

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain



Pendle Hill Area Meeting

Memorandum of understanding

Policy of area meeting 2019

1. Finance

1.1 Income, expenditure and bank accounts

- a. The treasurers of local meetings (LMs) will establish or maintain bank accounts that may be required.
- b. All income due to LMs will be collected, recorded and banked as soon as possible. The LM treasurers will establish clear guidelines as to which individuals are responsible for each stage of this process.
- c. Each LM should have up to 4 signatories who should be members of the society and there should be a minimum of two signatures on every cheque.
- d. LMs will be allowed to spend a maximum of £5000 before seeking permission from area meeting (AM).
- e. No financial commitments will be entered into unless funds are available.
- f. Restricted funds will be used solely for their intended purpose and kept separate from other LM funds, though they do not need to be kept in separate bank accounts.
- g. Trustees will support and offer advice to LM treasurers especially regarding the submission of annual reports.

1.2 Reserves

- a. LMs will ensure that financial reserves are kept at an appropriate level. They should be sufficient to meet expenditure without having recourse to borrowing (while ensuring that funds are employed for the purposes for which they were given). Funds should cover twelve months normal expenditure for each LM.
- b. The balance of any LM reserves should be transferred to AM central fund.
- c. If emergency funds are required, LMs should contact the clerk to trustees so that the clerk can quickly contact the other trustees for approval of funds. If approval is granted the AM treasurer will release the funds promptly to the appropriate LM.

1.3 Insurance

- a. LMs will inform trustees of any insurance claims made against or on behalf of LMs should there be any damage or loss which justifies a claim.

1.4 Accounting records and annual accounts

- a. AM has delegated the preparation and retention of LM and AM accounts to a professional accounting organisation.
- b. The consolidated AM accounts will be presented to the AM by the trustees along with their annual report.
- c. LMs and their treasurers are responsible for promptly providing this organisation with the financial information required. The organisation will provide for the consolidation of the AM accounts and their independent examination.
- d. If the use of a professional organisation is terminated then AM will appoint examiners for the consolidated AM accounts and receive those accounts together with the annual report of the trustees.
- e. If the use of a professional organisation is terminated then LMs and their treasurers are responsible for preparing and preserving accounts for the LM and for submission of these accounts for consolidation into AM accounts and annual reports.

2. Property

2.1 Meeting houses

- a. AM as formal owners of the meeting houses (MHs) will ensure that they are used and maintained in such a way as to promote the wellbeing of the Society and its local community.
- b. AM will ensure that constituent MHs comply with equality legislation. All disabled people should be able to use the MHs and have access to the services provided.
- c. LMs will make arrangements for the letting and hiring of their MHs.
- d. LMs will undertake risk assessments for fire, and other general risks on an annual basis under guidance from a professional body. LMs should undertake day-to-day care and management of their premises and notify the trustees of any maintenance or remedial work required either structural or cosmetic.
- e. LMs should arrange for and meet the cost of redecoration and internal repairs for the rooms used by the meeting and its warden.
- f. LMs should inform the trustees of all property matters and any significant work should be brought to the trustees attention before commencement.
- g. Trustees will encourage the sharing of experiences and support amongst all LMs responsible for MHs.

2.2 Burial grounds

- a. LMs will keep a careful record of any burial grounds and maintain plans containing details of the internments.

3. Legal

3.1 Health and safety (H&S)

- a. AM has delegated to a professional organisation for specialist H&S consultancy pertaining to all Quaker MHs of constituent LMs. The professional

organisation will provide an AM H&S policy. A copy of the most recent AM H&S policy certificate must be displayed clearly in each constituent MH.

- b. AM will receive and endorse policies produced by the professional organisation and also implement these policies at all meetings and gatherings at area level or greater.
- c. LMs will implement the policies received from the professional organisation in all its activities and report immediately to the professional organisation and trustees if any actual or potential problems arise.
- d. The professional organisation will inspect annually all constituent MHs to ensure that each property is compliant with legal requirements and professional guidelines. Copies of professional annual reports should be sent to both the clerk to trustees and the relevant LM. LMs will be responsible for implementing any remedial work contained in the recommendations of the annual H&S inspection.

3.2 Safeguarding (children, young people & vulnerable adults)

- a. Trustees will ensure that local policies are developed in accordance with legal requirements and professional guidelines and that LMs have all the relevant documents and that local procedures are in place.
- b. AM will receive and endorse policies produced by the trustees and also implement these policies at all meetings and gatherings at area level or greater.
- c. AM will be a registered member of an independent Christian safeguarding charity.
- d. AM shall provide a safeguarding policy to the trustees in the event of any meeting or gathering outside its normal meetings.
- e. LMs will implement these policies in all its activities and report immediately to the trustees if any actual or potential problems arise.

3.3 Data protection

- a. Trustees will ensure that area and local policies are developed in accordance with legal requirements and professional guidelines and that local meetings have all the relevant documents and that local procedures are in place.
- b. AM will receive and endorse policies produced by the trustees and also implement these policies at all meetings and gatherings at area level or greater.
- c. LMs will implement the policies accepted by the trustees in all its activities and report immediately to the trustees if any actual or potential problems arise.

3.4 Employment

- a. Trustees will ensure that a qualified body will advise on and approve contracts of employment for all AM employees.
- b. AM will, through its clerk, be the formal employer of all employees of local meetings.
- c. LMs will be responsible for engaging and managing such employees as may be necessary. If disciplinary matters arise, the AM will be consulted to ensure that the latest legislation is adhered to.

- d. LMs will send the trustees, a copy of each contract of employment currently held, and draft any new contract of employment in consultation with the advisers and trustees before it is agreed by the AM.
- e. LMs will ensure that arrangements for the payment or deduction of tax, National Insurance etc., are in place. LMs should consult with the AM advisers in the event that there is any uncertainty about whether a paid person is an employee or a self-employed contractor.

3.5 Insurance

- a. Trustees will produce guidelines for property and public liability insurance adequate for AM and LMs and ensure, through annual reporting systems, that adequate insurance cover is in place.
- b. LMs should inform trustees of any proposed changes in insurance requirements.

3.6 Risk management

- a. Trustees will be responsible for financial and other risk assessment and risk management (including fire and H&S) and for producing policies for implementation by AM and LMs.
- b. LMs will be responsible for implementing risk management policies as developed by trustees with professional advice.

3.7 New legislation

- a. Trustees will use professional help in monitoring new legislation in any area relating to LMs and will advise LMs on the implementation of any changes.

4. Quaker work

4.1 Meetings for worship

- a. LMs will make all arrangements and inform AM of any changes.
- b. The use of *Advices and queries* will be kept under review.
- c. Trustees will be involved only with respect to the resources needed to provide adequate locations and facilities for meetings.
- d. AM will provide support as requested.

4.2 Eldership and oversight

- a. AM will be responsible for the appointment of elders and overseers who will meet regularly at area level.
- b. LMs will give local elders and overseers responsibility for eldership and oversight of the local meeting. This can be arranged by: shared corporate responsibility or by appointed roles; and by joint responsibilities or separate eldership and oversight.
- c. Nurture and sustenance of the spiritual life, and pastoral care, of meeting will be shared by the elders and overseers. Special care will be paid to welcome newcomers at the meeting and make them feel warmly included.

4.3 Nurture of children

- a. AM will provide support and encourage the sharing of experiences and material between LMs. AM will appoint a person who will work within the safeguarding regulations and assist LMs in safeguarding matters.
- b. LMs will arrange and provide support and facilities to those who lead the work.

4.4 Meetings for church affairs

- a. AM will hold meetings for worship for church affairs on a regular basis as agreed beforehand by AM each year. AM will invite input from LMs.
- b. LMs will hold regular meetings for church affairs, and when possible preparation for AM for church affairs.
- c. Any Friend representing AM/LMs incurring expenses should have an easy way of claiming them and be encouraged to do so on every occasion.
- d. Nominations committee(s) should make sure that any Friend who is approached to serve is aware of the process and is automatically given an expense claim form.

4.5 Meetings for healing

- a. AM healing group will be responsible for holding regular meetings for worship for healing and wholeness; and the group be part of Friends Fellowship of Healing (FFH). A Quaker healing group in worship prays for people and situations by 'holding them in the healing Light'.
- b. AM healing group will facilitate an event to uphold in spiritual connectedness the annual Quaker Day of Healing.
- c. AM healing group will provide support for and encourage LM healing groups.
- d. LM healing groups will make their own arrangements for meetings for worship for healing and wholeness.

4.6 Library

- a. AM will support local libraries and encourage sharing between LMs.
- b. Each LM will maintain and develop its own library and collaborate with other local meetings in sharing resources and encouraging the use of written and audio visual material, including those for children and young people.

4.7 Outreach

- a. AM and LMs will participate in national Quaker Week and other related special activities whenever possible, and advertise regular and special meetings to the local community.

4.8 Links with other churches

- a. AM will respond to approaches made by other churches and faith groups and involve LMs as appropriate.
- b. LMs will participate in or initiate ecumenical and inter-faith activity in accordance with Friends' historic testimonies and the interest of local Friends.

5. Other matters

5.1 Preserving records

- a. Trustees will ensure policies are developed in accordance with guides on the right keeping of records published by Friends House.
- b. AM will receive and endorse policies produced by the trustees and also implement these policies at all meetings and gatherings at area level or greater.
- c. AM will be responsible for preserving local and area meeting records.
- d. LMs will implement the policies accepted by the trustees in all its activities and report immediately to the trustees if any actual or potential problems arise.
- e. LMs will be responsible for preserving its own records of decisions (in minutes) and any other documents relating to the life of the meeting.

6. Reporting

6.1 Trustees will in good time before the end of the reporting year, send to LMs the following:

- a. A check list to complete concerning H&S and other legal requirements.
- b. A detailed request for financial information for the years accounts.

6.2 LMs and the AM will send to the trustees annually within 3 months of the end of the year, the following:

- a. A report of activities including significant matters which should be included in the Trustees' Annual Report & Accounts and including a statement listing those responsibilities in *Quaker faith & practice* 4.33, which have been carried out and the steps taken to provide public benefit as required by the Charity Commission.
- b. A report on H&S and other legal compliance in response to the checklist sent by the trustees.
- c. Information requested by the trustees to enable the accounts of LMs to be included within the accounts of the AM. This information shall include income and expenditure, employment costs, balances in all bank accounts and details of investments together with any further information that may be required for consolidation of AM accounts.

Approval

This memorandum of understanding was approved at a meeting of trustees of Pendle Hill Area Meeting held 1 February 2014 at Bolton Friends Meeting House by trustees' minute 14.05.

Revised and approved at a meeting of trustees of Pendle Hill Area Meeting held xx xxxxx 2019 at xxxxxx FMH by trustees' minute 19.xx.

Barry Williamson
Clerk to trustees of Pendle Hill Area Meeting
xxxxx 2019