

Sunday March 8th 2020

Dear Partners

We are sorry and disappointed to have to contact you on this matter, but feel that it is important to make you aware of some of the experiences that we as Trustees and me personally are facing at this time.

Most recently, it would appear that the integrity and legitimacy of Merlyn, Jane and I as Trustees is being called in to question.

I have been informed in writing by a former chair of BCLC, that he had 'chatted recently with some former leaders and trustees' and wanted to meet with me.

Although I refused this firmly, I have since been the subject of repeated calls and texts, and have been presented with information that breaches the confidentiality of our internal discussions and processes.

I was advised that the repeated attempts to contact me were because the charity website says that 'before contacting them, make contact with the trustees', which we deemed as threatening to report us. The intensity of these calls and texts have been such that I have been reduced to tears, this has also come to the attention of my husband who has also had to intervene.

On the issue on inappropriate interactions, we have also had a couple of complaints from staff surrounding the attitude and tone in which they have been dealt with.

In consideration of some of the things that are being experienced as Trustees, we have set our own list of actions as follows;

We have contacted the Charity Commission to advise of the concerns we have as volunteers in this Charity and to inform them of the interactions that we have been experiencing, as we undertake this role.

We have also sought clarification on the process that should have been followed in 2004 & 2016 by the then Trustees, to note the addition of the Guiding Principles following vote by the members, although we have been advised that this is seen as an 'Administrative change' as it does not change the 'aims and purposes' of the charity.

As requested in our last business meeting and we have also clarified how amendments can be made to the governing documents and this would

be via an agreed resolution although it is deemed as an internal change, as it is classified as 'how we run things' rather than anything that changes our aims and and purposes.

We sought advice surrounding the status of the land and buildings back in 2017 and this has been recorded in our Trustee documents, but will seek further clarification as identified by the previous Chair, Andrew Berry, surrounding the registration of the land and how this is reflected in our assets as a Church and Charity going forward.

We can also confirm that 2 interviews did take place and that the panel deemed neither candidate viable to take forward in the selection process and so are re-advertising the post. We will keep you updated .

Going forward, we respectfully request that issues that need to be raised to do with our roles as Trustees, be informed via the Trustees email address rather than via the use of our personal emails as this opportunity has been abused.

I feel it important to say that some of the things we are experiencing do not bode well for the legacy that BCLC is aiming to build.

The impressions being given and the narrative that has been going around, has implications for BCLC's staff, volunteers, partners users and damages our reputation, let alone our foundation as a 'Christian organisation'.

We think it goes without saying, that this is unacceptable and does leave us open to challenge on many fronts surrounding our example as a church body in this region.

We are aware that this period of transition has not been an easy one but hope that we can work together to provide a stable and unified future. It does sadden us to have to report back and write to you in this way, but feel it important to keep you updated on this series of events.

Blessings

Debbie Merridew
(on behalf of the BCLC Trustees)