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# London Jesus Centre

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Three Year  
Plan

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April 2011

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# Preface.

This plan has been written as the London Jesus Centre approaches its third anniversary. There is much to be thankful for and the Centre has become well established. However, there remain many challenges: this plan seeks to explore these and suggest ways that the Centre can offer an expanded range of services in order to reach a broader section of the community.

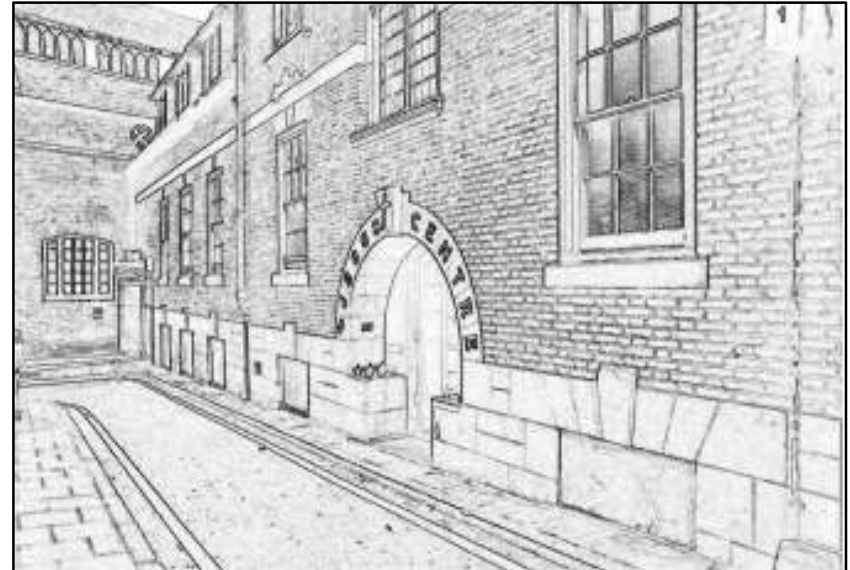
The biggest difficulty in preparing a three year plan at this time is the degree of uncertainty in relation to the economic, political and social situation in the U.K. As the Chief Executive of Westminster City Council said at a voluntary sector forum last year: 'We have no road map for the current circumstances.'

Historically, the genius of the voluntary sector has been the ability to respond flexibly to changing needs and to find innovative ways of contributing to society at large (perhaps that should be 'big'). It is to be hoped that the London Jesus Centre will be able to act creatively in meeting the challenges of the next phase of its development.

Rob Bentley

April 2011.

(Manager)



# The Bigger Picture.

## Political

Nationally we have a Coalition Government that is seeking to bring in a very large amount of radical legislation and reform. Much of this programme has implications for social and welfare provision. It is yet to be seen how the changes will affect people but it seems likely that there will be an increase in homelessness and a reduction in welfare provision.

Locally Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, and Hammersmith and Fulham Councils have published a consultation document on the proposal to create a 'Tri-borough'. This plan would maintain the separate political identity of each borough but many services would be merged. Adult social services and welfare would come under one department. This arrangement could result in closure of some local facilities, will work against 'localism' and probably result in fewer front line staff. The over-all picture would appear to be a reduction of state provision.

## Economic

The global economic situation continues to be unstable with marked pressures on the European Union. Our Government is imposing across the board cuts in expenditure in order to remedy the deficit. The net result of all these things is that there is less money available for funding the voluntary sector and a likely increase in demand for services. LJC currently gets no statutory funding but the cuts mean that there will be increased competition for Trust funds and Corporate Funding. Individual donations are likely to be affected by loss of disposable income.

## Social

There continues to be a growth in the number of people living alone leading to isolation. Fear of crime and polarisation of ethnic communities are eroding the culture of neighbourliness and the economic situation is likely to increase poverty. Large numbers of economic migrants are drawn to London and present a significant welfare problem as the likelihood of employment decreases. There are definite plans to eliminate rough sleeping in Westminster and this will gain momentum as the Olympics approach, it is yet to be seen how comprehensive this will be and exactly how it will be achieved. Housing Benefit changes are likely to cause many low income families to move out of Westminster (5,000 has been estimated) which will result in a significant change to the demographics of the borough.

## Technological

The rapid development of digital technology and social networking creates opportunities for communication and dissemination of information, while at the same time reducing real social inter-action and the ability to build relationships. The acceleration in technological innovation is difficult to keep up with on restricted budgets.

The increased emphasis on 'Green Technology' and environmentalism are likely to have cost and legislative implications, especially in connection with rising fuel prices in a building that does not readily lend itself to being made more energy efficient.

## *Strengths.*

A highly motivated team of staff and volunteers who have gained experience and confidence since the Centre has been open. Opportunities have been taken for internal and external training. There is a committed core of volunteers which has not diminished with the consequence that the Centre has never been forced to close due to lack of personnel.

The refurbishment of the building has been very successful resulting in an easy to run establishment which is really valued by those who use it.

Exciting location.

Good governance, structure and procedures.

Growing track record.

## *Weaknesses.*

Currently there is very limited scope for increasing the volunteer base which limits expansion of services.

Lack of identifiable local community

It is difficult to make an impact-small fish in a very large pond.

## *Opportunities.*

The world is on the doorstep.

There is unused capacity to grow into.

There is a growing demand for services.

Potential for increased lettings to community groups.

There is terrific scope for innovation.

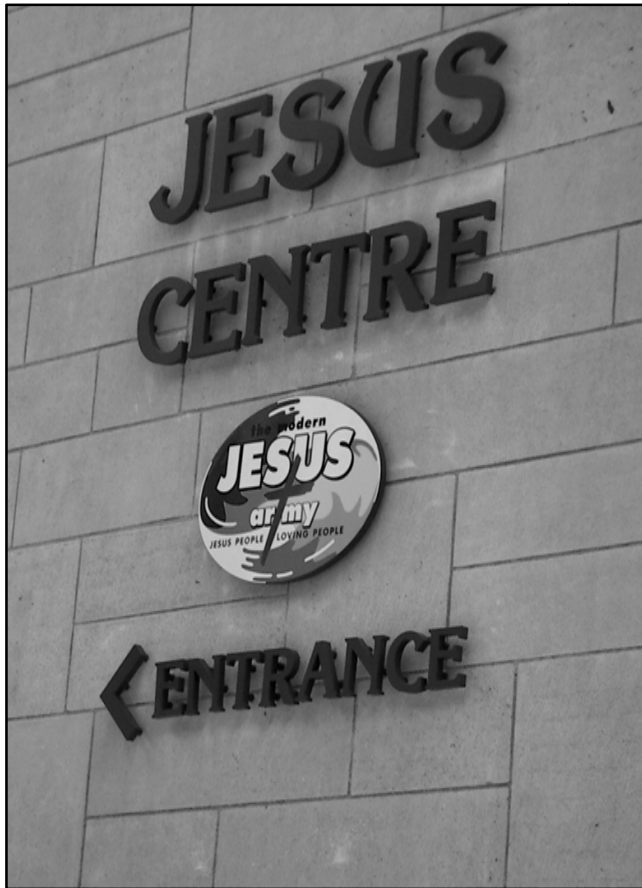
## *Threats.*

Failure to gain adequate finance.

Compassion fatigue in staff and volunteers.

Increasing secularisation of society.

Excessive demand.



## *Review and Renew.*

The Jesus Army Charitable Trust has five charitable aims, and objectives to enable these aims to be achieved. In order to ensure that the Centre remains 'on course' and does not get diverted from its aims and objective, activities and services are monitored to check that they are effective.

In the next five pages the charitable aims will be taken in turn with a review of what has been achieved to date, a statement of intended future development and proposals on how to bring it about.

## *Mission Statement:*

**"The London Jesus Centre where the love of Jesus is shown daily in worship, friendship and help for every kind of person."**

## Aim One:

*Reducing the personal suffering associated with economic or social deprivation by meeting physical, social and emotional needs on a holistic basis without prejudice to any.*



### **Achievement:**

Aim one is mainly but not exclusively fulfilled through the 'Welcome' drop-in. This operates for five morning and two afternoon sessions. Physical need is met by provision of food, drink, clothing, laundry, showers, post, luggage, storage, help with forms, and signposting to other services.

The drop-in has become well known for its calm and friendly atmosphere and several visitors have made the transition from visitor to volunteer. There is a strong emphasis on building relationships with visitors when possible.

### **Development:**

To build on 'Welcome's' strengths by seeking to work at greater depth with part of the client group. Offer a higher level of support in terms of wellbeing and employability by encouraging use of other services and activities.

Expand the opportunities for relationship and confidence building.

### **Proposal:**

1/. Extend number of sessions to include social/recreational afternoons.

2/. Recruit and train suitable volunteers to work in a support/mentoring role.

3/. Establish method of identifying visitors who want to make progress and work with them more intensively while maintaining a level of open access basic services for all in need.

4/. Widen and strengthen relationships with other agencies in order to access specialist help where we lack expertise or capacity.

## *Aim Two:*

*Building capacity on a non-prejudiced holistic basis to help individuals to make significant progress in their lives including reduction of addictions and rehabilitation of offenders.*



### **Achievement**

The Centre has maintained two ESOL classes and several English conversation classes which have helped many who could not otherwise access courses.

The IT room is well used and individual tuition is given at a basic level and web site design classes are held.

Help with finding employment has been provided by 'Making it Work' and 'Working it Out Write'.

'Bridges' support group has offered invaluable help to parents of children with special needs and has established an internet support network. The group is receiving referrals from health professionals and has good links with the National Blind Children's Society.

'Habit Breakers' is an occasional faith based course to help with breaking addictions.

### **Development:**

Identify particular areas of need that are not being met locally and where we are capable of providing a service.

Increase the take up of existing services. Develop greater involvement between 'Welcome' and our capacity building services.

There is prospect of developing a useful training programme in 'Word', offering a short course in a range of skills and including a Basic Food Hygiene Certificate.

### **Proposal:**

- 1/. Research and identify areas of unmet need.
- 2/. Recruit visionary volunteers to champion new services.
- 3/. Link services with new 'Welcome' support programme.
- 4/. Maximise the 'Making it Work' service.
- 5/. Progress the 'Word' based training programme for 'Welcome' visitors.

## *Aim Three:*

*Promoting the advancement of the Christian religion by facilitating Jesus Fellowship activities and by provision of appropriate spiritual services.*



### **Achievement:**

An extensive and lively spiritual programme is run by Jesus Fellowship Church; this is increasingly complementary to the Centre's programme.

'Word' Tea Room is regularly in use as a venue for evangelism and other Church events. Other rooms are used for small groups and a regular prayer for healing service has developed with a growing uptake.

'Word' has also proved to be a valuable place for informal contact, befriending and a non-threatening environment for people seeking faith and sharing spiritual need.

Many people have come to the Centre for practical services and have found faith in Christ leading them to baptism and Church membership.

### **Development:**

Reach a broader section of the local community. There is a very large working community travelling in to the area, many of these are shop workers whose hours often restrict their own church activity who would benefit by having events at suitable times.

Continue existing programme with an emphasis on growth.

### **Proposal:**

1/. Activate the existing idea to make the Chapel available for lunch time sessions targeted on local workers.

2/. Collaborate with Jesus Fellowship in promotion of the spiritual programme.

3/. Build on existing success in this area.

## *Aim Four:*

*Increasing social skills and cohesion through the provision of recreational and community facilities*



### **Achievement:**

This has proved to be the hardest area to attract people to.

To date we have had a women's group that was largely recreational and ran well, it is to be hoped it can be re-started.

There was a creativity course over the winter of 2009/10 which was reasonably well attended and led to a weeklong exhibition in the Chapel. It was planned to do something similar 2010/11 but there was insufficient interest.

There has been various other one off events in this category which have gone well but have not developed further.

Various community groups hire rooms for their activities and the Centre is a valuable resource.

### **Development:**

The key to this is gaining greater contact with local residents, there is a gradual 'word of mouth' effect and this should continue to grow.

Identify local people groups and what they are interested in. Tailor the programme to suit local interests.

Encourage the use of the Centre by community groups putting on their own events.

Develop the 'Welcome' based recreational sessions.

### **Proposal:**

1/. Recruit volunteer with enthusiasm for this area.

2/. Research local interests and potential audience.

3/. Develop one or two strong prospects.

4/. 'Welcome' recreational sessions.

5/. Continue to find ways to get the Art room in regular use.

## *Aim Five:*

*Operating as an effective and efficient charity, working constructively with other agencies and benefitting volunteers and staff by utilising and developing their skills and experience.*



### **Achievement:**

This has been an area of steady growth with persistent networking gradually bringing results. The Centre has developed good working relationships with Connexions, Housing Justice, Soho Caring Agencies Forum, Voluntary Action Westminster, the Passage, West London Day Centre, Homelessness Services, WCC, Chapel St Medical Centre, Cardinal Vaughan Centre, Reconnections, Metropolitan Police, Westminster Community Network, St Mungos, London Housing Foundation and others.

There has been a considerable amount of in house and external training of staff and volunteers but there has been slow progress on getting a more formal volunteer support structure in place.

### **Development:**

Now that the Centre is established and getting more widely known and respected there is growing opportunity to work collaboratively with other agencies. The best relationships seem to develop out of real situations and we will continue to seek opportunities to share expertise.

There is room for developing our staff and volunteers further as they have gained experience and confidence in the fields in which we operate.

There is a need to implement a more structured approach to training and mentoring of volunteers.

### **Proposal:**

- 1/. Continue networking and seeking to work with other agencies as opportunity arises.
- 2/. Implement the proposed mentoring structure.
- 3/. Implement the Volunteer Training Log Book.
- 4/. Consolidate training information.

## Finance,

## Communication,

## & People:

*Three topics that affect everything else.*

### **Finance:**

It is the aim of every Jesus Centre to be self-supporting financially; this presents quite a challenge in the present economic climate.

These are the areas of funding which need to be focussed on:

1/. Maximising giving from the London Congregation of the Jesus Fellowship. It is not a wealthy group but there is some room for increasing giving and it emphasises our owning of the Centre.

2/. Grant Making Trusts, we have some success here, it is an extremely laborious process and funds are being squeezed but it makes a valuable contribution.

3/. Increasing lettings income.

4/.Increasing 'Word' income: needs marketing more.

5/. Corporate Funding; develop contacts with local business.

### **Communication:**

It has proved hard to publicize the Centre in a way that would not be true in a provincial town. A media wise volunteer with enthusiasm is needed to develop links with such local media as there is. A start has been made on using Social Media but there is a lot of room to expand the use of them effectively.

While 'word of mouth' seems to be the most effective publicity of all we need to take hold of every opportunity to make the Centre and its work more widely known.

### **People:**

The vital resource of the Centre is the people who staff it (paid and voluntary) and for the Centre to grow there is a need for more people. At present there is not a great deal of unused capacity and so the need is for congregational growth to provide a greater pool of volunteers.

We will review the current situation and continue to encourage new volunteers but most people who can are already doing so.

We expect the trend of visitors becoming volunteers to continue and will seek to encourage this.

# Summary Conclusion: the way ahead.



## Starting from here:

L.J.C. is an established centre which has experienced steady growth in number of visitors and increased effectiveness in outcomes. It has a well adapted building in a location that, while having some challenges, provides amazing opportunities.

There is a strong team of staff and volunteers growing in experience with potential for increasing in size.

Jesus Army Charitable Trust provides good governance and support with opportunities for sharing expertise with other Jesus Centres.

The Centre is an integral part of Jesus Fellowship London and as such has clear goals, big vision and high motivation to grow and make a positive impact on individuals and the community.

## Next part of journey:

Prioritising proposals from this plan and implementing them effectively.

1/. Personnel: improve support and training to maximise effectiveness of current team.

Stimulate volunteering among congregation and recruit continuously.

2/. Programme: research to ensure relevance of services. Develop communication and identify champions to foster new services. Continue process of improving existing successful services.

3/. Finance: promote Centre to local businesses, emphasising that the Centre is **local** in an area where there is not much of a charitable presence. Continue existing fund raising and maximise Church giving.

## Arriving here (end 2014):

That the Centre will be open for longer hours throughout the week with a full programme that succeeds in attracting a wide range of people.

That there will be a well trained and sufficiently large team to operate the Centre without undue pressure on individuals. This will need to include arranging succession for the present manager.

That the Centre's programme and services make a significant impact on the local community helping individuals to make progress in their lives.

That the Centre is self-sufficient financially.

*Some facts  
and figures.*

Total number of different people who have used the Centre:

2008-267

2009-973

2010-1414

Total recorded outcomes from all services:

2008-234

2009-712

2010-731

Average number of students per week for ESOL and Conversation Groups:

2008-20

2009-32

2010-37

Total number of people using employment service since opening-50

Number finding work-13

Families currently linked to Bridges Support Group-12

Average number of 'Word' customers per week:

2008-88

2009-126

2010-145

Volunteer average number of hours per week:

2008-160

2009-218

2010-210

Principal hirers:

St George International College

Corazon Films UK

Polish Prayer Group

Imaginox

ITCH

New Wave Films

Verve Pictures

BBC World Service

Just Homes

National Blind Children's Society

Friends of Sabeel

Living Stones

St Charles Borromeo Church