



## YORK AREA QUAKER MEETING

### Minutes of a meeting of Trustees

held at 1400 on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2021 via Zoom (on-line)

1. **Trustees** Keith Barnes, Ros Batchelor, John Guest (Clerk) Brian Jardine, Lesley O’Neal, Barbara Penny, Roger Pierce, Jo Reilly, Geof Sewell
- Invited** Barbara Windle (AM Clerk). Eleanor Rhodes (AM admin assistant) Brian Fellowes (Clerk of Trustees Pickering and Hull AQM)
2. **Quorum** 9 Trustees being present our meeting is quorate
- 2.1 **Conflicts of Interest** There were no conflicts of interest declared
3. **Minutes**
  - 3.1 **Minutes of trustee meeting** Held on Zoom, 11<sup>th</sup> October 2020 were agreed at the meeting, have been circulated and signed by the clerk
  - 3.2 **Matters arising and continuing minutes** All matters arising are covered in the agenda and work on the Health and Safety policy (minute 8.1. Oct 2020) is continuing.
  - 3.3 **Confidential minute** Minute 12 of our meeting on October 2020, concerning the possible changes to the Friargate business manager’s job description was recorded as confidential. This is no longer the case and the minute will be included in the regular Trustee minutes.
4. **Matters of Report and between meeting decisions**
  - 4.1 **2019 accounts** The auditors finally approved our accounts in mid-December and these were filed with the Charity Commission and Companies House.
  - 4.2 **BYM safeguarding policy** We have received a copy of the new draft BYM safeguarding policy which it is intended all meetings should adopt, albeit with minor local adjustments. It is a long document and we are very grateful to Lois and Nick Folkard, two of the AM safeguarding coordinators, for reading the entire document and making some informed and pertinent comments. These were forwarded to the BYM safeguarding coordinator (interim) Mark Mitchell. He and the Deputy Recording Clerk accepted some of the suggested alterations and answered various queries. We await clarification of what the final document will contain. It is clear that the scope of “safe hiring” (that is DBS checks and references) will be required for more of our office holders and that considerable training will be needed at different levels for AM coordinators, Trustees etc.

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- 4.3 Muriel Acomb legacies**                      **Attachment A: Muriel Acomb Legacy**  
Muriel Acomb, a long standing Friend, mostly at Friargate and latterly at Acomb left a number of legacies of just over £10,000. These include one to Acomb LM and one to Friargate LM. Acomb have followed the procedure laid out in our legacies policy and, having agreed to use the money for some small improvements to storage, for growing the meeting as a worshipping community and for outreach.  
We agree the proposal as forwarded by Acomb LBM. We await a proposal from Friargate.
- 4.4 Websites**                      We understand that all our LMs have now joined the Quaker Website Network. Acomb and Harrogate websites are now live. Friargate website, which is much more complex, and the new Area Meeting website will be constructed by Eleanor Rhodes.
- 4.5 Quaker Centre Group**                      This group is now constituted as a working group of York Area Meeting (AM minute 3 November 2020). It has met once and is trying to discern what a Quaker centre would mean in present times and how it will work
- 4.6 Friargate Business Manager Appraisal.**                      Further to minute 7.2. October 2020, Margaret Bryan and John Guest carried out an appraisal for Tracey Sharp on January 19<sup>th</sup> 2021. Next year we anticipate that this will be initiated by the Trustee with responsibility for employment (currently Roger Pierce).

## 5 Staffing and employment matters

- 5.1 Current staffing**                      Considerable changes have taken place to our staffing. Cath Harvey, Quaker Centre Manager has resigned (see below) and one staff member had retired earlier in the autumn. This will eventually create a considerable shortage of desk staff at Friargate. Currently, all the Friargate casual staff are “flexibly furloughed” as are the Harrogate cleaner and the Thirsk cleaner. At present we guarantee to make up their full salaries.

We agree that staff salaries will be maintained at least until the end of 2021, taking advantage of whatever furlough schemes might be available and appropriate.

- 5.2 Friargate Business manager new job description and contract:** After consultation with Tracey Sharp and some discussion between Danielle Palmour and John Guest a new job description was drawn up for the Friargate Business Manager. This was circulated to Trustees who agreed it with a few minor alterations. With assistance from Jane Hudson (Community First York) a new contract was drawn up and offered to Tracey Sharp. At the same time a benchmarking exercise was undertaken by *Reward Connected* and a new salary offered, to reflect Tracey’s increased responsibilities. Tracey has accepted this offer and signed her new contract.
- 5.3 The Quaker Centre Manager.**                      Cath Harvey was due to return to her role on January 4<sup>th</sup> 2021. On November 26<sup>th</sup> Cath offered her resignation, which Danielle Palmour accepted on our behalf.

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#### **5.4 Hiring staff**

#### **Attachment B: Hiring Staff.**

In early January 2021 a query arose as to what is our procedure for hiring staff; additional casual staff may be needed at Friargate as covid restrictions ease. A temporary policy was hastily agreed by Tracey Sharp, Roger Pierce and John Guest. This will need to be considered and refined. There is also an intention to review the salary scale and contracts of all our staff. Roger Pierce and John Guest will work with Tracey Sharp and bring a new salary spine to Trustees for agreement.

#### **5.5 Living Wage Foundation Increase**

#### **Attachment C: Employees Pay award**

Following our minuted procedures, the increases were agreed by Danielle Palmour and Tracey Sharp and the new salaries activated from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2021

### **6. Reports**

#### **6.1 Property committee**

#### **Attachment D.i Property committee minutes**

#### **Attachment D.ii. Falsgrave Crescent Lease.**

Brian Jardine updated us with progress on the York Travellers Trust (YTT) lease of 20 Falsgrave Crescent, picking out three significant items from that new agreement. We authorise our clerk and one other Trustee to sign this lease, which is attached.

Our Friend John Gilham has served for many years as a Trustee, as a member of the Property Committee and latterly as part of the 20 Falsgrave Crescent sub-group. His service has now come to an end and we send our thanks.

#### **6.2 Tabular Statement and list of Members**

#### **Attachment E: List of members**

#### **Attachment F: tabular statement**

We have received from our enumerator, Lee O'Neal, the updated list of Members and a copy of the York AQM tabular statement.

We thank Lee for the huge amount of meticulous work that this represents.

### **7. Policies**

#### **7.1 Giving to non-Quaker charities Attachment G: Giving to Non Quaker Charities**

We reviewed and approved this policy at our last meeting (minute 8.1 Oct 2020).

Sadly, when Eleanor came to upload it to the AM website, she noticed that the syntax was muddled and failed to make sense.

The text has been slightly altered and we agree that this version is now accepted as our reviewed policy.

#### **7.2 Authorisation of payments**

#### **Attachment H: Authorisation etc.**

During the process of reviewing this policy various complications have been pointed out.

We ask the AM treasurer, having consulted with the treasurer's meeting, to suggest a new simple, robust and realistic policy for authorisations both at AM and LM level.

#### **7.3 Incurring fees**

#### **Attachment I: Incurring professional expenses.**

The incurring fees policy was instituted after a single Trustee ran up considerable legal expenses some time ago. It is clear that in the areas of employment, finance and property, there will be a need for professional services or advice. The problem with having precise rules laid down is that someone then has to remember them and check that they are being followed.

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We ask all Trustees, who might incur fees over £1,000 on our behalf, to get authorisation from the AM treasurer and Clerk of Trustees.

We ask Roger Pierce and Jo Reilly to prepare a short paper on how we obtain professional advice.

#### **7.4 Accounting policy**

#### **Attachment J: Accounting Policy**

Michael Sturge has suggested a change to our accounts policy to remove the need for a full audit and require only an independent examination. This would save the Area Meeting a considerable sum of money each year. His very helpful paper is attached.

We agree the proposal contained in Michael Sturge's paper (attached) and that our meeting houses will be valued as "Heritage Assets" having a "Nil" value from now on.

### **8. Simplifying procedures and liaising with other AMs**

#### **Attachment K: Proposed Trustee committees**

Our clerk has been active in setting up a national group of Clerks of Trustees. The Recording Clerk's office are now assisting with this. It is hoped that this group will exchange ideas about good practice, offer advice to each other, be a place where problems can be shared and a forum for supporting each other, in what in some cases is a demanding and lonely role.

As a result of information already exchanged, we agree with the clerk's suggestion that additional sub committees of Trustees should be formed.

- **Property committee** already exists, and its membership will remain the same with Brian Jardine as convenor
- A new **Employment committee** will consist of the Trustee with the lead responsibility (currently Roger Pierce) as convenor, the clerk and the Friargate Manager
- A new **Safeguarding, data and records committee** will consist of the Trustee with responsibility for data protection (currently Geof Sewell) as convenor, the AM archivist (Ros Batchelor), the Trustee who leads on safeguarding (Jo Reilly) and such other Friends as they co-opt.
- **The Finance Committee** will be convened by the AM treasurer (currently Keith Barnes) and will consist of the LM treasurers.

The purpose of having these would be to declutter the business of the main Trustee meetings, allowing us to concentrate on more substantial and long-term issues, merely reviewing the work of the committees

### **9. Merging Area Meetings**

In an effort to make our governance and administration more sustainable, there are various initiatives, or discussions, taking place in different parts of BYM. The four Area Meetings in Wales are now going to form one charity and the London Area Meetings (who already do their property as a single responsibility; via the London

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Quakers Property Trust, the successor to six Weeks Meeting) are looking at the pros and cons of merging their AMs, at least in terms of charities. There is some interest in Yorkshire in possible mergers. At some point I would like us to find the time and space to discuss this and identify what the issues are and what our overall view of such a possibility might be.

This is part of why I think it would be beneficial for us to have an additional meeting this year, when we are able to meet in person, to get to know each other better and talk about matters which it would be hard to squeeze into a Zoom meeting where much other business has to be done.

## **10. Trustee responsibilities**

Keith Barnes	AM Treasurer	
Ros Batchelor	AM Archivist	Property committee
John Guest	Clerk	
Brian Jardine	Property	
Lee O'Neal	AM enumerator	Bookkeeper
Barbara Penny	Burial Grounds	
Roger Pierce	Health and Safety Employment	
Jo Reilly	Safeguarding	
Geof Sewell	Data Protection	

**John Guest**  
**Clerk of Trustees YAQM**  
**14<sup>th</sup> February 2021**