



A new leadership structure for Frontier Youth Trust - Consultation document -

Introduction

Following the resignation of Alastair Jones from the role of Chief Executive at the end of August 2017, the Board of Trustees quickly agreed that the circumstances presented an opportunity to explore the leadership structure of the organisation. Primarily, this was to ensure that the role of CEO was fit for purpose for the next phase in the life of the organisation. However, with openness to learn and a prophetic ear, we were also exploring whether there might be alternative ways of operating that are better suited to the role we feel called to play in God's mission among young people on the margins. We also committed to taking things slowly, to ensure that we listened to a range of voices and opinions. We are grateful for the competence and commitment of Debbie Garden and the rest of the team in leading through this exploratory period.

Following productive discussions between the Board members and senior staff, we quickly agreed that there were indeed structures other than the traditional CEO which we wished to explore. This consultation paper is the culmination of that thinking and discussion, which we are now presenting to the community of FYT to gain the valued wisdom and insight of a wider range of people.

What you are about to read, however, is more than just a proposal about staffing and leadership structures. What excited us as a Board about this is the opportunity it also provides to remember the heart and purpose of the mission of Frontier Youth Trust. We hope that you will also share our excitement about this prospect and will help us to shape the concept in order to move towards the realisation of this ambition.

It should be noted that AIMCommunity doesn't feature in these plans. We have been privileged to support and sustain AIMCommunity's work with young people in Dorset over the past four years. However, the arrangement was always intended to be a temporary one and so we are in the process of enabling Richard and his team to set up a new charity, with locally based trustees, to set them up for a positive future serving young people and the community through performing and visual arts. While the transition process won't be complete before we commence the proposed changes outlined here, the proposals assume that the organisation operates without AIM Community as an owned concern.

At the end of the document there are a number of questions to help you shape your feedback. You are welcome to respond to us using them, or if you prefer, just to send us your thoughts. Even if you are in favour of what we are suggesting and have no specific comment to make, your affirmation would be welcome.

The Board of Trustees of Frontier Youth Trust
January 2018

Back to our roots...

In thinking about the staffing needs of Frontier Youth Trust, we began by reminding ourselves what we perceive God's calling for the organisation to be. It seemed an obvious place to start, but we considered it important and – while to some people involved with the organisation it may seem obvious – there was somewhat of a “light-bulb” moment for us in our discussions: our reflections led us to be reminded that the focus of our whole

operation needs to be on the “movement” of Frontier Youth Trust and not simply on FYT as an organisation.

Our mission statement and aims:

Frontier Youth Trust is a home for pioneer youth work. We are a prophetic movement on the margins, calling and working for shalom in and through the lives of young people.

Aim 1: Be a home for pioneer youth work

Aim 2: Improve and increase pioneering youth work practice

Aim 3: Be a prophetic voice from the margins

It is the movement and those active within it who should be driving the agenda for the work of the organisation and not the other way around. We have tended, at least in most recent years, to behave as if FYT is an organisation that exists to deliver services (whether directly with young people or with youth workers), and so we recruited a staff team and fundraised in order to deliver those services. But Frontier Youth Trust is fundamentally a movement of people who are keen to follow Jesus to the margins to do mission with young people (forgive the paraphrasing), and we have constructed an organisation (or legal entity) to support, resource and facilitate that movement. If you are reading this, you are probably a member of this

movement and as such you are not being invited to advise an organisation that is external to you, rather to help shape something that you are a part of and the lifeblood of. The attached Organisational Chart seeks to represent this interpretation.

The Role of the Board

If we assume this perspective (of the organisation existing to facilitate the movement), there are implications for how the Board functions. The Board's role is to govern the organisation, to ensure that it is run legally and sustainably (as a registered charity and limited company) and to direct employees of the organisation on their priorities and foci. These priorities and plans should be defined by listening to the members of the movement (discerning, alongside those in the membership, the mind of Christ). We therefore need to ensure that Board membership is both broadly representative of the movement and also suitably equipped to carry out its duties. In due course, we will need to give further consideration to the membership and recruitment of the Board as well as the way we go about shaping strategic priorities.

What about those employees in the organisation?

We have made the assumptions that, in order for a movement to survive and thrive, it needs capacity and resource in the form of a paid workforce. The question is what we ask these people to do. We believe that there are three distinct roles that we need in order to perform the function of facilitating the movement. We are also proposing that the holders of these roles form a Leadership Team who will work together to enable the smooth and efficient carrying out of the strategic priorities.

Role 1: Community Leader

The purpose of this role is to provide oversight and leadership to the FYT community/movement, and in particular to oversee the smooth running of the FYT Organisation. This will include chairing the Leadership Team and being the primary conduit of communication to the Board of Trustees. The Community Leader will:

- Promote and participate in the development of theological reflection and activism
- Lead and facilitate a rhythm of spiritual practice
- Listen to and provide care, support and prophetic challenge to the members of the FYT Community
- Act as convenor and mediator for FYT community
- Work with the FYT membership to shape the future direction of the community
- Actively lead activity which shapes positive culture in the community

The Community Leader is not CEO to an organisation, but the leader of a movement, hosting the home we seek to offer.

Role 2: Lead Activist

The Lead Activist's role is to think about how to deliver and implement the strategic priorities of the community. This will include developing projects and initiatives, resources and training. Being the agitator, coach and facilitator who is leading the charge to make things happen. They will listen to the needs of the community/movement and respond by curating learning spaces and co-producing resources where appropriate.

Role 3: Community Advocate

The Community Advocate's role is to work on behalf of the community/movement to speak out about the issues and themes that we are facing: listening to the community heartbeat; finding ways to showcase and celebrate what is happening on the margins; and facilitating prophetic challenge where necessary, both within and beyond the movement. This role will also include the continually expanding and recruiting new members to the community and managing/recruiting supporters and donors.

Of course, integral to all of these roles is a constant dialogue of theological reflection and conversation; between each other, with the Board and with the wider movement, to keep the name of Christ always on our lips as we "seek the welfare of the city". It's a thread woven into the fabric of the movement rather than an additional task to be carried out.

We would also secure the services of other "Youth Work Development Advisors" to assist as funding allows, although these people could be volunteers within the movement, or seconded from other organisations.

The practical stuff

The reality is that FYT (the organisation) faces a challenging time financially. Donations have been falling year on year. Grant funding is time-consuming to secure and has a tendency to divert from the things that we actually feel called to do, and we have seen the challenge that direct delivery brings and have chosen to divert from that path. We have to set a realistic budget and this will require some difficult decisions in terms of the staffing capacity that we can afford. We will not be able to afford three full-time posts to fulfil these roles and so will need to decide how to split the available funding between them. We are considering three posts of three days per week each, but we have not yet reached a conclusion.

In addition, none of the three roles described above have any significant amount of operational management function. The intention is that these people are free to focus their attention on the needs and developments of the movement. We will also therefore need an Operations Manager to support the leadership team and the board in ensuring the smooth running of our infrastructure. We are already taking steps to streamline our infrastructure and to make it more cost effective, but this approach will need to continue. One proposal that the board have discussed is to further outsource this operations role, perhaps developing our current partnership with Worth Unlimited. As a small

organisation, the cost of infrastructure is high if we try to do everything ourselves and so looking to partner with other organisations to achieve better efficiency, flexibility and economies of scale is something we believe to be good stewardship.

Next Steps

As previously stated, we are prepared to take our time with this process to ensure that we have consulted the wisdom of the movement and others externally who we trust. Throughout January and the beginning of February we will be sharing these plans, offering clarification where it is needed and seeking feedback, whether positive, neutral or negative. The Board have a meeting at the end of February where we will consider authorising recruitment if there is enough positivity about the plans (amended if necessary from the feedback). Should we find that our ideas are not well received, we may well need to postpone any decision making and think further about the way forward. Should we proceed at this point, we hope that we might have the new structure operational in May or June of this year. The board and senior staff team have been attempting to share this journey together, so they are fully aware of where we are going. We are engaged in ongoing conversations with our current employees regarding the future.

Questions for your consideration

Feel free to answer these questions as a way of framing your response. If you find it easier to simply make your own comments then those are also very welcome (or both).

1. We have sought to re-emphasise the nature of Frontier Youth Trust as a Movement, which is served by an organisation. Are we right to make this emphasis? What contribution do you think this makes to achieving FYT's aims?
2. What do you think about the proposed leadership structure? (How effectively do the three roles cover the functions that the Movement of FYT might need? Are there any additional/alternative functions which we need to help us to achieve our stated aims?)
3. What value/advantages/opportunities do you see – for you personally, for your work and for the FYT community/movement as a whole – in having a “Community Leader” in the way that this is described?
4. What do you think might be lost, in terms of your interaction with FYT, from not having a CEO in the traditional sense?
5. Do you have any views on the proposal to further outsource our infrastructure/operations functions? What do you think we might gain or lose from this approach?
6. Any further comments?

The closing date for responses is: 9th February 2018. Responses can be sent to our Board Member, Matt Perry via the email address consultation@fyt.org.uk.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



FYT— “The Community/Movement”

FYT— “The Organisation”

