

# Place For Hope Our Charter 18.1.2016

## 1. THE NEED

WHY WE EXIST | HOW WE DESCRIBE THE SITUATION WE'RE RESPONDING TO

We know conflict is part of life and can be both creative and destructive. We notice that many people – including those in faith communities – can struggle to find helpful ways to respond to change, tension and difference. Some structures, systems and habits can make it difficult for people to hear each other well and relationships break down. We know that there is much transformational potential in conflict. Knowing there is help and support available can be a great source of hope for those experiencing difficulties and divisions within their congregations and communities.

## 2. OUR VISION

WHAT WE ULTIMATELY WANT TO SEE – IS BEYOND OUR CONTROL AND WITHIN OUR INFLUENCE

Our vision is for a world where people embrace the transformational potential of conflict and nurture the art of peacebuilding.

## 3. OUR PURPOSE

WHAT WE EXIST TO DO | WHAT WE DO TO HELP REALISE THE VISION (OUR MISSION)

Place for Hope accompanies and equips people and faith communities so that all might reach their potential to be peacemakers who navigate conflict well. We want every community to be a place for hope where everyone is able to:

- notice brokenness and division
- nurture relationships and community
- navigate conflict with graciousness
- nourish wholeness in themselves and their communities.

As set out in our Constitution, our purposes are:

- To advance conflict resolution and reconciliation through mediation as a means to help individuals, groups and leaders in faith communities and the wider community live more effectively with difference and diversity;
- To advance citizenship, community development and peace-making through promoting methods of interaction and dialogue which support healthy relationships and reconciliation drawing on the wisdom from Christian and other religious traditions;
- To promote societal harmony, and prevent conflict, by providing trained mediators to work with individuals and within communities, addressing issues of inequality and division; and
- To advance education through the provision of training in mediation and conflict resolution, conflict reconciliation and conflict transformation.

## 4. OUR AIMS

WHAT WE'RE DOING TO FULFILL OUR PURPOSE; WHAT WE'RE CONCRETELY WORKING TOWARDS;  
OUR AIMS DETERMINE OUR SERVICES, THE IMPACT WE LOOK FOR AND WHAT WE MEASURE.

- To resource the church and wider faith communities with peacemakers
- To accompany groups navigating conflict and difficult conversations in our faith communities.

## 5. THE IMPACT WE WANT TO SEE

THE DIFFERENCE OR CHANGE WE WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO | THIS WILL DETERMINE THE INDICATORS WE NEED TO MONITOR

- More people understand the creative potential of conflict.
- More people are skilled and feel able to host difficult conversations.
- Places of worship are experienced as 'places for hope' by their members where conflict, change and difference are navigated in ways that feel both helpful and respectful.
- Each faith community in Scotland and beyond is able to be a reconciling presence in their wider community.
- Within our communities and institutions we move away from a culture of unhealthy and controlling models of behavior and leadership towards a healing model of ministry based on service.

## 6. OUR DISTINCTIVE CONTRIBUTION AND APPROACH

WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE DISTINCTIVE AND STRONG | WHAT WE WANT PEOPLE TO 'RECOGNISE' FROM THE OUTSIDE

- Place for Hope has its origins in the Christian faith. Our work is rooted in and informed by multiple expressions of faith. We seek to honour individuals' journeys and respect our faith institutions. We recognize and are familiar with the structures, dynamics and challenges within different faith communities.
- We are particularly adept at helping large, multi-party groups navigate change and hold difficult conversations. We help create 'circles of trust' where people can listen and be heard. We are flexible and able to deliver short workshops or work with groups over a longer period.
- We foster a peace building community by training, coaching, supporting and supervising a network of Team Members skilled in navigating conflict and hosting group dialogues.
- Our Team Members always work in groups of two or more to draw on each other's experience and wisdom and offer peer support, to guide difficult conversations between groups and individuals or where relationships have broken down.
- We are rooted in Scotland and also work collaboratively in partnerships elsewhere.

## 7. OUR SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

WHAT WE DO DAY-TO-DAY | WHAT YOU'D SEE IF YOU VISITED US | SERVICES/ACTIVITIES WE COULD PROMOTE AND POSSIBLY CHARGE FOR

- **Provide leadership training, workshops and resources** for understanding and working with conflict as well as hosting and navigating difficult conversations.
- **Respond to requests for help and support**, including:
  - helping groups and individuals at a time of crisis
  - accompanying sensitive or difficult group conversations
  - providing individual coaching, advice and support
  - hosting and enabling community dialogues on difficult, potentially divisive issues
- **Develop and support a Team** skilled in understanding conflict and able to provide mediation, training and facilitation.

## 8. OUR AUDIENCES

WHERE WE WORK | WHO WE WORK WITH | KEY TARGET AUDIENCES | OUR CLIENTS | WHO WE SERVE

We want peacebuilding to flourish and do what we can to help and enable this. We want to strengthen and resource individuals, faith leaders and groups so that they can be peacemakers within their wider communities. We want to accompany groups and individuals as they navigate difference and division.

**Our services are tailored to four groups:**

- Individuals who want to help others have difficult conversations
- Faith leaders working locally, regionally and nationally
- Churches, congregations and other faith groups
- Communities grappling with differences that relate to a faith context.

## 9. OUR PARTNERS

To do this work, we value and foster relationship with a wide spectrum of institutions, organisations, networks and individuals, including:

- Leaders and key contacts within different faith institutions
- Partners involved in the work of peacebuilding
- Academic institutions and training colleges
- Ecumenical and interfaith networks and festivals
- Faith-based charities and communities
- Funders and ambassadors who support our work

We invite everyone we work with to be part of a Peacebuilding Community.

## 10. OUR VALUES

GUIDE OUR DECISION MAKING AND HOW WE WORK | INFORM HOW WE RESOLVE CONFLICT

Our values are built into every area of activity. They tell the story of the hope we carry and seek to enable:

- **Courageous and compassionate**  
Being bold and working with loving kindness.
- **Challenging and trusting**  
Unafraid to go to the difficult, uncomfortable places – going there with care, humanity and empathy.
- **Inspirational and effective**  
Fostering prophetic and creative voices alongside workable approaches
- **Integrity and fairness**  
Honouring our differences and diversity and enabling respectful processes.

## 11. OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

THESE BELIEFS AND PRINCIPLES UNDERPIN 'OUR BEING AND OUR DOING'

### **About language and faith**

We honour the role of faith in people's lives. We recognise that people express values, beliefs and faith in many ways. We know that sometimes language or how beliefs are expressed can cause hurt and trigger division. We hope to be gracious, sensitive and inclusive about how we use language while remaining generous and open to hearing and holding difference. We know we won't always get it right. In the midst of so many words, we acknowledge the value of silence, and saying sorry when we get it wrong.

### **About faith, relationships and people**

We celebrate the goodness and blessing at the heart of humanity, believing there is that of God in everyone. We want to cultivate wholeness and reconciliation within ourselves, our faith communities and the wider community. We respect our staff, volunteers, clients and partners and cherish the diversity in all, including any age, ability, gender, race, religion/belief, sexual orientation and health status. We do this by treating every individual with respect as equals.

### **About conflict, creativity and change**

We recognise that conflict is part of life and we aim to harness its positive potential. We want to embrace change, difference and conflict in creative ways so that we can learn from them, and be open to being changed (*metanoia*). Transformation and reconciliation is built on truth, justice, forgiveness and peace.

### **About accompanying people**

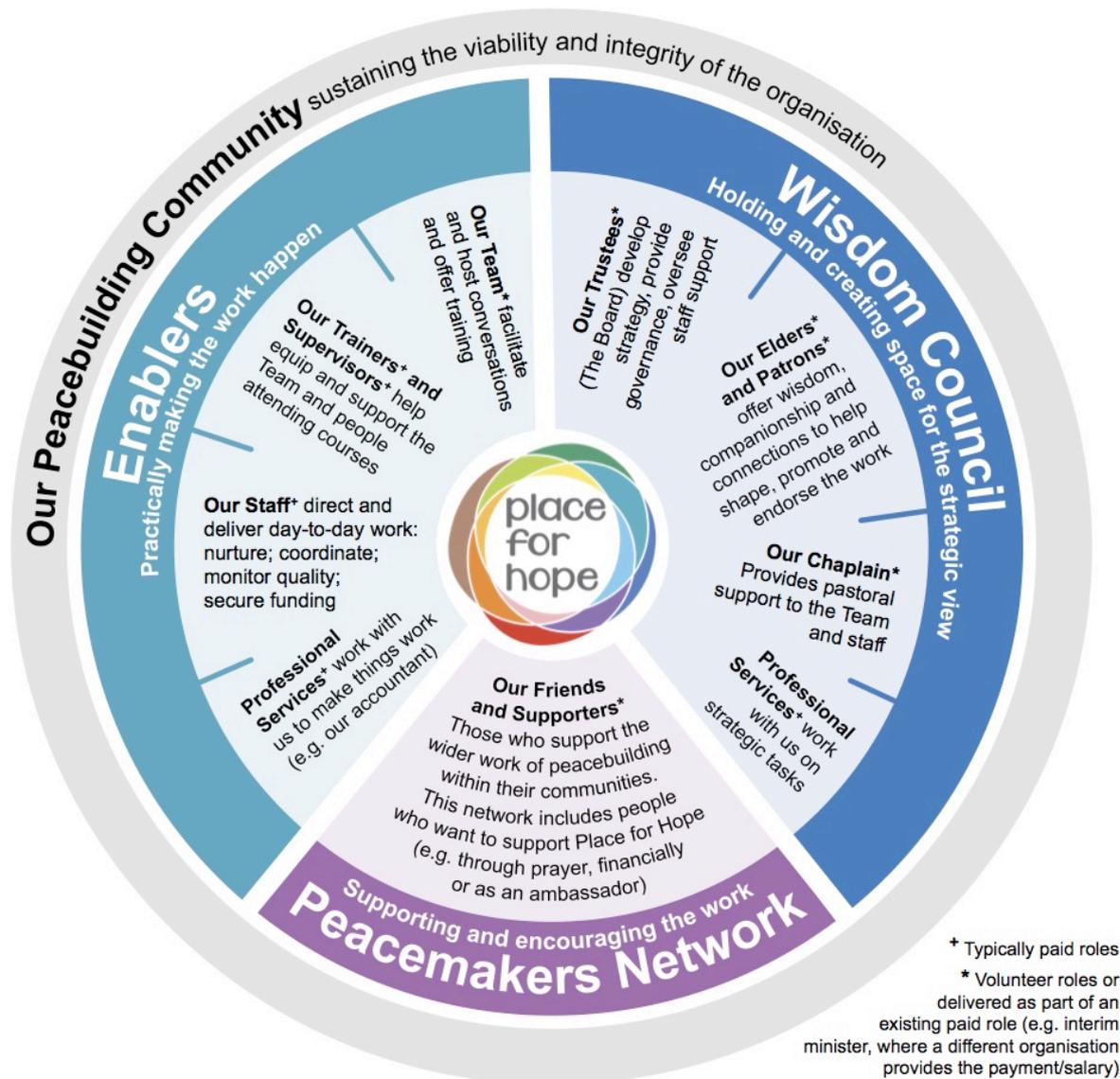
We know the power and courage to change resides within each individual. It is not our responsibility – nor within our power – to change anyone. We accompany people where relationships have become impaired and help them move towards a place of wholeness. Working in pairs, we aim to create trusting, gracious spaces so that people can connect with their own inner wisdom and with each other.

## About always being learners

We want to be reconciling peacemakers and so value learning as a lifelong journey. We are not alone in this work of reconciliation. Many are on the road with us and many have gone before. We want to acknowledge, learn from and link with others who are involved in this vital work.

## 12. OUR PEOPLE

WHO WE ARE AND HOW WE'RE STRUCTURED



As a community of practice, we seek to value and enrich the contribution and gifts of each Team Member. In order to work collaboratively, we recognise the value of having clear roles and responsibilities. We strive to operate within interconnecting circles, where each part of the organisation provides overlapping, important and distinctive contributions to the whole.

Currently:

\*These are typically volunteer roles (or delivered as part of an existing paid role – e.g. interim minister – where a different organisation/institution provides the payment/salary)

+These are typically paid roles within Place For Hope.

## NURTURING THE PEACEMAKERS NETWORK

We want to help connect and contribute to the wide network of people and organisations who are committed to the work of peace building. Anyone can join our peacemakers network – it is especially orientated towards individuals and organisations who are committed to the work of conflict transformation in their communities, homes and lives. It includes people who:

- value the skill of group facilitation/mediation and its power to transform conflicted situations
- want to learn more about themselves and learn better ways of handling conflict
- acknowledge the damaging ways in which our theology and our theological language have influenced our common life
- face up to living with difference within and between our denominations, faiths and communities
- want to help transform their local place of worship and/or communities into a place of peace and reconciliation.

## 13. HOW WE WORK

PROVIDING MORE DETAIL ON OUR SERVICES | OUR STRATEGIC APPROACH.

**This section will be incorporated into a regularly updated marketing flyer, informed by our Business Plan. We anticipate that the Policy Practice Group will develop a Code of Practice and Intake Policy**

OUR STORY:

Place for Hope had its genesis in the Church of Scotland in the Report on Conflict in the Church submitted to the General Assembly of 2008. An ecumenical conference was then held in Aviemore in 2009 where the original objectives included:

- “Establish a live network of people throughout Scotland committed to the work of peacemaking and reconciliation (*provide the churches of Scotland with a team of Trained Mediators who will be available to help congregations deal more effectively with disputes that might otherwise result in the breakdown of congregational life*).
- Found a place recognized as a Centre where resources in mediation and reconciliation can be accessed (*establish an ecumenical partnership which will allow the Church to claim its own ground as a peacemaker and healer in a broken world*)
- Initiate a church-wide realisation of the importance of building communities of peace and reconciliation (*reach beyond addressing the church’s internal conflicts and help congregations become peacemakers in the communities they serve*)”

In 2015, with the financial support of the Ministries Council of the Church of Scotland, Place for Hope was established as an independent charity in Scotland and has embarked on the journey of becoming a resource for churches and faith communities in Scotland and beyond.

## 14. THE INVITATION

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

- **Help your community in crisis:** If you are aware of conflict or difficulty within your faith community, and would appreciate some support, please get in touch to see if we can help.
- **Develop your skills:** Join one of our open access training courses
- **Strengthen your community:** Encourage your church or faith group to host a community dialogue and/or invite us to deliver a workshop or training session.
- **Stay connected:** Join our Place for Hope Network and receive our monthly bulletin with information on upcoming events, training and helpful articles.
- **Be a champion and enabler:** Please help us promote peacebuilding and the work of Place For Hope.

## 15. GLOSSARY

### SELECTED WORDS REFERRED TO IN CHARTER

- **Conflict Management:** focus on Process/Control - deliberate personal, social, organizational tools/skills for managing conflict and handling grievances (J P Lederach)
- **Conflict Resolution:** focus on Problem/Content; attempts to resolve a dispute or problem by providing opportunities to meet the needs and address the interests of both sides so that both can live with the outcome (J P Lederach):
- **Conflict Transformation:** focus on People/Relationships with an emphasis on building health relationships, communities and social structures where there is a radical respect for difference and nonviolence is embraced as a way of life (J P Lederach)
- **Conflict Reconciliation:** process of transforming energy of conflict into that which is 'life-giving' rather than 'soul-destroying'; includes the energies of truth, forgiveness, mercy, justice and peace. (J P Lederach)
  
- **Facilitation:** accompaniment of groups to encourage more open dialogue on important or potentially difficult subjects
- **Mediation:** a process where an impartial person facilitates a conversation between two parties to resolve a dispute where the resolution is acceptable by both parties
- **Training:** developing knowledge, understanding and skills within individuals or groups
  
- **Peacebuilding:** the long term commitment to resolving violent conflict and establishing sustainable peace
- **Peacemakers:** people committed to personal and systemic transformation in their community and world
- **Metanoia:** a change of mind and/or heart; often associated with repentance or a spiritual experience
- **Prophetic:** an ability to see holistically and with clarity, offering an alternative, creative, visionary way of being and experiencing the world

### Note:

The wording of this Charter has been influenced by some of our founding documents, e.g. The 2008 Report to the General Assembly on Congregational Conflict

The image of 'Circles of Trust' comes from Chapter 5 in *'A Hidden Wholeness: the journey toward an undivided life. Welcoming the soul and weaving community in a wounded world'* by Parker J. Palmer.

The full quote by John Hayne is: *"if there is 'that of God' in everyone, then the mediator must in all humility seek it."* (pp 172 of *'Mediating Divorce'*), incorporating the original quote *'seeking that of God in everyone'* from the Quaker, George Fox (1656)

---