

<b>Ref Code</b>	<b>Organisation Name</b>	
2020-05-R023	The Nehemiah Project	
<b>Visit Date</b>	<b>Visited By</b>	
14 <sup>th</sup> July 2020	Victoria Southwell (Zoom call)	
<b>Background to Organisation and governance</b>		
<p>The Nehemiah Project (TNP) is a registered charity that has been running in London for over 20 years. It is run by a CEO who manages 14 staff, one of whom is part time.</p> <p>A Board of eight Trustees are in place who have a wide range of skills and expertise including prison visiting, working for the National Offender Management Service, counselling, mentoring, business and finance skills and sitting on Independent Monitoring Boards. Three Trustees are from the Order of Malta which is a key funding partner of TNP and supports the salary of the Development Director as well as providing seed funding for new houses to be set up. This relationship provides TNP with support and guidance rather than controlling the direction of the organisation. This is an involved board who not only participate in quarterly board meetings but sub committees and regular interaction with key operational staff too. During the Coronavirus lockdown they have met monthly via Zoom.</p> <p>TNP is one of the 13 Board of Reference members of Prisons Week, an annual prayer week that raises awareness and fundraises within church communities. TNP is a Christian organisation but welcomes men of all (or no) faith.</p> <p>A Strategic Plan is in place for 2020 setting clear objectives and targets. A 3-5 year strategy is being developed but has been delayed due to the impact of Covid-19. A rescheduled Trustee away day is due to take place in the Autumn to finalise the plan and a new fundraising strategy will also be developed to sit alongside this.</p> <p>On the call I spoke with Lois Momoh (Development Director) and Kay Hunter Johnston (Treasurer and former CEO). Kay has been involved with TNP virtually since it was set up as either a volunteer, employee or Trustee. Lois has been with TNP for nearly two years. Both demonstrated strong understanding of the submitted application, a deep understanding of the issues and a shared vision for TNP.</p>		
<b>Aims and Activities</b>		
<p>TNP's mission is to enable vulnerable men who are ex-offenders to break free from crime and addiction and to help them rebuild their lives. They offer men, once outside the prison walls, the resources to enable them to set new goals and give them hope for the future by assisting in their reintegration into the community through providing supported housing and rehabilitation programmes.</p> <p>TNP provides 'first stage' and 'move on' accommodation to men with backgrounds in offending and addiction. 80% of residents come directly from prison with the rest made up of self-referrals and referrals from Probation Officers, Chaplains and other charities. On arrival at a 'first stage' house the men start a 12 week Cognitive Behavioural Therapy programme which examines the root causes of addiction and addresses past offending behaviours. This enables residents to recognise negative behaviour patterns and make informed decisions about their future. On graduating the 12 week course residents are then placed in a second stage 'move on' house where they are provided with support from Home Support Workers to help them further develop independence,</p>		

move into employment and continue to address the areas of their life that still cause challenges.

Alongside housing TNP also delivers Nehemiah Works, an employment and training programme, and a Family Support programme to help residents reconnect with and build healthy and lasting relationships with their families.

TNP works with between 30-50 vulnerable men annually and has a success rate of 71% of residents who maintain abstinence for over a year and a reoffending rate of 5% for the past five years.

### **Finances**

Audited accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 show income of £762,858 against expenditure of £685,821 resulting in a surplus of £77,037 for the year. This surplus was mainly due to receiving funding for work to refurbish their owned property in the previous financial year with the work due to be undertaken in the next. Income increased from the previous year due to the opening of their fourth house and increased beneficiaries on the programme.

The balance sheet shows net current assets of £150,417 with unrestricted funds of £47,966. Fixed assets show as £848,389 which is mostly the property that they own. The reserves policy doesn't state a certain period of expenditure that should be covered but does reference the fact that borrowing can be made against the owned property should reserves not be sufficient. However, increasing unrestricted reserves does remain a priority for TNP and this figure has increased from last year by £37,000.

Income and expenditure for 2020/21 is showing a possible deficit of £171,227 against income of £675,528 due to the impact of Covid-19 (this is worst case scenario modelling). At the onset of the lockdown a new operational budget was developed that made savings but also revised income figures. The original income and expenditure forecast for 2020/21 had shown a surplus of £52,036 against expenditure of £892,621. Draft budgets for 21/22 and 22/23 are based on expenditure of around £800,000.

TNP's income is broadly made up of 75% funding from Charitable Trusts and Foundations and donations and 25% from Housing Benefit.

Strong financial systems are in place with an actively engaged named Trustee having responsibility for finances who is supported by an Office Manager and paid external finance services.

### **Current Situation and need**

TNP currently has four houses accommodating men who are either undertaking their 12 week therapy course, A New Future, in a first stage house or are living in a second stage house and being supported to become independent and successfully rehabilitate themselves back into society. TNP owns one of the properties that it uses (and was the original purpose of the organisation when it was formed) and is the Management Agent for the other three properties, which are owned by Sanctuary Housing and Croydon Churches Housing Association. In 2020 they also plan to open a second house in Croydon which will be a second stage move on house and developed discussions are being held with Croydon Churches Housing Association around a specific property. There are also plans to look outside of London and currently a large piece of work is being undertaken in Bury St Edmonds around opening a house there, with a property having been identified and the support of the local council also in place.

TNP recognises though that with growth comes additional financial pressures and whilst the support of The Order of Malta ensures that seed funding is available to get new houses up and running the ongoing challenges of filling them and generating ongoing income from them is crucial. Ensuring that their programme and subsequent recovery and rehabilitation rates are good is a key way of getting confidence from referrers to choose TNP for their clients.

Whilst results are currently good a gap in peer mentoring support has been identified by both existing residents and past graduates. Men who have been through the 12 week programme and are now in the second stage houses are keen to be able to provide support to the men in the first stage houses. Their ability to connect with the men in a way that paid staff can't is seen as a crucial support mechanism that will add additional value to the programme. The peer mentors will also get huge benefit from having played this role in terms of their own confidence, development and recovery/rehabilitation.

Another area TNP has identified this approach adding huge value to is the ability to train some peer mentors to a higher level and for them to become trained Recovery Coaches. TNP struggles to recruit highly qualified staff, especially those with relatable experience. Currently TNP sees many graduates end up being trained by other organisations and securing paid employment with them, so feel that this a missed opportunity. By being able to provide the training themselves they hope that this will lead to paid employment opportunities for some graduates which will ultimately improve the quality of the support being offered and the outcomes of the residents.

#### **Overall aim of the funding**

Funding will enable TNP to embed better support for clients through peer mentoring and training graduates to become Housing Support Workers. This will improve outcomes for residents which will in turn lead to more referrals. As TNP increase their housing stock consistent referral numbers will be key to ensuring that they keep their beds full and help them move towards future expansion in cities outside of London. This all supports increased organisational growth and income generation and reduces reliance on Trusts and Foundations.

#### **Expected Key Achievements in Year 1**

##### **EKA 1**

Successful development and delivery of a peer mentoring programme to improve outcomes for residents and increase referral numbers.

##### **EKA 2**

Increase in residents successfully graduating from Nehemiah's recovery programme and not reoffending.

##### **EKA 3**

Increased number of skilled candidates for Supported Housing Worker vacancies who have relatable experiences.

#### **Purpose of grant and Budget**

TNP is requesting £75,000 over 3 years towards the salary of a Housing Support Worker (33% of their time), travel, training, course materials and a contribution to overheads.

**£25,000 in year 1** - £12,000 (salaries), £10,000 (training and course materials), £1,900 (training expenses) and £1,100 (contribution to overheads).

**£25,000 in year 2** - £12,000 (salaries), £10,000 (training and course materials), £1,500 (training expenses) and £1,500 (contribution to overheads).

**£25,000 in year 3** - £12,000 (salaries), £10,000 (training and course materials), £1,500 (training expenses) and £1,500 (contribution to overheads).

## Conclusion

The Zoom call that I had with TNP showed that this is a well-run organisation that has a knowledgeable operational and Trustee team. They are a small organisation with strong links to local churches that supports both their fundraising but also their ability to link into recruiting volunteers to help with the support needs of the men on their programme.

TNP has what feels like a very realistic growth plan in place. The support of The Order of Malta via their Global Fund for Forgotten People to seed fund new premises means that expansion operates at minimal risk during the early months of filling occupancy of houses and generating income via housing benefit. The plans to expand outside of London also seem well thought out, well-paced and low risk.

By embedding this approach into all of the current houses TNP operates this support will be able to be expanded as the organisation grows and form a core part of the TNP offer to residents. It would set them apart from other similar services and also help to embed significant skill development in men who could eventually become a pool of well qualified professionals suitable for paid employment. TNP spoke about the challenges of employing good quality workers, especially those with relatable experiences, and the frustrations of seeing graduates move into roles with other organisations who were able to provide them with job opportunities and support their training needs.

TNP will work closely with another organisation, Change UK, who are run by people with personal experience of addiction and the criminal justice system. Change UK will help design and run the initial training programme and support the Housing Support Worker who will be leading on this programme as it is embedded across the houses.

My main concern about this application is the actual link to sustainability. It is without a doubt a good thing to do and I am sure that it will have a hugely positive impact on the men that are on the programme. But I am unconvinced about whether the link between this extra support leading to increased referrals and income is strong enough to really improve the long term resilience of the organisation.

The slight struggle therefore with this application is that the request feels more like a project than a strong strategic work stream and the actual impact it would have organisationally feels rather unknown. This was especially apparent in the EKA's that were originally submitted. Whilst well written in terms of being clear and measurable there was no link to any kind of improved sustainability or resilience. At the assessment call we discussed this in length and changes were made both to the content and the form where an extra box was added by myself to identify the overall aim of the funding. Some changes were also made to some of the measures as they felt pretty ambitious and didn't seem to have had any contingency built into them should things not go exactly as planned in terms of beneficiary numbers and participants etc.

This would be an interesting application to support but ultimately I feel that we should only do so if this feels like a higher priority when compared against other applications that have been assessed. Therefore I would categorise this application as a 'maybe'.

## Recommended Priority Rating

Risk = Low

Difference to organisation = Medium

Priority = Medium