

Preston Cooperative Education Centre

Away-day

Monday 3rd October 2022 at 9.30am

Present:

Andy Birchall
Lynn Brooks
Aniela Bylinski
Julian Manley
Mick Mckeown
Janet Newsham
Cilla Ross

Apologies: David Savage

Agenda:

1. Division of labour (e.g. treasurer, curriculum development lead, etc)
2. Membership (worker owners, associate members or 'friends of...' etc)
3. Premises (office space) not limited to Preston
4. Developing relationships with Trade Unions
5. Physical presence (a stall, for example, with some promo material at TU events, especially rallies, etc.)
6. Approaching sympathetic journalists to run a story on PCEC
7. PCEC app
8. Any other business

Meeting Minutes:

Division of labour (e.g. treasurer, curriculum development lead, etc)

- Secretary - Andy
- Treasurer - potentially Brian Titley, but have Andy as a nominal treasurer.
→ We need to be selective about treasurers and employ a trusted person.
- Curriculum development lead - Cilla with Mick helping.
→ Create a curriculum development subgroup.
- Membership secretary - Julian and Alina with Andy helping
→ Write a pitch.
- Social media - Aniela
→ Recycle stuff we get from our partners for the content.
→ Alina to make Aniela admin on all social media platforms.

- Alina to create a News page on the website, embed social media and NewsSocial platform.
- Alina to create a footer for communications (put NS link first).
- Aniela to work on the header for communications.
- Lynne has too much on her plate. The Directors express their gratitude for Lynne's participation and contribution, despite difficulties of time, and it is recognised that members have different availabilities which we strive to accommodate in solidarity.
- We need to be realistic and not take too much - think of what we can achieve with the timescales and skills we've got, but if we don't have a skillset then we can get somebody involved.
- Approach sympathetic journalists to run a story on PCEC when we have enough information to write a Press Release.

Membership (worker owners, associate members or 'friends of...' etc)

- £1 nominal fee for membership and a sign up to the values and principles. All members receive a membership card.
- Cilla to send a copy of the certificate to Janet.
- Janet to tailor certificate to PCEC.
- Target TUC, Union branches, NW TUC, affiliate reg offices, Gateway Community Ass., Project Committee for Preston Model, Centre for SME Development (businesses), Preston's College, Newman College, Foxton, Citizens UK, etc.
- Between Julian, Mick, Janis, Alina - we will have those contacts.
- Mick to craft a general pitch and also a more tailored pitch to potential members.
- Have individual and organisational membership (supporting organisations).

Premises (office space) not limited to Preston

- Climate Emergency Centre has a shop opposite the Harris Museum, but there is no fire exit on the second floor, so we wouldn't be able to run courses from it.
- As a co-op we are autonomous and independent, even if we work for somebody else. If Matthew Brown can find us an office then we should go with that option and put a PCEC plaque there.
- Teaching from community centre to community centre is not the same, as having a physical space with our own plaque, but we don't want to be dependent on PCC.
- We could be in the same premises as the PCDN.
- Speak to Matthew, ask for a meeting with him and Rachel and if they can't deliver then move on, but still explore South Ribble.
- Lynne to remind Matthew/Rachel about help with premises and ask if it's feasible to use the Guild Hall.

- Getting premises can get overwhelming and preoccupying and isn't our priority. Teaching can be done in different spaces. We need to progress what we do and establish ourselves first. In the long run we should try and get a base. We want visibility and accessibility. The priority is Preston, but if we can't get it then we should go somewhere else.
- Birley Art Studios started off with nothing, the council wanted to rent out the space for a peppercorn rent because the space was not looked after, but now it's a permanent feature of Preston. They brought in independent artists and went from nothing to a constantly growing organisation. They now have 2 floors. It was all possible because they had a spot and wouldn't be able to do that if they would move from place to place. It has to be a peppercorn rent and be supported by somebody. We can't look a gift horse in the mouth. (This is a reference to the possibility of being offered something by South Ribble.) But the search for premises shouldn't take all of our time.
- We need teaching and office space, as we intend to employ somebody and want them to have a place where they could bring people.

Developing relationships with Trade Unions

- NS set up a meeting with GFTU and is committed and involved in developing that relationship.
- Dave Nicholls was inviting us to join their educational officers. We can be a part of this co-op partnership.
- GFTU are considering converting themselves into a co-op and Julian put him in touch with Alex Bird to begin a conversation about that.
- They are progressive in terms of union education. They get stuff done, so it's worth pursuing, regardless of their past problems.
- Chase the messages that came up from the meeting. Speak to Ali to set up a second meeting.
- Andy will have a chat with Sarah Woolley. It doesn't matter if their education is not what it used to be, because we will become their educational providers.

Physical presence (a stall, for example, with some promo material at TU events, especially rallies, etc.)

- Janet can help if she can have her own stall there as well.
- We need a pull up banner, leaflets, application form, table, tablecloth and somebody to run it.
- Aniela will help with the banner. Alina will send the logo to Aniela.
- Aniela to work on creating leaflets.

How do we employ somebody for this and other roles?

- Bakers Union don't want to be involved in administrative stuff. Our project is better if we have somebody full-time. When we had the money for that the Baker's Union pulled out.
- Have an advert rather than go through TU.
- We want to find somebody with our values and principles: a positive, creative and union minded person. Give them educational and development experience (an element of mentoring).
- Circle the job description to Unison, Unite, Baker's Union, etc.
- If we want to employ people ourselves then we need to have all procedures in place. Or have a self-employed consultant that would also be a member.
- What about approaching PCC to employ somebody for us?
- Janet to ask Caroline at Manchester Hazards.
- Mick to ask Unison.
- Andy to ask Matthew Brown.
- By next Monday speak to those people and have an advert ready. Job description already written by Andy but may need to be adapted depending on contract

PCEC app

- Has been released.
- All directors need to download the app.

Funding

- Alina to keep an eye on the Research Connect search results.
- Lynne to investigate Town's Fund.
- Bid

Next Away-day 16/01/2022

- Alina to book a room at UCLan 10am.