# Registering your area meeting with the Charity Commission

Here is some guidance below to help with the answering some of the questions when applying to register an area meeting as a charity. This is based on the Charity Commission website in Summer 2019. There will be differences if you are applying to become a CIO.

These answers are for guidance only. Also, we cannot be certain what the Charity Commission will find acceptable.

**To find the form**

* [www.charity-commission.gov.uk](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk)
* Click on “Charity Commission (CC) guidance”
* Scroll down to CC21b “How to register a charity”
* Click on “start or continue a charity registration application”

Please note a little further down there is a link to a pdf ***“Applying to register a charity – questions”.*** This will go through the information you will be asked for. Most questions are straightforward, but please note:

* Please give you main name as given clause 2 of your governing document
* You will be asked what sort of governing document you have – it is a **Constitution**
* You will be asked if the governing document has been issued by another organisation or umbrella body – **yes** – and to choose that organisation from a list – **The Religious Society of Friends**
* **What the organisation does:** You will need to select one or more charitable purposes from a list and select further options. For religion you will also need to explain:
	+ The tenets of faith it advances
	+ Any moral or ethical framework promoted by the religion it advances
	+ Specific ways the organisation advances religion

A suggested form of words (not tested on the Charity Commission at the time of writing) is:

*The Area Meeting is a constituent body within Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). The Society arose in the 17th century as one of a number of dissenting groups breaking away from the Church of England. Its beliefs, religious and charitable purposes are set out in the Book of Christian Discipline. It advances religion by the holding of public Meetings for Worship and by other activities in witness of Quaker testimonies.*

One area meeting which has successfully been registered gave the following explanation:

*Tenets of the faith of the Religious Society of Friends*

*Historically, the Religious Society of Friends is part of the Christian tradition. In more recent times it has broadened to include some members who do not identify themselves as Christian. Our faith is individually based on direct, empirical experience. We have neither doctrinal statements, nor ordained clergy nor sacred rituals.*

*As Friends, we commit ourselves to a way of worship which allows God to teach and transform us. We have found corporately that the Spirit, if rightly followed, will lead us into truth, unity and love; all our testimonies grow from this. In the silence of a Quaker meeting, we become aware of divine immanence in ourselves, in our meeting, in all people and in all creation.*

*We have a well-founded tradition of advices and testimonies which serve as guides and way-posts to assist each of us to nurture our own religious understanding.*

*Many of these are encapsulated as passages in Quaker Faith and Practice, a work which is revised approximately every 30 or 40 years.*

*In the current edition the first paragraph, written in 1967, encapsulates our religious practice.*

*Worship is the response of the human spirit to the presence of the divine and eternal, to the God who first seeks us. The sense of wonder and awe of the finite before the infinite leads naturally to thanksgiving and adoration.*

*Silent worship and the spoken word are both parts of Quaker ministry. The ministry of silence demands the faithful activity of every member in the meeting. As, together, we enter the depths of a living silence, the stillness of God, we find one another in ‘the things that are eternal’, upholding and strengthening one another.*

*As Friends we commit ourselves to a way of worship which allows God to teach and transform us. We have found corporately that the Spirit, if rightly followed, will lead us into truth, unity and love: all our testimonies grow from this leading.*

*And the first paragraph of our Advices and Queries states:*

*Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Trust them as the leadings of God, whose Light shows us our darkness and brings us to new life.*

*Friends have been committed since their foundation to living out their spiritual convictions in the world. Our founder George Fox wrote in 1656:*

*Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people,*

*and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.*

* **How the organisation carries out its purposes:** Meetings for worship are regularly held in X, Y…and Z. Premises are maintained or hired for this purpose. Also (as relevant): Education opportunities relevant to the Religious Society of Friends are made available/Grants are made to other charities, organisations and individuals, which are compatible with the principles of the Religious Society of Friends/The meeting supports our members and others to live out our faith in the world