

Death Cafe London

Business Plan

2015 - 2018

*A three-year plan to provide the worldwide Death Cafe
movement with a base in London*

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DEATH CAFE LONDON is the trading name of The Inclusive Community Cafe London Ltd, a Community Benefit Society registered with the Financial Conduct Authority, Registration No 7202, Registered Office: 167 Turners Hill, Cheshunt, Herts EN8 9BH



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Executive summary

Death Cafe London is the trading name of The Inclusive Community Cafe London Ltd., a membership-based social enterprise registered as a Community Benefit Society (reg. no. 7202) in September 2015.

Its aim is to give a home to the Death Cafe movement, in the city in which Death Cafe was born. Its objectives revolve around helping people make the most of their finite lives, by offering an accessible, respectful, inclusive and confidential space, accompanied by high quality food and drink.

Death Cafe already has an established nationwide and international network of supporters. Death Cafe London will host many and frequent Death Cafes, including facilitated sessions for specific communities. A key aim of Death Cafe London is to promote inclusion.

Death Cafe London will be located in central London and will be a good quality cafe with sufficient physical space to offer a complementary programme of events and meetings focusing on death and dying such as films, music, poetry, exhibitions of art and photography, support sessions and lectures. The events space will be also be available for hire to other organisations.

Death Cafe is now a well-established, very credible brand, from which Death Cafe London will benefit by association. It has an exceptionally strong media record to date. This project has the backing of many key organisations in the sector.

The start-up finance for Death Cafe London will be provided predominantly by an issue of community shares by the Society (please see Share Offer Document for full details of how to purchase shares, tax reliefs and interest payable on shares). Share capital will be supplemented by grants and donations. Purchasing shares in the Society confers membership.

Death Cafe London will be run by a team of staff and volunteers overseen by an executive director. They will report to the Board, which is elected by the members. As a Community Benefit Society, every member has one vote, irrespective of the size of their shareholding.

Once the share offer (which is being run online through Crowdfunder, a leading crowdfunding site) is deemed successful, funds will be drawn down and work will commence, to find and fit suitable premises in central London. A volunteer team will be coordinated, events schedule drawn up and staff recruited, in time for an opening in October 2016. The budget produced for Death Cafe London as part of this business plan shows the Society will breakeven in Year 2 and achieve a total income of £332,000 with net profit of over £16,000 by its third year.

Why Death Cafe London?

THE STORY SO FAR

The Death Cafe movement was founded in 2011 by Jon Underwood from Hackney, East London, after being inspired by the eminent Swiss sociologist Bernard Crettaz. He created the Death Cafe website and formalised the concept of free gatherings, hosted by willing individuals under a set of guidelines. At each meeting, members gather to discuss death and the many topics that accompany the subject. Far from being sombre or negative, feedback has proved the Death Cafes to be respectful, supportive occasions,

with warmth, laughter and lively discussion throughout. The enthusiasm generated by these gatherings has meant that the concept has travelled far and wide, mainly via word of mouth.

In the four years since it was founded, Death Cafe has rapidly turned from an idea into a movement which has snowballed internationally. To date:

- Over 2400 Death Cafes have been held in 32 countries, run by willing volunteers (this is the number of events that have been catalogued; many more will have gone unreported).
- Over 1,000 articles have appeared in the world's press, including leading national newspapers such as the New York Times.
- A conservative estimate of 30,000 participants have benefited from attending Death Cafes.
- Every day, on average, three Death Cafes are held somewhere in the world.

Notifications of these events, along with feedback such as attendance figures and extensive press coverage, can be found on the Death Cafe website at www.deathcafe.com.

After talking about death for two hours straight, customers departed the Death Cafe full of life. The crowd consisted of ordinary Hongkongers intent on addressing the taboo subject - over cake and a cup of tea. Many had arrived at the Death Cafe - hosted by the Bijas vegetarian restaurant at the University of Hong Kong - not knowing what to expect. But within five minutes, 30 to 40 strangers were having conversations that they had found impossible with friends and family. (South China Morning Post, June 2014)

"Our whole society is so focused on youth and we want to recapture that and we don't want to think about dying . . . I think that Baby Boomers as a whole, we were the generation that started talking about sex. Now we're getting to that age bracket where we have to pursue more uncharted territory, which is talk about death and talk about dying and what it means to us." (Canadian Death Cafe participant, in Calgary Herald, July 2013)

VISION

A Death Cafe is a very specific type of event. The Death Cafe format is designed to create a very open environment to permit free-flowing conversation between people from any background. It is group directed, without agenda, objective or outside input. This is clearly set out in the Death Cafe guide.

The phenomenal success of Death Cafe as a worldwide movement has led to the idea of creating a home for Death Cafe. The vision for Death Cafe London is that it will promote Death Cafe's mission to "increase awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their finite lives".

OBJECTIVES

In creating a permanent home for Death Cafe in London, we aim to:

- *Get people talking about death!*
- *Offer people an opportunity to connect with their thoughts on death, however briefly*
- *Provide a space for practical information on subjects related to death such as funeral planning, will-making, bereavement support, and organ donation*
- *Inspire and host events focused on topics directly related to death and life*
- *Help facilitate positive cultural change around death*
- *Model good practice in terms of inclusion and transparency as a social business*
- *Succeed as an excellent and interesting cafe*
- *Establish a prototype real Death Cafe franchise that could be set up elsewhere.*

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

As a social enterprise, Death Cafe London aims to promote inclusion, in order to enhance the lives of as many people as possible in our varied, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic population.

As a community benefit society, owned and run by the community, for the community, Death Cafe London is committed to enabling all people to participate in funding, running, and shaping the venture.

Death Cafe London will adhere to Death Cafe's established principles. These are that a Death Cafe will always be offered:

- *Primarily for the benefit of the community rather than for profit*
- *In an accessible, respectful, inclusive and confidential space*
- *With no intention of leading people to any conclusion, product or course of action. Specifically Death Cafe will never advocate for or be aligned with a specific commercial service provided by a 3rd party organisation*
- *Alongside refreshing drinks and nourishing food – and cake*

In addition, Death Cafe London will:

- *Be committed to excellence in service*
- *Offer quality food and drink*
- *Be professionally managed*
- *Develop its staff*

What Death Cafe London will not do:

- *Directly offer a drop in support service i.e. physical, mental, spiritual or emotional help to vulnerable people. If necessary, based on our wide network of contacts within different services, we shall make referrals to help people find support.*
- *Upset the local community in which the permanent Death Cafe is situated. We shall spend time engaging with that community and the outside world.*

SOCIAL OUTCOMES

As a responsible social enterprise, we intend to plan, measure and learn about our social impact. The management board will set targets and methods of reporting, early on in the planning process. We foresee strong results within the following social outcomes:

Mental / emotional health and wellbeing

Death is one of the most significant causes of anxiety and mental ill health in the modern world. Bringing death out into the open by opening a Death Cafe will show that talking about death is normal and potentially useful. Feedback from Death Cafes to date tells us that talking about death enhances people's lives and sense of wellbeing. Those attending Death Cafe London will receive benefits of this type.

Improved understanding of death

Death Cafe London will offer information around death and dying, links to services and opportunities to learn about this subject. We aim to foster 'death literacy' which contributes to people having better experiences around dying, death and bereavement. As a unique and groundbreaking venture in this field we will learn a great deal which we're committed to sharing widely.

Citizenship and community

We believe that nothing brings out our shared humanity as much as death. As such, talking about death will foster empathy and understanding between diverse groups. Focusing on death also brings a requirement to acknowledge uncomfortable truths about society including racism, misogyny, ableism, homophobia and transphobia. Death Cafe London's inclusion policy acknowledges this and makes a clear commitment to addressing this in the way we work.

The engagement of volunteers offers the opportunity for everyone to participate. A community benefit society model enables people to become members of an organisation and share responsibility.

Employment, training and education

Death Cafe London will offer employment and training opportunities based around the cafe, its PR work and its events. Peer-to-peer training of facilitators to help with Death Cafe sessions will educate volunteers in transferable skills.

The market for Death Cafe London

Death Cafe has an established nationwide and international network of people who are passionate about this work and will support it. Death Cafe London will host many and frequent Death Cafes, including facilitated sessions for specific communities e.g. a Death Cafe for ex-servicemen/women, or for those working in hospitals.

However Death Cafes are only one way of engaging with death and of course there are many others. Death Cafe London will offer a range of other events around death and dying. These might include art, films, music, poetry, photography, lectures, information and support sessions around the theme of death and dying. . There is an established audience for such events, and examples of high quality work around some aspects of death and dying in London:

- Well over 100 Death Cafes have been organised by motivated volunteers in London since the first Death Cafe started here in 2011. This includes a popular run of 25 by Josefine Speyer in Hampstead (see Death Cafe website for blog article).

- Excellent, regularly sold-out programme of events focused on death at the Pathology Museum curated by Carla Valentine, winner of “Major Contribution to the Understanding of Death” at the Good Funeral Awards 2015.
- The well-sponsored and popular London Month of the Dead running for the 2nd year offering a popular programme of events focused around Brompton and Kensall Green Cemeteries.

London has a concentration of key player organisations and thought leaders around end of life and death such as: Dying Matters, Hospice UK, Macmillan, Marie Curie, Sue Ryder and Dead Social. It also has some amazing undertakers, fantastic hospices and many others working in this field.

It is anticipated that Death Cafe London will complement and invite more of this activity into existence.

OUR CUSTOMERS

The location of Death Cafe London will be a central position with high footfall. We believe London is the right location as it is a firmly multi-cultural city that attracts many thousands of visitors each year.

Not everyone wants to talk about death. Despite this, our experience of over 2,400 pop-up Death Cafes to date has shown that many people benefit from and are keen to do just this. People have many different reasons for attending Death Cafes and this will be true of Death Cafe London too.

We anticipate some of the most common reasons for attending Death Cafe London to include:

- *Wanting to engage with death as a ‘wake up call’ to help highlight, for example, what’s important in life and as a reminder that life isn’t forever*
- *Wanting support or just to talk about death in a place where this is accepted and normal*
- *Being curious about death and wishing to investigate further*
- *Wanting to gain knowledge or skills to enable one to approach death or support others more effectively*
- *Wishing to meet people, those who work in the death or dying field or who are not afraid to talk about death*
- *Enjoying the environment as a pleasant or entertaining place to visit*
- *Loving the cake.*

Death Cafe London won’t appeal to everyone but we are confident that in this city of 8.63 million we have more than enough potential customers to thrive.

INCLUSION

Death Cafe London’s view is that, despite what society might tell us, no one individual’s death is inherently more important than another’s. But we also acknowledge that in London, as in the world, some groups are privileged or oppressed by virtue of fairly arbitrary characteristics, and that discrimination and prejudices accompanying these different characteristics are deeply woven into our culture. Death Cafe London intends therefore to make every effort to avoid becoming a specialised or exclusive space catering to any particular worldview. The ways in which we will achieve this are detailed in our inclusion policy (see Appendix A).

Partnerships and supporting organisations

We have already received some tremendously encouraging message of support from people and organisations very well connected in this sector. The support received from these organisations will ensure an extended reach for Death Cafe London, its aims and its principles. Here are some examples of the messages we have received to date:

Dying Matters

Claire Henry, Chief Executive of the National Council for Palliative Care and the Dying Matters Coalition said: “Death cafes have already had a tremendous impact, which is why we are very excited about plans to open a Death Cafe in London. Talking more openly about dying, death and bereavement and changing the nation’s approach to dying stands to benefit us all, and having a safe space to do this will provide fantastic opportunities to demystify dying and support people to live well until they die.”

Good Funeral Guide

Protracted end-of-life suffering is propelling a growing social impulse to embrace assisted dying. This is radically reconfiguring our relationship with mortality and altering commemorative practices, dissolving both the taboo surrounding death and the life-at-any-price mindset which characterised cultural attitudes throughout most of the 20th century. In this fast-changing landscape there is now a growing and urgent appetite, fuelled by necessity, among all people of all ages to question, debate, listen and learn. Death Cafe London will capture this zeitgeist in the most dynamic and socially useful way I can think of. This is exactly the right initiative at exactly the right time and the Good Funeral Guide CIC supports it without qualification.

British Humanist Association

The British Humanist Association supports 'Death Cafe London' because it represents a profound and enlightened step in the right direction. A step that not only helps break the taboos that still exist around an essential truth of our existence, but one that also gives grief, curiosity and fear a safe place to be articulated and shared, thereby creating happier, healthier communities and a more integrated society.

Caitlin Doughty, founder of the Order of the Good Death

I'm excited that things are moving along with an official Death Cafe! Having a stationary space is so important, people feel like they belong to a community. There should be spaces like this in every major city. I can't wait to visit when you open.

Living Well Dying Well

Hermione Elliott and her team at Living Well Dying Well enthusiastically support the establishment of 'Death Cafe London. We congratulate Jon Underwood on embarking on this unique enterprise and wish him every success. We support this wonderful initiative because we believe the objective of creating environments where people can talk about death naturally and comfortably is so important. Supporting conversations with individuals, families and deaths can only serve to normalise death and create a positive approach to dying. It's great that we share the same objective – Living Well Dying Well is with you, wholeheartedly!

The Natural Death Centre

The Natural Death Centre charity unreservedly supports Death Cafe London. We have had discussions with Jon Underwood and understand its aims and objectives. Death Cafe London's aims are also in line with the NHS's End of Life Care Strategy promoting a public health approach to dying and offering opportunity for people to explore their thoughts in a safe, non-judgmental environment. Death Cafes around the UK and the world over recent years have mushroomed which demonstrates people's wishes to host a Death Cafe and for people to attend. The Natural Death Centre charity has been hosting public awareness events on death awareness for nearly 25 years around the UK. The feedback we have received from members of the public and professionals has been overwhelmingly supportive and say they wish there were more opportunities to do so. Death Cafes have fulfilled that and this is the next evolutionary step forward. The Natural Death Centre charity has worked alongside Jon Underwood on previous projects. His professionalism, skill, sensitivity and ability to take a project from idea to fruition and maintain its sustainability are exemplary. We have no hesitation in supporting Death Cafe London.

Sheldon Solomon, co-author of *The Worm at the Core: On the Role of Death in Life*

I cannot image a more timely, useful, and important venture than Death Cafe London. The uniquely human fear of death has a pervasive effect on human beings' thoughts, feelings, and behaviour. Humans manage the terror of death by adhering to culturally constructed beliefs about reality that provide a sense that one is a person of value in a world of meaning, and thus eligible for either literal or symbolic immortality. The quest for immortality underlies some of humankind's most noble achievements. However, it also engenders some of our most ignominious affectations, including: hostility and disdain for people with different beliefs; indifference to, or contempt for, the natural environment; and, the mindless pursuit of material possessions—which, if unchecked, may render humans the first form of life responsible for our own extinction. "Come to terms with death," wrote Albert Camus, "thereafter, anything is possible." Death Cafe London will surely help make this possible, by fostering personal growth and social progress.

Marketing and engagement

THE DEATH CAFE BRAND

Death Cafe is now a well-established, very credible brand with a huge following, from which the venture will benefit by association. It has an exceptionally strong media record to date: over the last four years Death Cafe has generated thousands of conversations and there have been prominent stories in the New York Times, Washington Post, NPR, BBC and a host of others across the globe. (See box below, article from The Independent, Death cafe set to open in London to help people engage with dying, September 2015.) We can predict with a great degree of confidence that there will be ongoing high exposure within mainstream press. A physical home for Death Cafe is unique and timely, the first of its type in the world, and this will immediately generate media attention.

Death Cafe London's branding will be designed as part of the launch process, but in addition the permanent cafe will have on sale the already successful and distinctive Death Cafe merchandise. All promotional material for Death Cafe London will emphasise the history and purpose of Death Cafe.

DEATH CAFE SET TO OPEN IN LONDON TO 'HELP PEOPLE ENGAGE WITH DYING'

Dying for a coffee? There is a place with caffeine and mortality on the menu

Matilda Battersby @matildbattersby THE INDEPENDENT: *Weird News*, Wednesday 23 September 2015

Tea and sympathy traditionally accompany bereavement but soon you could also have cake, cheese toasties and frankness about mortality. London looks set to host a permanent "Death Cafe", a coffee shop where people can go to talk about one of life's most awkward subjects - dying.

Since the Death Cafe movement started in 2011 more than 2,000 popup cafes have sprung up across the world, with the majority opening in this country. But now the movement's founder wants to open a permanent Death Cafe in the British capital and next month will offer shares in it at £50 a go.

The permanent Death Cafe will run as a non-profit Community Benefit Society owned and managed by those who support it.

Funeral advisor and Death Cafe founder Jon Underwood says the aim of the movement is "to increase awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their (finite) lives."

Death Cafes are not intended to be bereavement support groups or morbid places. They are simply environments where mentioning death and the deceased or fears about personal mortality and means of dying are openly welcomed and not unsaid, sanitised or ignored.

A survey by the charity Dying Matters reveals that more than 70 per cent of us are uncomfortable talking about death and dying. *"We don't want to shove death down people's throats,"* Underwood told The Independent. *"We just want to create an environment where talking about death is natural and comfortable."*

He got the idea from the Swiss model (cafe mortel) invented by sociologist Bernard Crettaz. *"I'm certain that Death Cafe London will be both beneficial for society and a chance for learning and discussion,"* Underwood explains. *"In my experience, when people talk about death and dying, all their pretences disappear. You see people's authenticity and honesty among strangers. Although it might sound really weird and wonderful to say you attend a death cafe, it just feels very normal."*

Talking of Death Cafe London he says: *"The time is right to offer a place where people can come to engage with death. More and more people are expressing support and getting involved. Death Cafe London is committed to enabling all people – especially individuals with marginalized identities – to safely buy shares in, work at, use and shape the venture."*

What is said at a Death Cafe?

I visited a Death Cafe pop up in East London in 2012 and was amazed by the warmth, humour and total lack of misery I encountered there. Yes there was grief. Yes people were carrying, and told, dreadful stories of watching loved ones die. But there was joy and laughter and support and honesty, too.

There were also several representatives of people from the so-called “death industry” - including an undertaker and a funeral celebrant.

*"I feel more alive than ever since working in a funeral home," a woman working as an embalmer remarked. "It has helped me recognise that it isn't a circle between life and death, it is more like a cosmic soup. **The dead and the living are sort of floating about together.**"*

*"**We're in a bit of a pickle about embalming,**" one man commented, without quite realising his joke.*

*"**I have seen people have funerals which I don't think they would have wanted,**" the undertaker, who has 17 years of experience, remarked. *"It is possible to provide funerals more cheaply, more sensitively and with greater respect for the dead."**

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

It is anticipated that Death Cafe London will be used very flexibly. We are committed to being open to the public as often as possible and in our ideal scenario we would have space to run events and offer space to hire alongside this.

Food and drink

Coming to Death Cafe London will be a special experience and we are committed to providing a delectable menu to mark the occasion. Food and drinks will also be available for takeaway so our marketing plan incorporates strategies to attract local and passing traffic to pop in for a coffee, cake, etc.

There will be a full range of hot and cold drinks, with variety coffees and teas priced between £2 and £3. The menus would include brunch-type items such as granola, omelettes, French toast, croissants and Danish pastries; lunch items such as filled baguettes, sandwiches, home-made salads and quiches etc.; and of course cakes of all descriptions which will be the cafe specialty (sold by the slice). We would aim to keep the range of cakes as large as possible, very varied and constantly changing, ensuring that there is a large range of popular baked goods on sale per day (such as muffins, biscotti, iced buns, brownies and cookies, fruit tarts and pies, sponge cakes, fruit cakes and gateaux, and including a gluten-free range) at a price point of between £1.50 and £4 per slice.

During the day, while the cafe is open to the general public, there will also be catered events (these will be held in the evening as well). We will serve alcohol in moderation (e.g. wine by the glass, and a small range of bottled lagers and beers) and the kitchen will be available to host ‘guest chefs’ who can cook for special occasions.

Workshop and events

We will offer a diverse portfolio of events. There would be at least one large open-to-all Death Cafe every week sometimes facilitated by visiting hosts. We would also market the Death Cafe to groups who might wish to host their own Death Cafe, following successful work with LGBT communities.

Other events will include:

- *Cultural investigation of death: the creation, performance and discussion of death in forms including art, film, comedy, literature, music, food and poetry.*

- *Practical work around death: discussion of policy or practice around death to bring about positive change. This could take the form of sharing knowledge and learning skills*
- *Investigation of subjects related to death: social policy, psychology, history, science, medicine*
- *Support and sharing. It would be very natural and appropriate for people dealing with illness, suicide, trauma, bereavement to meet in this venue.*

Meeting space rental

Death Cafe London will offer space in its central London local for other organisations to rent (when not being used for Death Cafe events). We envisage the space being rented for a variety of purposes including training, personal development, celebrations and rites, awaydays, meetings, product launches and lectures.

Merchandise sales

Death Cafe London will sell a carefully collated selection of products both on the premises and online. These will include a small number of excellent books about death and branded goods / memorabilia such as cups and saucers, candles, clothing and pins.

PROMOTION AND COMMUNICATION

Promotion

Promotion for Death Cafe London will be spurred on by the worldwide interest in the Death Cafe concept and we shall continue to facilitate the larger cultural conversation from the new physical base. There is anticipated to be regular, frequent and high-profile interaction with the press, and the Board will take responsibility early on for policy decisions on the organisation's literature and press releases, to enable a coherent PR strategy.

Although we are certain that the majority of our publicity will be press and community-led, we have allocated £40,000 for our launch marketing budget for Year 1. We would envisage marketing costs to be spread as follows:

- *£20,000 for branding and associated assets*
- *£20,000 for web development, £11,000 for front-end design and £9,000 for back-end development.*

In subsequent years we have allocated £5,000 p.a. to cover ongoing social media work, website updates, and general marketing and promotion, to members, relevant organisations and press.

Communications

Death Cafe's communications strategy is informed by focusing on our core beliefs and the unique value of what we offer the customer. We have developed an integrated communications plan that will use a variety of tactics, across marketing, social media and PR, to alert or remind the customer of that value.

Our communications for the cafe as a new food outlet in the highly competitive London market will focus on being food-centric (i.e. the food should sell itself), low-cost (i.e. no big budgets or print advertising), locally focused, partnership-orientated, and harnessing the power of word of mouth. Full details of our pre-launch and post-launch communications and marketing plan can be found in Appendix B.

Premises and operations

LOCATION AND PREMISES

The amount of space and its configuration is dependent on our success in attracting investment. Death Cafe London needs to have enough space for meetings and events;; we shall seek two-roomed premises to allow bookings and events to run simultaneously with the day-to-day operations of the cafe. However, if funds are limited to one space only, it would still be possible to have cafe space open during the day, and switch to event space in the evening. A kitchen and toilets are essential requirements.

The location needs to be in an area of high footfall within central London. We are budgeting for a mid-range rental value of £49,000.

OPERATIONS

Day to day operational running depends largely on the size and location of our premises. In the most likely scenario we will open mid-morning and through lunch and then for an event in the evening. Food and drink will be served at a counter including a limited menu of alcoholic drinks. There will be a waiting area for takeaway coffee and cake sales from our short vegetarian menu.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

We envisage that most services behind the scenes of Death Cafe London will be carried out by volunteers. However, we realise that establishing and running the cafe plus a substantial events schedule will entail significant financial and organizational commitment if the venture is to be sustainable. Therefore we anticipate a team of five staff, headed by an executive director (initially this post will be taken by Jon Underwood, the founder). This team will:

- *Be responsible for the day-to-day running of the cafe, including stock purchase and control*
- *Organise and coordinate the delivery of workshops, meetings and events*
- *Manage a pool of volunteers, including death cafe session facilitators*
- *Take responsibility for adhering to the budget set by the Board in order for the cafe to become self-sufficient.*

Governance: the management and people

LEGAL STRUCTURE

Death Cafe London is a social enterprise. Its legal form is a Community Benefit Society, registered with the Financial Conduct Authority. Anyone may join the society, and membership is conferred by the purchase of one share. This type of legal structure is unique in that the control of the society is via one vote per member rather than one vote per share. We chose this legal form as its non-hierarchical, democratic structure fits with Death Cafe's mission of inclusion and member participation.

Our society is run by a management group, or Board, elected from the members. Members also have the power to vote on all aspects of the business put forward by the board, such as distribution of profits to the community, agreeing interest payable on shareholding, and future direction of the organisation.

MEMBERSHIP

The aim of Death Cafe London is to have a large, inclusive and international membership. The members will be kept informed via regular newsletters, emails and social media notifications. All members are welcome to attend the Annual General Meetings, and to receive a copy of the annual accounts. A copy of the governing document is available on the Crowdfunder and Death Cafe websites, or by email request. As the establishing of Death Cafe London is primarily to be funded by the sale of community shares, the initial board is overseeing a share issue in which members may purchase up to 1200 shares each (i.e. £60,000, as the value of one share is £50).

MANAGEMENT BOARD

Elections of board members will take place annually at the Society's AGM. The Board will always be accountable to the membership. We have put together an interim Board, which will be added to over the forthcoming months, to ensure that we have the skills, knowledge, experience and commitment to make our vision a reality.

This initial group of directors will provide good governance: looking at the strategic direction, overseeing the fundraising effort and ensuring compliance with legal and contractual obligations. The initial Board is primarily dedicated to the preliminary funding and development stage of establishing Death Cafe London and will stand down at the first AGM to make way for a new operational Board drawn from the membership. (They are, however, entitled to stand for re-election if they wish.) The initial Board comprises:

Jon Underwood (Secretary and Executive Director)



Jon has been working on projects about death for the past 5 years. This has including included setting up Death Cafe and leading the development of Death Cafe London. Jon also established Funeral Advisor with the Natural Death Centre and Find Me Help with Dying Matters. Prior to this Jon had seven years' senior management experience in Tower Hamlets Council. Jon has also worked in catering and software development and was for 3 years the manager at Jamyang Buddhist Centre, London.

Zoe Samudzi



Zoe holds an MSc in Health, Community, and Development and is a social psychologist focusing in critical race and gender theory, structural violence and inequities within public health discourse. She is currently the project coordinator of the Sheroes Project at the Center of Excellence for Transgender Health at the University of California – San Francisco, and her research interests include sex work, transgender women’s health, hegemonic gender constructs, and structural determinants of health and risk.

Jools Barsky



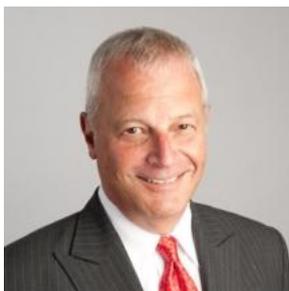
Jools has been in the marketing sector for 9 years, and has been heavily involved in all aspects of Death Cafe's marketing since 2011. Having worked in environments ranging from large global corporations to start-up SMEs, both internally and agency-side, Jools has a wealth of experience in digital and offline marketing. Specialisms include immersive and experiential marketing, in addition to establishing brand continuity through operational development.

Dr Laura-Jane Smith



Dr Laura-Jane Smith is a Respiratory Registrar working in the NHS in London. She is also a Wellcome-funded researcher, examining how to identify and support those with chronic respiratory diseases who are nearing the end of life. She also has interests that include: bioethics; the potential uses of social media in health and education; social inequality and its effect on health; and the positive effects of the arts on health and wellbeing. She has a Diploma in Clinical Education, and is a trustee for the London Arts in Health Forum.

Bill Palmer



Bill has extensive coaching, consulting and training experience, and is designated as a Professional Certified Coach by the International Coach Federation. He has worked for a diverse set of Fortune 500 companies and serves as a pro bono coach and consultant to www.kiva.org, the world’s leading microfinance website. Now living in California, Bill established and facilitates Death Cafe Oakland. He brings his breadth of financial experience to the Board.

Megan Mooney



Megan Mooney is a Master Social Worker and Thanatologist. She has worked for the past two years as a Hospice Social Worker and Bereavement Counsellor. Megan is a researcher and worked for the University of Missouri, Dept. of Family and Community of Medicine for four years. Megan worked as an Emergency Room Master Social Worker for five years. Megan Mooney started Death Cafe St. Joe in 2013 and has hosted 25 Death Cafes since then. Megan runs the Official Death Cafe facebook page and has been a mentor to several other Death Cafe Hosts.

Lizzy Miles



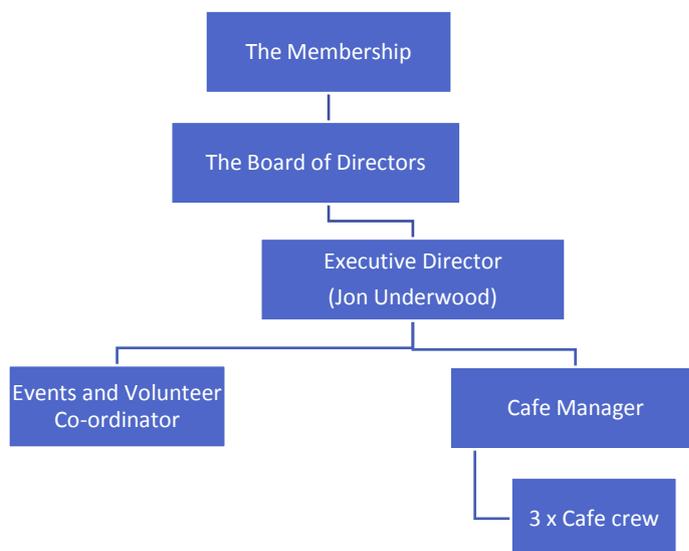
Lizzy Miles, MA, MSW, LSW is a thanatologist, writer, and hospice social worker. She is a passionate advocate for hospice and end-of-life issues and has presented her research and experiences at national and international conferences. She authored a book of happy hospice stories - Somewhere In Between: The Hokey Pokey, Chocolate Cake and the Shared Death Experience. Lizzy is best known for bringing the Death Cafe concept to the United States and supporting the concept's worldwide growth and development.

STAFFING POLICY

In furtherance of its goals and values regarding diversity and inclusion, as well as business sustainability, Death Cafe London will adopt the following regular business practices:

1. A key attribute of those hired to work at Death Cafe London will be their own belief in diversity and inclusion. All employees will receive regular training and coaching on the skills and behaviours essential to working in Death Cafe London.
2. We will measure, both formally and informally, both customer and employee satisfaction, with a mind to continually improving both.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



Finance and funding

We have prepared a budget for the three years of our business plan. This includes the revenue and costs for our sales projections as well as the start-up capital requirements for new premises and equipment and funding of growth.

We will generate income from four complementary trading activities: food and drink sales, workshops and events, meeting space rental and merchandise retail sales.

Our budget has a ramp up of demand to a running rate in year 3. In summary, the performance of the trading activities is as follows:

1. **Food and drink.** By Year 3 we will achieve an average of 260 transactions per day, five days per week. The average transaction value is £3.50 plus VAT. Our direct costs for food ingredients are based upon an industry standard of 30% of sales value.
2. **Workshop and events.** We will host events related to our social mission with a busy calendar through the year. By Year 3 we will host 240 events annually, generating £200 each.
3. **Meeting space rental.** We will rent our central London meeting space to other organisations when we are not using it at the equivalent of £250 per day. Our budget assumes 75 rentals annually by Year 3.
4. **Merchandise sales.** Sales of a selection of books and branded merchandise are projected to generate £7,800 by Year 3 with a Gross margin of 40%

In addition we expect to generate top up funding from two sources every year: donations and revenue grants.

- **Donations.** We expect to raise money from visitor donations at the Cafe as well as online. By Year 3, we project this at £3,120 annually.

- **Revenue grants.** Our social impact is a good fit with the mission of a number of foundations and grant awarding bodies such as the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, Paul Hamlyn Foundation and a number of the Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts. We project that revenue grant income will total £18,000 in Year 3.

Our assumptions about the factors affecting financial performance such as customer numbers, sales value and overheads will form Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and we will use these to monitor progress.

TRADING PERFORMANCE

In summary the financial figures are shown in the table below. We are raising sufficient initial funding to cover year 1 losses.

We have assumed an interest cost in the P&L equivalent to an average return of 3% annually for our share investors.

Profit and Loss	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Trading Income			
Revenue from food and drink	£76,895	£218,855	£236,600
Workshops and events	£21,100	£48,000	£48,000
Meeting space rental	£5,500	£9,250	£18,750
Merchandise retail	£1,300	£5,200	£7,800
Total trading income	£104,695	£281,305	£311,150
Donations	£3,120	£3,120	£3,120
Revenue grants	£6,000	£12,000	£18,000
Total income	£113,815	£296,425	£332,270
Direct costs	£36,999	£98,502	£106,335
Overheads and depreciation	£134,029	£197,833	£209,299
Net Profit	- £57,213	£90	£16,636

INVESTMENT AND SOURCES OF FUNDING

We have identified the investment funding required and sources of funding in Year 1 to make our plan happen. The breakdown is shown in the table below.

Investment requirement	Year 1
Rent deposit, Premium and fees	£79,000
Premises refurbishment and fit-out	£52,000
Kitchen, equipment, furniture and fittings	£30,000
Signage and menu boards	£8,000
IT and systems	£12,000
Project and design fees	£37,000
Stock	£7,000
Launch marketing costs	£40,000
Working capital	£135,000
Total	£400,000
Source of funds	
Share offer (October launch)	£350,000
Grants and donations	£50,000
Total	£400,000

SHARE OFFER

We are seeking funding from investors of up to £500,000. Our budget is based upon raising £350,000 and the money will be used to support the work in the table below. The offer will be launched in October and our business plan assumes that the funding will be in place by end of March 2016. The community shares are withdrawable; however, we have assumed that no capital repayments will be made over the three year period of the plan. However, it is our intention, subject to trading performance, to build a reserve to provide for this in the future.

CASHFLOW FORECAST

We have a monthly cashflow forecast for the next three years and it is positive every month. The figures are based upon the investment expenditure and funding detail in the table above. The month when cash is lowest is July 2017 when the closing balance is £79,804.

Action plan

We have an action plan and team in place to deliver our launch and business plan, as follows:

Activity	When
Share offer launch	19 October 2015
Licensing agreement with Death Cafe finalised	November 2015
Volunteer/staff roles defined	November 2015
Share offer closes	December 2015
Property agent appointed	January 2016
Sign lease on premises	February 2016
Board agrees staff/stock/pricing policies	February 2016
Social impact measurement/reporting processes agreed	February 2016
Take possession of premises	April 2016
Fit-out and refurbishment of premises	April-June 2016
Recruitment of manager/staff	July-August 2016
Marketing and events planning completed	July-August 2016
Volunteers coordinated	September 2016
Launch and marketing planned	September 2016
Staff/volunteer training	September 2016
Stock and equipment acquired	Sept-October 2016
Cafe opens	October 2016

Uncertainty and risk

We have identified areas where there is risk and determined the right response to each and these have been incorporated into our business planning.

The main risks identified and our responses are:

What might go wrong	What we will do about it
Share offer does not raise sufficient funds	If the funds are between £250,000-350,000 then the business plan will be revised, based on smaller premises. However, if the Board deems that there are no realistic options for the development of a sustainable Death Cafe they reserve the right under the rules to return funds to investors and cease development of the concept. In the event of the offer receiving advanced assurance for SEIS/EIS, we will therefore not be sending out any certificates to enable tax relief until and unless we have decided to

What might go wrong	What we will do about it
	proceed with our plan, in order to ensure that no investor claims any relief which such subsequent withdrawal of funds render ineligible.
Premises rent more expensive than expected	<p>We seek a smaller venue that will not require such an excessive rent premium.</p> <p>We have had professional advice on property options and our budget is based upon the middle of the scenarios we explored. We believe that the budgeted costs are realistic.</p>
Not able to find right premises (footfall, accessible location) within our rent and refurbishment budget.	<p>If after having become funded, for this reasons or any others, we conclude that the project is not viable and we have not yet signed a lease on a property it will be abandoned. We think it is better to safeguard shareholders' investment than take forward a project that is unviable. In this scenario shareholders' investment will be returned minus an equal share of expenditure to date.</p>
Food and drink sales do not reach our targets	<p>Food and drink is not the only income source but it is critical that we achieve our targets. We are confident that our projections are realistic and we have based the budget upon the middle of the scenarios we explored.</p> <p>Our fund raising target will ensure that the enterprise has sufficient capital to drive marketing effort.</p> <p>We will monitor sales and financial performance weekly and address any variance quickly with the marketing budget available. The use of volunteers reduces our exposure to wage cost.</p> <p>Operational management will be professional with high focus on cost control and quality. Staff will be trained and experienced in managing parameters such as wastage, portion control.</p>
Tension between need to achieve financial performance, and social mission	<p>Operating a cafe in London invariably involves spending a lot of money. As such continuing to offer Death Cafe London depends on the Board being alert to the need to spend significant time monitoring finances and being efficient. However our approach is that the best way to stay solvent is to offer something really splendid. Our overall focus will always remain on the person who steps over our threshold having a great experience.</p>
Death Cafe London name and logo may be offputting to potential customers	<p>Our branding will be unashamed without being too prominent. We will have large clear windows with good view into the cafe.</p> <p>We will display Death Cafe's social aims and not for profit status outside the cafe. We will advertise facilities and quality of coffee and food outside the cafe. We will fully accept that some people won't want to visit Death Cafe London but believe there are enough people who will to make the enterprise worthwhile.</p>
Food ingredient costs are higher than expected.	<p>We will plan our menus carefully and have had professional advice. Our menu will be kept simple to keep costs under control. There will be ongoing review and monitoring of costs and gross margins.</p>
Threat of competition from local cafe operators	<p>We are unique and realise that customers will have options for food and drink in our central London location.</p> <p>We will seek to build customer loyalty through a great product offer alongside our social mission. For a lot of customers the balance between</p>

What might go wrong	What we will do about it
	these will be key to success and we will continuously research customer perceptions and experience as we look to develop income streams in Years 1 and 2.
Poor portion control reduces our margin	<p>We will train staff on standardizing portion size to the specification of our menu items.</p> <p>Serving spoons and equipment will be selected to make this easy for staff in a busy environment.</p> <p>We will review financial performance continuously to monitor KPIs and address any problems quickly.</p>
Novelty value may provide short term sales but no long term interest	<p>Current interest in death is anticipated to continue and death as a subject will certainly continue to be relevant regardless.</p> <p>The Death Cafe itself offers up new opportunities for conversations in varied communities which will keep it relevant and topical.</p> <p>Relationships with partners will be fostered to keep interest in the cafe high.</p> <p>Programme of events will be continuously reviewed to be fresh, innovative and diverse.</p>

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Inclusion policy

Philosophy underpinning the policy

One thing we all share is that we're going to die. Our view is that, despite powerful societal structures, no one's death is inherently more important than another's. But in London, as in the wider world, some groups are relatively privileged or oppressed by virtue of fairly arbitrary characteristics and this oppression occurs in every institution we encounter.

Oppressive conditions and privileges are interrelated: prejudices are deeply engrained and discrimination is reproduced by individuals both within institutions and in everyday interactions. As individuals living within and socialized into these systems of discrimination, we frequently internalize and enact these learned prejudices.

At Death Cafe London, we explicitly recognise these oppressions along the lines of race, class, gender, age, faith, sexuality, physical or intellectual ability, and other characteristics and aspire to make this space one that is accommodating to and safe for all participants regardless of marginalised identity.

Death Cafe London is committed to enabling all people - especially those subject to oppression - to safely buy shares in, work at, use and shape the venture.

The policy

Death Cafe includes the following in its core way of working:

- *Having zero tolerance for any form of discriminatory, intimidating, or aggressive behaviour*
- *Actively engaging with and supporting marginalized and excluded communities and individuals, particularly those subject to intersecting oppressions. If these communities wish, we will enable them to attend or hold events related to death and facilitate the maintenance of safe spaces for them however that may look*
- *Recognising the often violent or fatal experiences of discrimination against transgender communities, especially transgender women of colour, and holding a strong commitment to Death Cafe London being a friendly, inclusive, and safe space for transgender individuals*
- *Developing a better understanding of cultural ownership and working to avoid cultural appropriation*

- *Actively enabling people with mental or physical disabilities to attend Death Cafe London and support individuals with all natures of disabilities however they may need it, namely in making the space as accessible as possible*
- *Actively enabling people of different ages to attend and facilitating opportunities for intergenerational connections*
- *Recognizing various financial barriers to facility access and trying to address these, whilst still being aware of financial realities*
- *Actively supporting the creation of open and safe spaces for discussion about issues related to inclusion, especially when they intersect with death.*

APPENDIX B

Communications and marketing plan for Death Cafe London as food outlet

Overview

Death Cafe's communications strategy is informed by focusing on our core beliefs and the differentiated value of what we offer the customer.

Our integrated communications plan will use a variety of tactics, across marketing, social media and PR, to alert or remind the customer of that value.

We will create traction and results through the effects of micro-local and digital marketing within and outside the cafe. This will build brand awareness, drive traffic to our website and encourage advocacy will focus on differentiation, how we stand apart from our competitors and our story.

We don't intend to spend money on mass media but will instead focus on a core product range, consistently and flawlessly executed, brilliant, personable service, Death Cafe's story, value to our locale, social media and emphasis on word of mouth.

As the majority of our customers will be people who work or live locally and passers-by, our main marketing efforts will be on the cafe itself, the strength of that location and on alerting the locale and passers-by to our differentiated offer and turning them into loyal and vocal advocates.

Death Cafe's guiding communications principles

- *Food centric* – our food will do the marketing for us
- *Low cost* – mainly organic marketing, some paid, social and referral but no big budgets or print advertising
- *Micro-local* – emphasis on visibility within the locale
- *Partnerships* – developed with local businesses
- *Advocacy* – harnessing the power of community based word of mouth

We need customers to:

- Learn more (customer awareness stemming from product differentiation)
- Buy more (product purchase, engaging of existing customers)
- Tell more (encouraging high levels of advocacy)

Pre-launch and launch plan

Cafe

Hospitality: engender emotional attachment, create a lasting impression through a unique, welcoming, customer focused, visually striking environment.

Theatre: surprise, stimulate all the senses, turn passive window shoppers into active buyers through clever and distinctive features, colours, lighting, props and the theatre of food preparation.

Merchandising: clever use of space, printed materials and packaging to convey the Death Cafe message, story, encourage impulse sales and offer a fast but differentiated and original experience.

Digital & social

Digital will be an important element of our communications strategy.

Although an estimated 95% of word of mouth takes place offline, a strong online presence and engaging content (including pictures, a blog and/or vlog) in engaging people.

Be social: social is not a sales platform, more a place to engage with customers on a variety of levels.

Twitter and Instagram: food and restaurants are a massive interesting category on Twitter and offer an opportunity to share the Death Cafe experience on and offline. We will use Twitter (and Instagram) to build relationships and share experiences with a community of supporters, encourage feedback, monitor Death Cafe's reputation, deliver news and encourage repeat custom.

Engage existing communities: most well established communities have their own context for understanding death and dying e.g. faith groups, families, friendship groups. We will offer them the opportunity to explore these in the Death Cafe setting.

PR

Local media: use Death Cafe's story to do an initial PR push across London magazines and websites including the Evening Standard, City AM, Metro, Time Out, Shortlist, relevant local papers, Hot Dinners, Mr Hyde, Foodism etc.

Build relations: strengthen rapport and relations with important businesses, critics, foodies and bloggers, offering behind-the-scenes visits to Death Cafe and menu tastings.

Reputation: reach out to opinion formers who will write about Death Cafe on social media and financial and banking networks.

Generate local buzz

Hit the streets: local awareness is critical, face-to-face communication, office-to-office, armed with menus, samples and the Death Cafe story.

Launch party: invite key local leaders, share holders, press and bloggers to generate positivity and publicity for the Death Cafe website, social media and marketing collateral.

Using Death Cafe culture

Recruit smart: hire people who buy into the Death Cafe vision.

Empower & enable: Death Cafe staff are the ultimate ambassadors, communicating effectively, taking pride in the food and the restaurant, upselling without appearing pushy or robotic. We will implement a staff incentive programme to train, develop, incentivise and reward the most effective and loyal team members, creating a vibrant working environment.

Customer focused: treat customers as people not transactions. Staff will be trained and mystery shopped to be welcoming, personable, friendly and pro-active.

Strong identity: The Death Cafe identity is built around our cause - making customers feel valued to earn their loyalty.

Post launch

Communicate

Start the dialogue: ongoing research, some of it on social media, is critical for keeping customers happy. Encourage feedback, be easy to contact, listen, respond.

Be personal: communicate openly with customers, believe in and demonstrate accountability.

Used alongside loyalty and mystery shopper programmes this will enable us to measure customers' long term behaviour.

Build a loyal fan base

Retention: repeat customers are critical to Death Cafe's success. We will appreciate, listen to and learn from these individuals.

Loyalty (or Super User) & referral programme: building an emotional connection with Death Cafe's loyal customers. Not through discounting but through making customers feel included and valued – members' events, privileges, menu development tastings, seasonal one-offs.

CRM (customer relationship management): create and implement a CRM strategy and customer database. Formulate e-marketing and direct marketing programmes for subscribers, keeping them abreast of developments at Death Cafe through newsletters and e-newsletters, birthday cards, thank you notes and competitions. Use communications to incentivise customers to make return visits.

Target local business

Awareness: visit local businesses with menus and samples, befriend and incentivise local networks, explore office deliveries and event catering.

Forge partnerships: offer selected businesses incentives to promote Death Cafe to their employees.

Embed within the local community

Become a respected neighbour: develop lasting relationships with local residents, businesses and organisations. Establish foothold in the local community and become recognised as a valuable and useful member of the community.

Fundraiser programme: consider working with initiatives like squaremile.com or 'Street Mart' to raise money for a local charity or hospice.