

# York Area Quaker Meeting

## Minutes of Area Meeting of Trustees

Held on-line by Zoom at 13:30 on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2020

### 1. Trustees

Keith Barnes, Ros Batchelor, Gilly Chartres, John Guest (Clerk) Brian Jardine, Lesley O’Neal, Danielle Palmour, Barbara Penny, Jo Reilly Geof Sewell

#### Invited

Eleanor Rhodes (AM admin assistant), Michael Sturge, Barbara Windle (AM Clerk).

### 2. Quorum

Our Articles of Association 39.1 read: The quorum necessary for business to be done at board level is a third of the Trustees subject to a minimum of three. A Trustee shall not be counted in the quorum at a meeting in relation to a decision on which he (sic) is not entitled to participate”.

There are currently ten trustees so the quorum is four. We are therefore quorate.

#### 2.1 Check In

Friends briefly shared how the lockdown had been for them and how they were feeling at present.

### 3. Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

#### 4.1 Minutes of trustee meeting 9<sup>th</sup> February 2020

The minutes of the trustee meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> October were agreed at that meeting and subsequently sent to all trustees. They have been signed.

#### 4.2 Matters arising

Area Meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2020 approved trustees’ decision to send an extra £30,000 to Britain Yearly Meeting and the money was transferred.

#### 4.3 Revised Disciplinary policy *Separate Document – Revised Disciplinary Policy*

Danielle has now provided a draft of proposed amendments to the revised disciplinary policy. This has been circulated to trustees. We ask all trustees to read these amendments and, unless there is disagreement, we will adopt this revised policy on a “between meetings” basis.

#### 4.4 Health and Safety coordinators

No names have been received from the AM nominations committee.

### 5. Between Meeting Decisions

With the advent of the covid-19 pandemic, a series of decisions have been taken by trustees on a “between meetings” basis. These were.

- In the early stages and following government advice, all face to face Meetings for Worship were discontinued.
- On 1<sup>st</sup> April, Danielle Palmour as Trustee responsible for employment matters, convened a meeting of those directly concerned and the decision was taken to Furlough all except three of our Friargate Staff, taking advantage of the government 80% scheme. All staff were guaranteed their full salary until the end of June. After consultation with the local Meetings, Harrogate and Thirsk staff were also furloughed. It then became clear that the Harrogate warden should be taken out of furlough. All of these decisions will be reviewed as conditions change.
- We have decided to leave the question of lettings to each local meeting, provided they follow the current government guidelines, and involve local Trustees in their decisions.
- On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, at the suggestion of the AM property committee, trustees agreed that the payment of contributions by local meetings to the AM Property committee should be suspended this year.
- The York Racial Equality Network (YREN) requested a reduction in rent for the period they are not able to occupy 20 Falsgrave Crescent. Property committee recommended a 50% reduction in the current quarter's rent for both YREN and the other tenant at Falsgrave Crescent- YTT (York Travellers' Trust). Trustees agreed to this.
- The annual return to the Charity Commission and the confirmation statement to Companies House have been submitted and the names of current trustees updated in both places.

### **6.1 Trustee Annual Report and Accounts (TARA).**

Keith Barnes (AM treasurer) and Michael Sturge have prepared the annual report and accounts. We agree the Trustees report (attached) and the accounts subject to their being agreed by the auditors without significant changes.

### **6.2 Michael Sturge Report** *Separate Document – Michael Sturge Report*

Michael Sturge has provided a commentary on our financial position. Michael also assists the local Meeting treasurers in providing the year-end figures and then collates them into the AM accounts. We thank Michael for the enormous amount of work this all entails (over 50 hours this year) and are grateful for the considerable sum of money this saves the Area Meeting.

### **6.3 Appointment of auditors.**

We agree to appoint BHP as our auditors for 2021.

## **7. Staff Salaries**

Keith Barnes (AM Treasurer) has given us up to date information about the cash holdings of each of our Local Meetings. Taking these health sums into account we agree to guarantee the salaries of our staff until the end of this year. As the furlough scheme unwinds, we will need to revisit the payments to the Friargate casually employed staff.

## **8. AM Property Committee.** *Separate Document – Property Cttee word.doc*

AM property committee met on May 21<sup>st</sup>. The minutes have been circulated in advance of

this meeting. Trustees agreed that the AM Property Committee should take a view on whether continued reduction in rent payable by the two tenants of 20 Falsgrave Crescent is desirable. They will bring a proposal to trustees on a between meetings basis.

#### **9. Opening up our meeting houses**

We ask our Clerk to form a coordinating group to oversee the opening up of our meeting houses, both for worship and lettings. The group should include one person from each meeting and enable our Meetings to share information, practical advice and experience as the regulations evolve. The named person from each Meeting will communicate to all those involved in the opening up, ensuring that this is done safely, within the law and protecting Friends, our staff and others who use our buildings.

#### **10. Retreat Burial Ground** *Separate Document – Retreat Burial Ground*

We note the report received from Barbara Penny about the future of the retreat burial ground.

There is no action for us to take at present.

#### **11. Addition to AM Safeguarding policy** *Separate Document – Appendix to Safeguarding*

We agree the paper provided by Jo Reilly and add it as an appendix to the AM safeguarding policy. Trustees should ensure that their LM safeguarding coordinators have been made aware of this document and the annual update to LMs should include consideration of these requirements. When the full policy is next revised, some wording should be incorporated into the main text of the policy.

#### **12. What we have learned**

The current situation has exposed some problems with our decision making process and our executive actions. In particular we note the difficulties in finding an AM Health and Safety coordinator, the difficulties with line management and the way in which Trustees have relied so heavily on the Friargate business manager. We agree that our clerk should explore this matter further.

John Guest  
Clerk of Trustees