

THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS) IN BRITAIN

BRISTOL AREA QUAKER MEETING

GOVERNING DOCUMENT

Adopted on the 17th day of 10th 2007, by minute of Bristol Area Quaker Meeting.

Definitions

- i. The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain refers to the church in Britain, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, in its entirety, including all its local meetings for worship and its constituent meetings for church affairs, as well as all their work. [referred to below as the Religious Society]
- ii. Britain Yearly Meeting of Friends (Quakers) [~~Britain Yearly Meeting~~] refers to the centrally held and managed policy, property, employment and work, referred to below as Britain Yearly Meeting.
- iii. Meeting for Sufferings is the standing representative body entrusted with the general care of matters affecting the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain.
- iv. Area Quaker Meetings are the main local meetings for church affairs and these are the level of the Society at which individual membership is held. Each Area Meeting is a separate charitable entity and may be registered as such with the Charity Commission.
- v. The charity constituted by this document is Bristol Area Quaker Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain [referred to below as Bristol Area Meeting or the Area Meeting]. It was previously known as "Bristol & Frenchay Monthly meeting of the Religious Society of Friends". ~~As such it was exempted from registration by SI 2002-1598~~
- vi. The current edition of the Book of Christian Discipline of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain is Quaker faith and practice (London 2005) [referred to below as the Book of Christian discipline].
- vii) The term Friend refers to a member of the Religious Society.
- viii) The term Attender refers to a person who is not a member of the Religious Society but who regularly attends its meetings for worship.

1. Governing Document

Bristol Area Meeting and its property shall be administered and managed in accordance with the provisions in this governing document. Further guidance is contained in the Book of Christian Discipline of The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain.

2. Name

The name of the charitable body constituted by this document is Bristol Area Meeting of The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain (abbreviated as Bristol Area ~~Quaker~~ Meeting).

3. Object

The object of Bristol Area Meeting is the furtherance of the general religious and charitable purposes of The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain in the area of Bristol Area Meeting and beyond.

4. Administration

Subject to the matters set out below the property of ~~the~~ Bristol Area meeting shall be administered in accordance with this governing document by the trustees constituted by Clause 13.

5. Application of the income and property

Within ~~the~~ Bristol Area Meeting money and property are used to further the Area meeting's object by work such as:

- i. strengthening the life and witness of Quaker meetings both in the area of Bristol Area Meeting and beyond;
- ii. spreading the message of Quakers and interpreting and developing the thought and practice of the Religious Society of Friends;
- iii. undertaking Quaker service for the relief of suffering at home and abroad;
- iv. funding the concerns that Quaker meetings in the area of Bristol Area Meeting or beyond have adopted or agreed to support;
- v. providing for the pastoral care of individual members and attenders including assistance to those in need and for education
- vi. maintaining and developing Quaker meeting houses as places for public worship and from which to carry out our witness into the world
- vii. Administering and maintaining the organisation of Bristol Area Meeting and contributing to the support of Britain Yearly Meeting.

6. Dissolution

If at a meeting of Bristol Area Meeting the members decide that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Area meeting or to amalgamate with another Area meeting and this is agreed by Meeting for Sufferings, the trustees shall have the power to realise any assets held by or on behalf of the Area meeting. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall, with the agreement of Meeting for Sufferings, be given or transferred to another Area Meeting, to Britain Yearly Meeting, or to some other charitable institution or institutions having objects similar to that of the meeting, and failing that for such other charitable purpose as Britain Yearly Meeting shall direct.

7. Amendments

- i. Amendments to this governing document shall be agreed by Bristol Area Meeting in session and recorded by minute of the Area meeting.
- ii. No amendment may be made that affects the objects of the Area meeting (clause 3) or the benefits of the trustees (clause 16) without the prior written consent of the Charity Commission, nor may the charitable status of the Area meeting be affected.

8. Membership

- i. The membership of anyone in Bristol Area Meeting begins when a record to this effect is made in the minutes of ~~the~~ Bristol Area Meeting;
- ii. Bristol Area Meeting shall maintain an official register of members and shall appoint a suitable person to have care of it. No alteration shall be made to the register save in accordance with decisions minuted by ~~the~~ Bristol Area Meeting.

9. Termination of Membership

- i. The membership of anyone shall cease when a record to this effect is made in the minutes of the Bristol Area Meeting.
- ii. If a member is dissatisfied with a final decision of the Area meeting affecting him or her, the member may appeal in writing to Meeting for Sufferings against the decision of the Area meeting.

10. Meetings for church affairs

Meetings for church affairs, in which the Religious Society conducts its business, are meetings for worship based on silence, carrying the expectation that God's guidance can be discerned if members are truly listening together and to each other. The unity that is sought depends on the willingness of all to seek the truth in each other's utterances. There is no voting in the meetings, because the Society believes that this would emphasise the divisions between differing views and inhibit the process of seeking to know the right way forward, the will of God as expressed in the ~~will~~ sense of the meeting.

The clerk of the meeting bears the final responsibility for preparing the business, conducting the meeting and drafting the minutes of the meeting. Minutes are drafted by the clerk during the course of the meeting, but the final decision about whether a minute represents the sense of the meeting is the responsibility of the meeting itself, not of the clerk.

- i. Bristol Area Meeting shall meet at such frequency, times and places as the meeting itself shall direct. The clerk may arrange for a special Area meeting to be held if necessary.
- ii. The sessions of Area meeting are open to all members of the meeting.
- iii. The business and activities of the Area meeting shall at all times be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the current edition of the Book of Christian Discipline,
- iv. It shall be the duty of the Area meeting in session to appoint an auditor or independent examiner of the Area meeting accounts.

11. Constituent meetings

- i. Bristol Area Meeting consists of all the local meetings contained within its area, as listed in the accompanying schedule.
- ii. Arrangements for the establishment, running or dissolution of such constituent meetings shall be in accordance with the Book of Christian Discipline.

12. Appointments of officers of the meeting

- i. The Area meeting shall appoint from its membership a clerk, assistant clerk, treasurer, registering officer and Nominations committee who shall be members of the Religious Society,
- ii. The appointments shall be made for a fixed term, generally not more than three years. Only in exceptional circumstances shall an appointee remain continuously in post for more than six years.

13. Trustees

- i. The Area meeting shall appoint Friends, normally from its membership a body of trustees not ordinarily fewer than five or more than fifteen persons.
- ii. The Trustees shall so far as is practicable include the Area meeting treasurer and representatives of each meeting contained within the Area meeting, but not the clerk of the Area meeting, nor any employee of the Area meeting.
- iii. One trustee, but not the Area meeting treasurer, shall be appointed by Area meeting in session to act as clerk to the trustees.

- iv. The appointments shall be reviewed at intervals not exceeding three years. A trustee can be reappointed on no more than two occasions to give an unbroken term of service as a trustee of the Area meeting not exceeding nine years. That person cannot then be reappointed as a trustee of that Area meeting until three years have elapsed after the end of the last period of service in that capacity.

14. Eligibility, disqualification and removal of Trustees

A member who is appointed to act as a trustee may hold office ~~unless~~ until he or she

- i. notifies the clerk of the Area meeting of a wish to be released from service as a trustee;
- ii. ceases to be a member of Bristol Area Meeting;
- iii. is determined by the Area meeting to no longer be a fit or suitable person to carry out the duties of a trustee;
- iv. is believed by the Area meeting to have become incapable by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury of managing and administering his or her own affairs;
- v. ~~is determined by the monthly meeting not to be paying sufficient heed to the guidance given by the Book of Christian Discipline.~~
- vi. comes to the end of his or her term of service.

Removal of a trustee under the terms of (iii), (iv) or (v) above shall require a decision of the Area meeting. An individual trustee may make an appeal against such a decision in accordance with Britain Yearly Meeting's appeal process. ~~to Meeting for Sufferings, whose decision shall be final.~~

Members of the Religious Society of Friends who are legally ineligible to act or who are disqualified from acting as trustees shall not be able so to act nor continue so to act.

Release of a trustee from office shall be recorded by minute of the Area meeting.

15. Powers of Trustees

The trustees shall have the following powers, in exercise of which they shall at all times be guided by the Book of Christian Discipline of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain:

- i. To raise funds from contributions; from legacies; from grants and other sources outside the Area meeting; from investments and the use of assets; and from the sale of goods and services provided in furtherance of the Area meeting's objects;
- ii. To buy, lease or acquire property, and to sell, grant a lease or dispose of it, subject to the terms of clause 17(vii) below;
- iii. To borrow money and to give security for loans (but only in accordance with restrictions imposed by the Charities act 1993 as amended from time to time);
- iv. To set aside income as a reserve,
- v. To make investments in accordance with the legal constraints and the ethical testimonies of the Religious Society;
- vi. To co-operate with other charities or to enter into partnerships;
- vii. To establish or support trusts or institutions formed for charitable purposes within the Bristol Area Meeting's objects;
- viii. To employ staff
- ix. To pay pensions
- x. To obtain and pay for goods and services;

- xi. To reimburse the reasonable expenses incurred by those, including the trustees, acting on behalf of the Area meeting;
- xii. To open and operate bank accounts;
- xiii. To effect insurance;
- xiv. To insure themselves against the costs of a successful defence to a criminal prosecution brought against them as charity trustees or against personal liability incurred in respect of any act or omission which is or is alleged to be in breach of trust or breach of duty;
- xv. To delegate their powers or functions as set out in Clause 18, below
- xvi. To establish committees or working groups for carrying out agreed programmes of work;
- xvii. To authorise any of the Area meeting's constituent meetings or committees to open a bank account and to appoint signatories; such action to be recorded by minute of the constituent meeting or committee and reported without delay to the trustees;
- xviii. To do any other lawful thing that is necessary or desirable for the achievement of the objects of the Area meeting.

16. Trustees not to be personally interested

- i. Subject to the provisions of the sub-clause (ii) of this clause, and subject to sub-clause 15 ~~(ix)~~ (xiv), no trustee shall acquire any interest in property belonging to the Area meeting (otherwise than as a trustee) or receive remuneration or be interested (otherwise than as a trustee) in any contract entered into by the trustees.
- ii. Any trustee for the time being who possesses specialist skills or knowledge may charge and be paid reasonable fees for business done by her or him or his firm when instructed by the other trustees to act on behalf of the Area meeting provided that at no time shall a majority of trustees benefit under this provision and that a trustee shall withdraw from any meeting at which her or his own instruction or remuneration, or that of her or his firm, is under discussion.

17. Meetings and proceedings of the trustees

- i. Trustees shall conduct their meetings according to the Quaker business method as described in the Book of Christian Discipline.
- ii. The trustees shall hold at least two meetings each year. A special meeting of the trustees may be called at any time by the clerk to the trustees or by any two trustees upon not less than four days notice being given to the other trustees of the matters to be discussed. This period of consent may be waived with the consent of all trustees.
- iii. If the clerk to the trustees is absent from any meeting, the trustees present shall chose one of their number to be clerk at that meeting before any business is transacted.
- iv. An effective working strength of the trustee body, normally represented by at least half of the trustees for the time being, should be present for decisions to be made in right ordering.
- v. Minutes are to be made in the meeting and accepted and signed in accordance with the Quaker business method as set out in the Book of Christian Discipline, The trustees shall keep minutes of the proceedings at meetings of the trustees and any sub-committee.
- vi. The trustees may from time to time make and alter arrangements for the conduct of their business, the summoning and conduct of their meetings and the custody of documents. No rule may be made that is inconsistent with this governing document .

- vii. The trustees shall report to ~~the~~ Bristol Area Meeting at least once a year. They shall also refer to the Area meeting in session any major decisions such as those involving the acquisition, disposal or major alteration of land or buildings.

18. Power of trustees to delegate

- i. The trustees may delegate any of their powers or functions to a committee including two or more trustees but the terms of any such delegation must be recorded by minute,
- ii. The trustees may impose conditions when delegating including the condition that:
 - a. the relevant powers are to be exercised exclusively by the committee to which they are delegated;
 - b. no expenditure may be incurred except in accordance with a budget previously agreed with the trustees.
- iii. The trustees may revoke or alter a delegation
- iv. All acts and proceedings of any committee must be fully and promptly reported to the trustees

19. Annual Report and Accounts

- i. The trustees shall ensure that an annual report and statement of accounts for ~~the~~ Bristol Area meeting (including the meetings it contains) is prepared in compliance with current charities legislation.
- ii. The report and statement of accounts must be presented to Area meeting in session for consideration and acceptance not later than eight months after the end of the financial year, which the Area Meeting has agreed with the Charity Commission.
- iii. The trustees shall submit an appropriate annual return to the Charity Commission in compliance with current legislation.

20. Income and expenditure

- i. ~~The funds of the~~ money of Bristol Area Meeting, ~~other than those held as investments,~~ shall be safeguarded by depositing in a bank account. The bank account or accounts shall be held in the name of Bristol Area Meeting or in the name of any of the meetings or committees contained within the Area meeting and not in the name of any individual.
- ii. The funds of the Area meeting shall be applied only in furthering the objects of the Area Meeting as defined in Clause 3 above.

21. Property and Investments

- i. Ordinarily the trustees shall cause the title of all real property and investments held by or in trust for Bristol Area Meeting to be held in the name of Friends Trusts Limited as custodian trustee.
- ii. If the trustees decide to use a separate nominee to hold investments, they must apply to the Charity Commission for an Order discharging Friends Trusts Limited from its custodian trusteeship and all land will remain vested in Friends Trusts Limited and the trustees shall grant Friends Trusts Ltd an indemnity in order to give it the same level of protection as it would enjoy under the provisions of section 4(2) of the Public Trustee Act 1906, as if it were acting as custodian trustee

- iii. It is the responsibility of trustees to insure all property, including buildings and contents, for replacement values which shall be reviewed regularly. It is also the trustees' responsibility to maintain in force all appropriate liability insurances, including employers, occupiers and public liability.

Signed:Clerk of Bristol Area Meeting

..... Assistant Clerk

signed in Area Meeting in session 17.10.2007