



The **Blackley** Centre

Relate, Restore, Reconcile

Prospect View
Blackley
Elland
West Yorkshire
HX5 0TD

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of The Blackley Centre, held on Saturday 15th March, 2025 at The Blackley Centre and on Zoom

Attendees: Karen Ainsworth (Trustee), Joe Braithwaite, Sue Clough, Steve Green, Christine Green, Guy Hirst (Trustee), Rob Quarton (Treasurer and Trustee), Andrew Taylor, Mary Taylor (Chair of Trustees), Jean Whitworth (Trustee), Andy Williams (Centre Co-Director), Chris Williams, Jo Williams (Centre Co-Director), Ray Williams, Steve Williams

Welcome and worship

Revd Mary Taylor (Chair of Trustees) warmly welcomed everyone to the 5th AGM of The Blackley Centre, either in person or on Zoom and opened the meeting with a short reflection and prayer.

Apologies were received from: Pauline Barnard, Hugh Donald, Jude Hall, Nikki Jenkins, Gordon Smith, Pamela Smith, Ernie Whalley, Mary Whalley.

Minutes of the **AGM** held on **16th March 2024** were received and signed as a true and accurate record, with one amendment.

Presentation of the Annual report 2023-24.

The written report had been circulated in advance of the meeting, and Jo presented slides highlighting 6 key areas of work.

David Shutt Young Peace Ambassadors: Two new schools joined the existing 3 schools, resulting in 48 children being trained as Young Peace Ambassadors. These schools also received the introductory staff training session and whole school assembly theatre workshop with children being invited to apply. One of these letters of application was shown on screen, showing Asher's desire to be a Peace Ambassador in the school and community saying he was 'ready to spread kindness wherever I go.' All the children were trained in the glide process, which was outlined on the screen. Jo also showed pictures of the YPA display at one of the 3 schools. Plus the board of Peace Doves at another school – each dove represented a playground conflict that had been resolved.

Training: Alongside continued bespoke training days offered to Diocese, churches and teams, the Blackley Centre was in conversation with Regional Ministers from Southern Counties Baptist Association, exploring how an Association can be restorative and how TBC could help. We subsequently developed 'Paths of Peace: Handling Conflict Well' – a 5 week hybrid training course, which we began Oct 2024.

Mediations: These are confidential so cannot be reported on, other than to say that there was an increase in the number of mediations in 2023-2024. Jo journeyed with 3 churches for prolonged periods, facilitating meetings and mediations, and expressed appreciation to colleagues for assisting in this work. There is the on-going challenge of people expecting that TBC will come and fix things, so it is important to name that we are accompaniers, helping people to resolve their own issues.

P&Q days: The year 2023 -2024 was particularly enhanced by having Revd Nikki Jenkins working with Jo and Andy at Blackley. She took a lead on Peace and Quiet days (which she continued until her retirement in October.) Nikki also volunteered to make our Peace Garden more of a reality, although this is still needing more work.

Playing with Peace Co -Play Leader: It was reported that Michelle Edwards has been appointed as joint play leader of our Playing with Peace Toddler and Parent Group. [We re-commenced **Playing with Peace** after Easter and tho' small, the group has been going well.]

Jo and Andy concluded the presentation of the Annual report expressing thanks to the Trustees for their continued support, and to Chris Allcock and Pam Smith, plus all the caterers, for their hard work.

There were two questions from the floor – one about finding further funding for YPA, with an expressed hope that the project continues. There was also a question around working for business and funded charities as an area with potential. We do currently do get some work outside the churches.

Annual accounts 2023 - 2024

Rob (Treasurer) presented the accounts on Zoom. (Accounts had been circulated prior to the meeting, and had been approved by the Trustees and signed by Mary.)

He summarised the current position of a surplus of £10k,

Income: £50, 928 Expenditure: £40,700

The bank balance was just over £36k, equivalent to 9 months expenditure.

He highlighted 3 areas:

Service provision of training and mediations has increased

Donations & gifts: we are immensely grateful for both one-off donations and regular monthly giving. Thanks to people who give which is our bed rock, helping us to forecast income. Lister Hill BC gave significantly.

Grants: we would struggle to balance our income and expenditure without the grants we have received. Ability to write bids is therefore very important, and we are grateful to Lisa Jagger for her assistance. Our expenditure was similar to the previous year, but we need to remember ongoing cost of living rises, and increase in staff cost (for PWP) as we proceed. Rob's view is that we're not there yet in self-funding, and finance is still precarious. He expressed gratitude to the Church for offering a 'sabbatical' from some Centre contributions, to help us at this time.

Rob thanked Jo & Andy for all their hard work and Steve Williams for his work on accounts.

Steve expressed his appreciation for the work done by Rob, saying they worked well together.

Enormous thanks were expressed to Rob, especially navigating the additional issues arising due to the death of Richard Kidd (former Treasurer.)

Appointment of Independent Examiner.

Steve Williams was reappointed as our Independent Examiner, and thanks with a small gift were given to Steve for his work on our behalf.

Trustees:

There are 5 serving trustees and none proposed for election

Chair of The Blackley Centre: Report from Revd Mary Taylor

Mary began by saying that we've had a very successful year.

She said it was great to see the success of YPA, seeing it expand to include more schools as the year has progressed. We are looking at delivery models & whether it is possible to make it more widely available. We should value it because of what it does in offering a different way of looking at life for children. On

the way over Mary listened to a podcast where people spoke of 3 people who've changed their lives. She remarked that Young Peace Ambassadors could be something that impacts children at a deep level. We do not know the impact it may have in years to come.

Training has developed with a highlight being the creation of Paths of Peace (with a very successful first delivery that happened in October 2024 with a second Spring course now underway.) The course is brilliant and has been very well received.

Mary also remarked on the piece of work done by Jo and Andy for a City Council following the escalation of the conflict in Israel with Gaza. We should not underestimate the civic engagement with a city as it is really significant that they should ask us.

In the summer of 2024, the finances were at a critical level. We made an appeal to members, and gifts were received from individuals and community funds. The signs are that we can move to a more stable place. Thanks not only to Rob, but also Karen for her support with future developmental work.

Mary concluded by saying we should remind ourselves of our core vision for peace. She feels hopeful that we are beginning to expand & that we continue to gather friends and contacts including from within Baptist church life. There is so much solid work to celebrate. It impacts deeply into communities & lives in their being with one another. Thanks were given to Blackley Baptist Church, saying that we are co-workers, and there is growing synergy with the church, which seeks to be a place of gathering for peace.

Safeguarding Policies

These had been printed and were signed. The Blackley Centre takes safeguarding very seriously and annually we re-affirm our Safeguarding Policies. Karen Ainsworth was thanked as our Acting Trustee for Safeguarding, as was Andy as our Designated Person for Safeguarding. There have been no safeguarding issues to report.

Looking forward

Jo and Andy spoke about ongoing work with David Shutt Young Peace Ambassadors; Partnership work with Southern Counties Baptist Association; continued development of Paths of Peace training; an increased demand for mediations as well as a need to develop funding streams and expand our membership. It feels in some way as if we are at a time of step change, which is both exciting but also daunting!

Guy also mentioned a sense of a step change, and expressed support for the work that was being done in this area. Mary also commented on the need for step change, recognising that Jo and Andy cannot work any harder, but there is a lot of potential that could be developed. This is exciting as we progress, but can also seem overwhelming for our Directors.

Jean asked about copyrighting our materials, feeling that it is important to protect our intellectual property. This is especially important for YPA materials which she has seen and thinks are very good, and for the new training. She also thanked Andy and Jo for lots of tremendous work

Date of Next AGM: March 14th 2026, at 10.00am at The Blackley Centre or on Zoom.