

This statement was circulated by the Trustees of Kirklands (Menston) Trust to those who were able to attend the launch session on Thursday 26th April:

Our mission is:

“To provide a high quality and affordable focal point for village activities which is available and accessible to all residents of Menston Village.”

Previously called FOURNESS HOUSE as shown by the picture painted by S. H. Carter in 1899 from the junction of Grove Road and Cleasby Road and displayed in the Main Hall - KIRKLANDS was run by Ilkley Urban District Council until 1974 when, on local government reorganisation, Bradford District Council became the proud owners!

Recent reductions in the Government Rate Support Grant and the need for general budget savings – all outside the direct control of our local community - meant that Bradford Council decided (with their on-going technical support) to outsource its smaller local Library Services to volunteers and also to close 6 Community Halls across the district, Menston being among that number.

Menston Parish Council quickly decided that both these actions would be catastrophic for the village and so took action to safeguard our facilities and preserve the special ambience of the village – which, as we all know, is a great place to live and work.

1. Menston Parish Council has signed a Service Level Agreement with Bradford Council to run Menston Library and has funded the services of a professional Librarian and now has about 50 Volunteers who help run the service on a rota basis. The Library now BUZZES, but we are always looking for extra Volunteers AS WELL AS new library members!

2. Menston Parish Council then encouraged the formation of Kirklands (Menston) Trust which, from 1st April, now has a licence to run, manage and fund the entire estate of Kirklands – the buildings we are now in, the Library, the Children’s Centre, the Bowling Club and the Doctors surgery! Quite a task! (Negotiations continue to secure a formal 50 year lease). (We are only the ground landlords of the surgery!!)

Kirklands (Menston) Trust is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and the “first” Trustees were (in alphabetical order): Peter Finlay (chairman), Quentin Mackenzie, Heather Norreys, Dale Smith, and Peter Wilbraham.

Heather Norreys resigned before her subsequent appointment as Centre Manager and Duncan Watson has been nominated by the Menston Community Association.

Menston Parish Council will soon nominate their representative who may or may not be a Parish Councillor and there are 4 possible vacancies to be filled by people from the community of Menston living within the Parish boundary.

We welcome expressions of interest and will soon be more formally inviting applications.

The Future Aims of the Trust are quite simple:

- To ensure the sustainability of the entire Centre, eliminating the deficit.

This we shall do by:

- Obtaining funds to carry out maintenance and improvements
- Generating sufficient income to be sustainable.
- Working closely with the Parish Council who have committed £30,000 in their last financial year and £30,000 in 2018/19.
- Achieving better utilisation of space within the building.
- Attracting other permanent users to the building.
- Bringing space not currently let back into use and increasing the utilisation of the existing rooms through targeted marketing and competitive pricing.
- Identifying grants and loans relating to building efficiency therefore reducing overheads.
- Exploring other revenue streams including fundraising events, gifting and sponsorship. As the Trust is a registered CHARITY it can now claim GIFT AID and grants from such as the Lottery Fund and others who only give to registered charities. The Trust has this very significant advantage over National and Local Government.
- Promoting the Centre more effectively locally.
- Establishing a web presence with a “What’s on” page and perhaps in due course enabling interactive on-line bookings although the revised booking system is much more customer friendly. Simply drop in Monday to Friday 8.30 to 12.30 or ring 01943 874335 – we now have an answerphone and will return your call ASAP or use the email for Kirklands Trust kirklandsct@gmail.com for any enquiries or comments.
- Supporting our users to be self-funding as the Trust itself has to be sustainable.

The Trust now employs Heather Norreys as the Centre Manager who oversees the daily running of the building and manages the administration and marketing of the building and Vicky Hannam as Building Custodian.

Already we are seeing buzz, sparkle and a sense of excitement, as most of those attending the Drop-In readily agreed.

How can you help us?

- Become a Trustee.
- If you are a Trader or Business tell us how you can help, for example a decorator might wish to supply labour on the basis of promoting his/her skill.
- Book an event and use the facilities – clubs, organisations, business or parties.
- If you do not wish to become a trustee offer expertise on an advisory board (marketing, publicity etc.)
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Answers to some questions raised:

Relationship with the Parish Council – The Trust is a separate charity but hopes to be supported by the Parish Council financially to begin with.

What is our current income – we estimate £40 - 45k. How much will it cost to run - estimate £55k. Difficult to be precise as we are digging into issues that change almost weekly, but we will be transparent once we are established.

How do we intend to bridge the deficit – increased usage of the building, securing another permanent user, increased energy efficiency of the building so decreased utilities bills. For example the boilers will; need replacing soon but in part will be self-financing as the new one/s will be more efficient.

Will the charges for room hire change – we have maintained the charges for existing users and will be reviewing charges in 6 months. We hope that increased usage of the building will mean we can maintain the current charging strategy.

What are the priorities for improving the building – making the building watertight, cleanliness, better accessibility, energy efficiency (boiler, windows, insulation, renewable energy, radiator controls).

Thank you to those who came for coming and showing interest in these exciting projects.

We are confident that the Village will rally round and support our efforts.

Trustees of Kirklands (Menston) Trust