

DOING THE RIGHT THING

(A statement from Trinity Hospice Trustees, CEO and Directors)

- We feel that creating this therapeutic space in the chapel was the right thing to do.
- We realise we got it wrong in using the general charitable fund and sincerely apologise.
- We will put this right and hope people will continue to value and support Hospice Care.

Many people will have followed the stories surrounding Trinity Hospice's decision in spending £50,000 on 'The Dance', seven works of art that make up the 'artwork' in Trinity's Chapel. The Trustees, CEO and Directors are confident that the commissioning of these paintings and the focus on the emotional and spiritual care of the patients, carers and families that access Trinity's services was the right decision. Trinity feels that we have acted in good faith and that you cannot put a price on spiritual care.

However, there are three distinct aspects to 'doing the right thing' in respect of this artwork. The first part is about our vision and conviction that exploring the concept of healing where no physical cure is possible is right for Trinity Hospice. We have been open, honest and transparent in all of this. The cost of the paintings was decided 18 months ago and set out in Trinity's Business Plan, which is available for everyone to see. In an organisation with a total budget of over £6 million a year, the £50,000 is less than 1% of one year's running costs. This purchase has not reduced any aspect of our care.

We are convinced that commissioned, bespoke and specialist paintings of this scale and quality justify the spending. We know that the artwork creates a therapeutic space and it is a fundamental part of the care of patients, carers and their families. Over the last 25 years the community of Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre has trusted Trinity with their loved one's care at the most difficult time possible and Trinity thought they would trust them to make good decisions about the purchase of artwork to enhance spiritual and emotional care.

Trinity are confident that with over 3000 referrals a year, over the next 25 years almost over 80,000 patients, who need the care of the hospice, will have the opportunity to benefit from these paintings. Taking into account, carers and families, this figure will be hundreds of thousands. The patients, who are often living in the last few days or weeks of their lives, and their carers' and families, deserve the very best that Trinity can offer them.

The Board of Trustees are 13 unpaid, honourable volunteers from across Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre; they represent the voice of the community we serve. Together with the CEO and Directors it was thought 'The Dance' would be a significant purchase in Trinity's 25th Anniversary Year. It is a 'one off' legacy for the next 25 years.

www.trinityhospice.co.uk

The Trinity family of services:

-  Support/counselling for grief and loss
- In-Patient Unit
- Day Therapy Unit
- Clinical Nurse Specialists
- Lymphoedema Service
- Complementary Therapy
- Learning and Research Centre
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Low Moor Road, Bispham, Blackpool FY2 0BG Tel: 01253 358881

However, with the benefit of hindsight as a second part of 'doing the right thing' the Trustees, CEO and Directors realise that many people in the community which we serve are not supportive of charitable donations being spent on this artwork. We have been shocked and saddened at the strength of this feeling and regret that we did not make a different decision and raise the funding from a specific appeal. In doing the right thing we apologise unreservedly for any distress our decision has caused.

It is clearly a dilemma for Trinity that the vast majority of the people that see the artwork express strong feelings of support, this particularly includes; carers families and most importantly the patients. However, a significant number people from the community, who may have not yet seen the artwork, express their dismay at the decision.

We fully accept that if in the future we wanted to purchase something that we remotely suspected the vast majority of people would not see as care for patients, carers and families then we would not use the general funds donated by the community.

In an age when people in public services make an error and don't accept responsibility and trust diminishes in those people and in their organisations, Trinity has always strived to be different and to always do the right thing. Hospices are faced with difficult moral and ethical decisions everyday and Trinity has always acted with the utmost integrity and the highest standards of public service.

The Trustees, CEO and Directors want not only to apologise but to put right the error in keeping with the ethical and moral position that Trinity takes on many issues. We have decided that Trinity hospice will run a retrospective 'Chapel artwork fund' so that those who wish to contribute to the money spent on the artwork can do so. Those that don't think it was a good use of donations can rest assured their donations will, as usual, go to patient care. When we raise the funding required we will transfer the £50,000 originally spent, back into the general charity fund. We know that we will raise the required amount needed for the artwork and a number of loyal supporters have already indicated their desire to give to this fund.

We are keen to reassure the people of Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre who support Trinity a valuable lesson has been learned. People should continue to donate, support and fundraise in confidence knowing that Trinity have recognised their error and can guarantee it won't happen again. Trinity can also guarantee that there is no more artwork to be purchased for Trinity and that any and all money will be spent on care of patients, carers and their families.

The third part of doing the right thing is for Trinity to thank those people that have supported it over the last 25 years and so have helped to ensure high quality hospice care is available. The final part of doing the right thing rests outside Trinity and is for the various stakeholders and donors to get back to supporting their local hospice. Trinity wants to be providing high quality Hospice care for the adults and children of Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre for the next 25 years.