

Contemplative Fire Post

November 2015 – no.8 v1



Transition

Following Philip and Jill's letter about their retirement at the end of February 2016, the Core Group is meeting in London on 14th December to plan for the transition period.

Core Group members: Charlotte Wright (Chair), Elaine Wilkins, Françoise Pinteaux-Jones, John Marsh, Paul Arnesen - the trustees – Chris Holmes (treasurer) and Gill Greenwood (secretary).

There are a number of tasks which need to be covered, either on a short-term or longer basis.

Finance tasks - processing payments to CF; processing invoices and expenses requests; sending bank statements to the treasurer; sending information to the book keeper (payments in and out, bank statement, gift aid details, details of new standing orders); liaising with treasurer and company secretary re details for financial reports; circulating bank forms to change signatories to bank account. Catherine Musgrave (Sheffield) is happy to help train someone.

Wisdom On The Way – handover from Jill and Philip including organising speakers, booking venues, hosting, registration (for May and July 2016, venues and speakers are in place)



Website – adding updates of new events
Community Weekend 2016 (date and venue arranged)
Retreat 2017 (date, venue and one co-leader arranged - Ann Crosthwait, Canada)
Lent and Advent Resources (designer in place for Lent 2016)

- Responding to enquiries
- Storage of files and resources
- Link with Fresh Expressions

Contact Gill for more information on gillgreenwood@tiscali.co.uk or 0114 230 7706.

Leadership

Charlotte Wright writes:

The Acknowledged Communities Advisory Council document 'Towards Acknowledgement – Guidelines and Expectations' states:

'The Community must draw up guidelines about its expectations of leadership, how the leader is chosen, elected or replaced and the length of time of periods in office. It must do similar things for any leadership group that might be formed and ensure that there are clear accountability structures, where appropriate'.



At our next meeting on 14th December, the Core Group will be discussing the kind of interim leadership that will be needed after Philip's retirement, until the time comes for new forms of overseeing to put in place. We will keep you informed.

The Core Group will also be looking at the reflections and comments about "What Does The Community Need Now From Leadership?" made by Companions before and during the Community Weekend and at learning from the Leadership Trio.

Celebration! Sunday 10th April 2016

Keep this date free for the retirement party for Jill and Philip at The Barn, Thame near Oxford, around lunchtime and into the afternoon.



<http://www.thamebarnscentre.co.uk/>

Sally Wright has kindly offered to co-co-ordinate (note the extra “co”!) so please contact her with offers of help:

Sally Wright 01753 850755 or sallywright@hotmail.com

And let **Gill** know if you are hoping to come: gillgreenwood@tiscali.co.uk

Local Group news

In September, CF North invited local artist Ric Stott to lead an evening. Ric is a Pioneer Methodist Minister, artist and art psycho-therapist, who lives and works in Sheffield, exploring ways in which the visual arts can help us to engage with Life, Spirit and Community. He said:

“I will bring some paintings, talk a bit about my experience of making art and how it relates to meditation in a conversational setting - inviting dialogue, then lead us into silence.”

It was a rich and moving experience. He spoke about “wild curating” on Iona - this is from his blog:

<http://iaskforwonder.com/>

“Wild Curating on Iona – July 2015

I have heard some people argue that no one place is any more sacred than any other. Wherever we are then the transcendent reality of God (if I can use such an inadequate word) is present. But if everywhere is sacred then the word loses any meaning. Just like if everyone is special then the word ‘special’ dissolves into grey mediocrity (but YOU, of course, are special xxx).

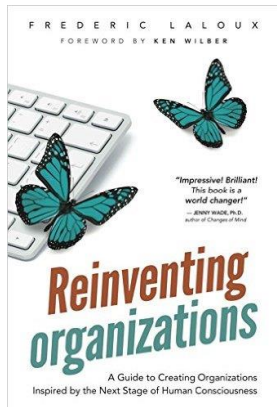
I would go with the idea that every place has the potential to be sacred. But that this potential needs opening up or earthing. The soul antenna needs to stretch out and pick up the latent presence of God, just as the radio mast hears and expresses meaning from the electromagnetic buzz all around us. It seemed to me that the white circle acted as just such an object: a sacrament, a physical manifestation of a deeper reality. The circle earthed and expressed the sacredness of the place all around.*

And so, putting aside my elaborate plans for grand pieces of art, I sat and waited in silence. Waiting for grace to lead me to that simple intervention, a physical action, a real and solid thing that could be an antenna of the soul.”

*two of Ric’s fellow artists created a temporary artwork in the landscape – a circle on the cliff, created with sand from the shore.



The CF AGM was held at St Alphege Clergy House in October. If you would like a copy of the Annual Report and Accounts, contact Gill Greenwood.



Tom Hinds writes:

Philip and Jill, in their letter announcing their retirement, wrote of *'a generous period enabled for handover and what Frederic Laloux calls "The Advice Process"'*.

Laloux's book *'Reinventing Organisations'* says:

"Can anybody just make any decision? That sounds like a recipe for chaos. Are decisions then made by consensus? That sounds exhausting and impractical...and it often degenerates into a collective tyranny of the ego. Anybody has power to block the group... (albeit only the power to paralyse).

The advice process is a simple form of decision making that transcends both consensus and unilateral action."

With the advice process it is very simple: "in principle, any person in the organisation can make any decision. But before doing so, that person MUST seek advice from all affected parties and people with expertise in the matter.

The person is under no obligation to integrate every piece of advice; the person is not to achieve a watered-down compromise that accommodates everybody's wishes. But advice must be sought and taken into serious consideration. The bigger the decision the wider the net must be cast - including, when necessary, the CEO or the board of directors.

Usually the decision-maker is the person who noticed the issue or the opportunity, or the person most affected by it." That person then carries the responsibility and the accountability. Nobody "approves" a decision in a self-managing (co-responsible) organisation. That said, if you have expertise in the matter, you can of course share your advice.

"The advice practice... creates community, humility, learning, better decisions and fun" (pp100-103)

Sharing of Stories

Here is the link to the most recent in the small series featuring some Contemplative Fire Companions who were involved with CF in the very early days:

<http://www.contemplativefire.org/media.html>

This is on the media page of the CF website. Sharing their stories are Jean Gell and Vincent Strudwick – two of our CF 'elders'.



In the next issue of CF Post...

... profiles (and photos!) of members of the Sounding Board Group

...an article about compassion

...CF North's *Pilgrimage to Nowhere* in Saltmarshe, East Riding of Yorkshire

...Wisdom on the Way

Reflections and sharing from local groups and Companions always very welcome.
