

Local Meeting Responsibilities, January Minutes

From Harwich Friends, minuted by Clacton Meeting

LM2016/005 REPORT FROM HARWICH MEETING

Harwich Friends held a formal Annual Meeting last month, minutes of which have been circulated. Membership is stable and Friends have agreed to continue to meet every second and fourth Sunday each month in 2016. In addition Friends meet for discussion once a month and the Experiment with Light group continues to meet monthly.

From Clacton Meeting:

LM2016/007 RESPONSIBILITIES OF LOCAL MEETINGS

We confirm that throughout 2015 we have to the best of our ability carried out the duties of a Local Meeting set out in section 4.33 of 4th edition of *Quaker Faith and Practice*:

- a. We have held regular Meetings for Worship.
- b. We have read regularly at our Meetings from *Advices & Queries*.
- c. We have continued this year with a system of corporate Eldership and Oversight. We place particular importance on the welcoming of newcomers.
- d. We have no children in our meeting at present.
- e. We have conducted our own business throughout the year through regular meetings for church affairs.
- f. We have ensured a regular presence at Area Meeting.
- g. We have been careful in all matters relating to finance.
- h. We have prepared all necessary reports, returns and statistics.
- i. Minutes of our meetings for church affairs have been preserved, and we rely on Area Meeting for a printed list of members and attenders.
- j. We have complied with new legislation as advised by Area Meeting.
- k. Local outreach this year was in the form of a very well attended annual meeting for carols. This has helped us to continue close links with Derek Crosfield House; and we ensure a presence at business meetings and events held by Churches Together in the Harwich Peninsula.
- l. We support the Harwich Meeting which in 2015 has continued to meet on 2nd and 4th Sundays each month. We have paid the cost of hire of premises for this purpose.
- m. We have a correspondent for Woodbrooke.
- n. We have arranged for the provision and upkeep of a library, and subscribe both individually and as a Meeting to various Quaker publications.
- o. We have maintained links with other churches and faith communities.
- p. We seek to exert a Quaker influence in our local communities.

We send this Minute to Area Meeting.

From Colchester Meeting

16.06. Responsibilities of Local Meetings

We have considered our responsibilities as laid out in Para 4.33 of Quaker Faith and Practice. Much of the responsibilities are fulfilled. From now on we will spread copies of Quaker Faith and Practice around the seats of the Meeting Rooms they are readily available for reading and ministry. In the last year we have introduced a new welcome pack to hand to visitors, and have held regular "All things considered" discussion groups after Meetings for Worship. We are conscious that we need to encourage more Friends than the "regulars" to attend Meetings for Business. Some members of our meeting are very active in welcoming and supporting Syrian refugee families that are settling in the town. Interfaith activity in the town has been limited in recent years but welcoming the refugees; Hiroshima Day commemorations, and the local Food Bank may lead to openings.

From Earls Colne Meeting

2016/03 Earls Colne Meeting for Worship Further to minutes 2014.03 and 2015/03 we are continuing to consider our position with regard to becoming a local meeting again. We have considered our responses made in 2014 to Quaker Faith and Practice (Fourth Edition) 4.33 Responsibilities of Local Meetings and 4.34 Agreement with Area Meeting. We have made the following changes and additions:

4.33a (No change) **Public Meetings for Worship (Advertised):** These will continue to take place on 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays, with the Meeting House open for Quaker use on 2nd and 4th Sundays.

4.33b (No change) **Use of Advices and Queries:** These are used regularly and a record is kept.

4.33c (Changed to include all visitors) **Nurturing and sustaining the spiritual life of the meeting, welcoming newcomers and supporting enquirers:** Friends attending have a sense of personal responsibility in these matters and our small numbers ensure that we can carry this out in an informal way. We value the contribution made by regular visits on third Sundays by Friends from other Meetings.

4.33d (No change) **Taking special responsibility for children and their parents:** This is something that the Meeting is not currently called upon to do as there are no children in the Meeting. Should a family with children arrive at a Meeting for Worship we will discuss arrangements with the parents.

4.33e (No change) **Holding regular meetings for church affairs:** We have recently appreciated the need to formally consider the affairs of the Meeting and plan to continue holding meetings for church affairs as the need arises.

4.33f (Changed to include attenders) - **to Attendance and participation in Area Meeting:** We would not be able to appoint Friends to attend Area Meeting. At present there are members and attenders who are able to take a regular part in the activities of the AM. We cherish the opportunity to host AM once a year.

4.33g (No change) **Financial activities of the meeting:** The accounts have been looked after by the Area Meeting since 01.01.2009, with regular reports available to Earls Colne Friends. We hope that this arrangement will continue.

4.33h (No change) Statistics, returns and reports: Overseers have carried out this responsibility with regard to membership statistics. Trustees took responsibility for the Heritage project and have enlisted the help of Tim Holding and Jenny Kay to work on the requirements of the Quinquennial review and report to Trustees.

4.33i (No change) Preservation of records: Minutes of the meetings for church affairs and related reports and correspondence are the only records currently needing preservation by Earls Colne Friends.

4.33j (No change) New legislation: We depend on Trustees to act on our behalf, keeping us informed by liaising with the appointed elder, Antoinette Arnold and overseer, Jenny Kay.

4.33k (Updated) Local Outreach: The Meeting for Worship is advertised in the Parish Magazine and on the new notice board outside the Meeting House. John Derring's telephone number is listed in the free magazine 'LOOK'. We have produced a leaflet which is available in the Meeting House and could be more widely distributed. Jayne Meleschko will investigate adding our details to the Earls Colne Website.

4.33l (Changed) Supporting other local meetings: We are open to approaches from other Local Meetings and are able to attend other Meetings for Worship as the opportunity arises.

4.33m (No Change) Appointment of correspondents to Quaker bodies: Such appointments would depend on an interest expressed by one of the worshipping group. We do not feel able to make any regular formal commitment.

4.33n (No Change) The library: Earls Colne has a well established, catalogued library with a wide ranging selection of Quaker and other texts. Books are borrowed on a regular basis and we exchange views and make recommendations to each other.

4.33o (Changed) Links with other churches and faith communities: The meeting currently has no formal links with the other churches in Earls Colne. Some of us maintain personal links with the churches in our home communities. We will investigate the opportunities for ecumenical participation with Earls Colne churches.

4.33p (No Change) A Christian influence in the neighbourhood: Quakers are part of Earls Colne community life through the hirings of the meeting house, overseen by John Derring.

4.34 (Changed with request for a Memorandum of Understanding with AM Trustees) Formal Agreement with Area Meeting: We thank the AM and Trustees for the responsibilities undertaken on behalf of Earls Colne and specifically thank Tim Holding for continuing to care for Earls Colne Meeting House and the AM Treasurers for looking after our financial affairs. Earls Colne Friends ask for a Memorandum of Understanding to be drawn up on the basis of the present arrangement with AM Trustees, who look after the premises, hirings and the caretaker, and the finances through an AM appointment of a treasurer. We appoint Antoinette Arnold and Colin Keen to represent us in this process.