offered by Bristol Shopping Quarter. In addition, it's wonderful to report that there is strong competition amongst retailers to host one of the animals in their store which enable the Easter story to be shared with an audience that otherwise may not hear of it.

Regular events which are hosted at the New Room include our Community Film Club, Chat & Craft and our monthly Folk at the New Room programme. One particular exhibition that we were delighted to display last year was 'One Chapel, Many Voices', an oral history project undertaken by our intern, Annie Sharples. The New Room continues to attract attention from the TV and film sector as it featured in ITV's adaptation of 'Sanditon', BBC's 'Britain's Easter Story' and BBC's 'Songs of Praise' in which the history of the Methodist Covenant Service was shared.

We're delighted to report that the weekly Friday lunchtime communion service continues to grow with a good number of regulars who attend. In addition, many of our international and domestic groups now schedule their visits in order to play an active part in the service which provides them with a highly valued spiritual experience as they attend worship at the oldest Methodist building in the world.

Our challenge moving forwards is how we sustain what has been achieved and seek new ways to expand our offer and engagement with a local, national and international audience. The ongoing financial support from Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) ends in December 2020 and we are grateful for grants that have been given by the Methodist Church for the work delivered by the staff team. In addition, there will be applications made to external charities and grant making trusts to support

these 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.

Currently, income from venue hire and the café continues to grow although we would like to see an increase in museum admissions. It has proved to be a particular challenge moving from a free museum to one where an admission charge applies although those who have visited have been extremely complimentary and we've received much positive feedback on its content and layout and visitors can enjoy free readmission for a further twelve months. The cafe has established itself as a delightful space in which to relax and appreciate this 'oasis' in the middle of Bristol Shopping Quarter which promotes Fairtrade products and developed a well-deserved reputation for its food and drink offer along with great customer service. Income streams have increased substantially since we first opened, and we developed our in-house catering offer for venue hire users.

The New Room staff team consists of the 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) Assistant Manager (part-time) - HLF; Elizabeth Worthington
- 6) Cafe Manager (full-time) - New Room; Ewa Littlefield
- 7) Assistant Cafe Manager (full-time) - New Room; Niamh Archbold-Puttock
- 8) Catering Assistant (part-time) – New Room; Rodolfo Rivas-Aldrete

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.

#### **SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - YEAR ENDED 31st AUGUST 2019**

	<b>General Fund (Unrestricted)</b>	<b>Designated Funds (Unrestricted)</b>	<b>Restricted Funds</b>	<b>Endowment Funds</b>	<b>Total 2018-19</b>
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Income</b>					
Donations, Legacies and Grants	85,657		137,874		<b>223,531</b>
Charitable Activities	84,212				<b>84,212</b>
Other Trading Activities	144,696				<b>144,696</b>
Interest and investment income	7,907				<b>7,907</b>
Other	3,698				<b>3,698</b>
<b>Total income</b>	<b>326,170</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>137,874</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>464,044</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Raising Funds	135,800				<b>135,800</b>
Charitable Activities	106,097		172,212		<b>278,309</b>
Other					

<b>Total charitable expenditure</b>	<b>241,897</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>172,212</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>414,109</b>
Gains/(losses) on monetary investments	2,800		3,356	(2,308)	3,848
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>	<b>87,073</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(30,982)</b>	<b>(2,308)</b>	<b>53,783</b>
Transfers between funds	(30,000)	30,000			0
Other gains/(losses)					0
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>57,073</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>(30,982)</b>	<b>(2,308)</b>	<b>53,783</b>
Total funds brought forward	104,932	35,823	291,866	150,955	583,576
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>162,005</b>	<b>65,823</b>	<b>260,884</b>	<b>148,647</b>	<b>637,359</b>

### **Resolutions:**

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1. Conference adopts the report.
  
2. Conference appoints the following as the Managing Trustees of the New Room for 2020-21:
  - (i) The Secretary of Conference or her/his nominated substitute
  - (ii) The chair of the Bristol District: Revd Jonathan Pye
  - (iii) The Superintendent of the Bristol & South Gloucestershire Circuit: Revd David Alderman
  - (iv) Mrs Jane Allin, Revd Josette Crane, Mr Gary Best, Mr Geoffrey Gollop, Mr John Hirst, Revd A. Ward Jones Mrs Linda Jones, Mrs. Rachel Newton, Mr Niall Philips, Mr Michael Rose, Mr John Savage (Chair), Mrs Aroona Smith, Revd David G. Weeks, Revd Steven Wild