

**Registered Charity Number**

1169562

**Address**Collaboration House  
77-79 Charlotte Street  
London  
W1T 4PW**Trustees**

	<u>Date appointed</u>
Mr Benedict Samuel Rich	10 <sup>th</sup> October 2016
Rev Christopher Landau	10 <sup>th</sup> October 2016
Mr Michael Wakelin (chair)	10 <sup>th</sup> October 2016
Mr Kevin Jaquiss	20 <sup>th</sup> March 2017
Mr Niall Thomas Dufffy	8 <sup>th</sup> February 2018
Ms Eleanor Puttock	8 <sup>th</sup> February 2018
Ms Remona Aly	8 <sup>th</sup> February 2018
Dr Mohammed Azim Ahmed	8 <sup>th</sup> February 2018

**Accountant**

Fiona McCulloch ACA

**Independent Examiner**

Mr Keith Halstead MA (Oxon) FCA

**Bank**

Cooperative Bank, PO Box 101, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester M60 4EP

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## Trustees Report

The trustees are pleased to present the first annual report of the Religion Media Centre from the date of receiving charitable status 10 October 2016 to the end of the financial year 31 March 2018.

### Governance

The Religion Media Centre was entered onto the Register of Charities with the registered charity number 1169562, on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2016. It is a Charitable Incorporated Organization.

Its constitution states its objects as: 'To advance education of the public in world religion, including the Baha'i faith; Buddhism; Christianity; Hinduism; Islam; Jainism; Judaism; Sikhism and Zoroastrianism by: the dissemination of accurate, authoritative, independent and impartial information and research about religious faiths to the media; and the provision of media training to religious organisations.'

Our office address is Collaboration House, 77-79 Charlotte Street, London W1T 4PW, a building which contains many organizations committed to interfaith and community work. Soon after our creation, Collaboration House was closed for extensive renovation work, so during this time, work for the Religion Media Centre was completed from home with meetings at venues kindly offered pro bono.

The trustees have met eleven times from October 2016 – March 2018. The founding trustees – Michael Wakelin, Ben Rich and Christopher Landau – had been part of a steering group working to create the charity, a process which began in 2009. They approached Kevin Jaquiss to join them in March 2017. These trustees then invited four people – Eleanor Puttock, Niall Duffy, Azim Ahmed and Remona Aly – to join them, as the constitution allows for a maximum of 9 trustees. Each was chosen for their expertise and interest expressed in the charity's work. Each was made aware of their roles and responsibilities.

Our Trustees share our aims, engage with issues relating to our governance and ensure that the organisation remains focussed on its charitable objectives. Specifically, we look to our trustees to offer expertise or experience in one or more of the following areas: Corporate governance, Finance and accounting, Fundraising, Marketing and communications. We aim to have a board that is relatively balanced in terms of gender, age, ethnicity and religious and belief affiliation. Our document sent to all trustees who join outlines their responsibilities as:

- Share in the overall governance of the charity, having ultimate responsibility for compliance with charity law and with the RMC's own charitable objectives
- Set the RMC's strategic direction
- Appoint and line manage the work of the RMC's senior member of staff (eg Chief Executive)
- In conjunction with the senior staff member, prioritise the RMC's activities and monitor progress
- Support, but not direct, the staff team as requested by its senior staff member in particular in relation to the portfolio responsibilities below.

In addition, an advisory board has been set up to support the work of the RMC by providing advice to the Trustees and senior staff on its strategy and to help inform understanding and decision making, especially as it relates to key stakeholders including the media, religious and belief communities, and experts and academic commentators. All Trustees are automatically invited to

attend Advisory Board meetings, which took place on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2017 and 13<sup>th</sup> March 2018. At the discretion of the Chair of Trustees, in consultation with the senior member of staff, the Advisory Board will:

- Provide a sounding board for RMC's strategy
- Reflect on how its work is impacting on its various stakeholders and how its offer might be improved
- Make recommendations as to how better to engage and influence key stakeholders
- Review and add to the network of commentators and trainers used by the RMC
- Generally promote the work and value of the RMC and act as advocates for the organisation.

There are 13 members of the advisory board:

Professor Adam Dinham:	Director of Faiths and Civic Society at Goldsmiths University, London
Dr Clive Field:	Co-Director of British Religion in Numbers
Canon Ed Newell:	Director Cumberland Lodge
Rev George Pitcher:	Author, journalist and vicar
Jasvir Singh:	Lawyer and co-chair Faiths Forum for London
Professor Jolyon Mitchell:	Director Centre for Theology and Public Issues, Edinburgh University
Katie Harrison:	Director of the Faith Research Centre, ComRes
Mandip Sahota:	CEO Baroness Warsi Foundation
Lord Navnit Dholakia:	Deputy leader Liberal Democrats in the House of Lords
Nick Spencer:	Research Director Theos
Roger Bolton:	Journalist and broadcaster
Rev Tony Miles:	Methodist minister at Westminster Central Hall
Yas Taherzadeh:	Bahais UK

Ruth Peacock attended all trustee and advisory board meetings, having volunteered to work on creating the charity and administrating its work. After receiving funding in September 2017, she was contracted for six months as launch director. In its first year of operation, payments have also been made to web and graphic designers, journalists and marketing advisers.

Our Co-operative bank account was opened in April 2017 and our first funding of £30,000 from the Porticus Trust was received in September 2017.

#### Charitable objectives:

The Religion Media Centre is an impartial and independent organization aiming to help the media report and understand religion. It has no editorial line nor does it promote any one religion, or religious belief in general. Instead, it exists to provide accurate, timely and relevant information to the media, enabling the public to be better informed.

85% of the world's population identifies with a religious group, so understanding religion and belief is and will remain central to public life and debate, however significant the growth of secularism. Tens of millions of people in the UK continue to identify with a religious faith. Religious literacy is essential to understanding the world in which we live. The media plays a key role in developing and enhancing this understanding.



### Activities, achievements and performance:

In our first year, we have gained widespread support from the BBC, politicians, academics and journalists, won initial funding, set up a website, held three events and set up systems on which to base future activity and growth.

One year after achieving charitable status, we secured an acknowledgment from the BBC. Its Religion and Ethics Review, published in December 2017 states that it will strengthen its network of expertise in BBC News through making the most of in-house expertise by creating internal specialist networks 'working closely with experts outside the BBC and groups such as the Religion Media Centre'. We are maintaining contact with the author of the report and with BBC news journalists, alerting them to our information on the website and training opportunities.

### Website

The trustees knew that our window to the world and main activities would be around providing news comment and factual information to journalists when reporting religion. So it was an early priority to set up a website. Trustee Ben Rich, with support from Lesley Steel and Rachael Reeves, designed the logo and wordpress website and created early drafts of content. This was taken forward by a long-time supporter, Shabbar Dhalla, whose team continue to provide web support and help. The website went live on March 27<sup>th</sup> 2018. An experienced freelance web editor sub edits the copy to ensure accuracy and prevent risk of defamation. The website has around 300 hits a month.

News comments are produced by Ruth Peacock and have covered diverse stories such as comment on the rising interest in passion plays and reaction to a coroner's restriction on burial rites. Fact sheets are commissioned by Ruth Peacock and written by freelance journalists and academics. These have included information on faith groups in Britain, secularisation and hate crime against religious groups and individuals.

### Network of support

A database has been created with 200 commentators, 100 journalists and 100 contacts who support our work. Media professionals have contacted us seeking background information or useful contacts for stories they are researching.

Our trustees and launch director have built a wide network of support from all faiths and none and continue to meet people interested in furthering our vision including politicians, academics, journalists and faith leaders. We have held two supporter events in November 2017 and March 2018, with opportunity for discussing activities and governance.

In September 2017, we engaged in discussions with the All Party Parliamentary Group on Religion and the Media, to consider acting as their secretariat. These discussions are ongoing and we have suggested a range of topics for future events.

### Events

Four people associated with the Religion Media Centre - the chair, launch director and two members of the advisory board - joined with two others to organize the inaugural Religion and Media festival at the JW3 centre. While not organised under the name of the Religion Media Centre,

the event aired areas of concern and interest which the Centre aims to address. Around 150 people attended including academics, faith leaders, journalists and others interested in the field. Speakers included James Harding, former BBC Director of News and Mark Thompson, CEO of the New York Times. At the end of the event, the Religion Media Centre held a well-attended reception launching the website and detailing our ambition.

### Fund raising

The Centre has kept up fund raising activities throughout the year. A strategy awayday was held in July 2017, led by consultant Dr Darrell Jaya Ratnam, to analyse the strengths of potential funders and business opportunities. Fund raising applications have been submitted to secular and religious based organizations and we have met representatives from universities and contacted individuals for support. In September 2017, we received our first donation from the Porticus Trust and by the end of our first year have the promise of two further donations. The Religion Media Centre has benefitted from volunteers, pro bono help and people who have reduced their rate, in order to accomplish various activities.

The RMC has an anti-bribery policy and accepts funds from those who support our vision, values and aims; who have a clear governance structure and transparent accountability. To protect the Centre from any undue influence, the RMC will cap donations from any one institution as a proportion of its annual income. The Centre seeks donations from a wide variety of organisations with an interest in the accurate reporting of religion in the media, including academic and religious institutions, companies, charities, media organisations and government.

Our business case and pitch pack were revised with the help of pro bono business consultants and have been reviewed during the year.

### Marketing

Our marketing strategy for the first year of operation was produced by a consultant at a reduced rate. We have communicated our activities to supporters by email and have created a twitter account with 200 followers and a Facebook page.

### Training offer

Plans were approved by the trustees for a training offer, including a suite of courses for journalists on reporting religion in Britain - one full day is an overview on reporting religion and there are six half day courses on reporting individual faiths, including one on understanding non-religion. Media training courses have also been developed for our commentators and faith groups who seek to understand how the media works. The intention is to roll these out in our second year of operation. Content has been created by academics and journalists known to the launch director and trustees.

### Statement of public benefit

Academics working in the fields of theology and religion in society have engaged with the Centre, writing fact sheets on a voluntary basis and offering comment on news stories. They do so in part because the website allows their work to be known to a wider audience.

Faith leaders have engaged with us, for example on the story about a coroner's verdict on burial rites, to get their views across, for fear of being misunderstood and marginalised.



Journalists have engaged with us by taking part and reporting on the Religion and Media festival, and supporting our work at the reception following the all-day event. They have asked for help and advice on news stories and review our website for information and contacts.

Politicians are engaged with us because we are an independent impartial body, which is attractive when dealing with controversy and groups with fixed views.

Financial review including any debts and details of your reserves policy (if applicable)

Reserves Policy

The Charity is at an early stage of development and is keeping its costs low, with no future commitments or overheads as staff are freelance. Therefore there is no reserves policy.

Responsibilities of Trustees regarding the accounts

Charity law requires the Trustees to prepare a receipts and payments account and a statement of assets and liabilities for each financial year. In addition, they are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which are sufficient to show and explain the Charity transactions and to disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities

*Michael Wakelin 9.7.18*

Michael Wakelin

Chair, Religion Media Centre

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

# RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

	2018
	Unrestricted Funds
	£
<b>RECEIPTS</b>	
Grant	30,000
 <b>PAYMENTS</b>	
Consultancy	10,000
Communication	2,980
Computing	26
Web Development	875
Events	770
Marketing	522
Travel	228
Insurance	293
Stationery	99
Accounts & Professional fees	350
<b>Total</b>	<hr/> 16,143
<b>Surplus for the Year</b>	<hr/> 13,857
Cash funds at the beginning of year	-
Cash Funds at the end of year	<hr/> <hr/> 13,857



STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

	2018 £
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Bank and cash balances	13,857
Non cash assets after 31 March 2016 - none	
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
Accrual for accounts preparation for the year ended 31 March 2018 - £300	
<b>Represented by :</b>	
<b>ACCUMULATED FUNDS</b>	
Unrestricted funds	
Surplus for the year	13,857
Total funds	13,857

These accounts were approved by the board of Trustees on –

And signed on its behalf by

*Michael Wakelin* 9.7.18.

Michael Wakelin, Chair

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

### 1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

#### Basis of accounting

The accounts have been prepared on the receipts and payments basis. The receipts and payments account is a record of monies received and paid during the financial year. The statement of assets and liabilities is a list of significant possessions and outstanding financial obligations at the end of the financial years. The accounts comply with the appropriate legal requirements.

### 2. FUNDS

Unrestricted funds comprise those funds which the Trustees are free to use for any purpose in furtherance of the charitable objects.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by the donor. There are currently no restricted funds.

### 3. TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING RELATED PARTIES

Included in web development is £486.77 paid to Rachael Reeves, the wife of Trustee Ben Rich, for graphic design. This work was carried out at a rate considerably below market.

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Religion Media Centre**

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the accounts of Religion Media Centre (the Charity) for the period ended 31 March 2018.

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

The Charity's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent Examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Act;  
or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:-  .....

Date..... 24/07/18 .....

Name:- Keith E. Halstead MA(Oxon) FCA

Address:- 60 Woodcote Hurst

Epsom

Surrey

KT18 7DT