

# **Towards Right Ordering**

A Handbook for the management  
of Local Meetings within  
Oxford and Swindon Area Meeting

Revised edition 2016

The Trustees of Oxford and Swindon Area Quaker Meeting

Oxford and Swindon Area Quaker Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain is a Company Limited by Guarantee registered in England (Company Number 06947462) and with the Charity Commission for England and Wales (Charity Number 1137897) whose registered office is at 43 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LW

## Foreword

This Handbook is a revised version of the one first published in 2011 as a response by OSAM Trustees to changes in the management of Quaker Meetings within BYM brought about by external pressures.. All Meetings are now under the direct supervision of the Charity Commission. In addition, OSAM has adopted the form of charity registration known as a Company Limited by Guarantee, and that means further supervision by Companies House.

Trustees carry the legal responsibility for the proper conduct of the life and work of our Local Meetings. They are required to report annually, as part of the accounting process, to the Charity Commission and to Companies House to explain how the Area Meeting is meeting its charitable objectives. The Handbook is intended as a guide for Trustees and Clerks of Local Meetings in the conduct of church affairs within the overall framework of Quaker Faith and Practice.

We continue to face changes in national legislation and regulation, and that is why this new edition of Towards Right Ordering is necessary. Its main new feature is a chapter on Employment, written with legal advice to comply with current legislation. The Finance chapter has been revised and expanded to deal with reserves and the ways in which they may be held. The chapters on Property, on Safety, and on the Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults have all been revised.

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## **1. Oxford and Swindon Area Meeting Trustees**

### **Constitution**

In 2010 Oxford and Swindon Area Meeting, like all British Quaker Meetings, was required to become a registered Charity. Its constitution is that of a Company Limited by Guarantee, which means that it is regulated both by the Charity Commission and by Companies House. The Company's Memorandum and Articles are, legally, the governing body of the Charity. The Trustees serve as Directors of the Company, and all Members of the Area Meeting are Members of the Company.

### **Trustees**

The Trustee body is made up of one Trustee from each Local Meeting, with two from Oxford Local Meeting. The Clerk of Area Meeting and the AM Treasurer are appointed *ex officio* via Area Meeting Nominations Committee. At the date of issue there are two co-opted Trustees: the Clerk and the Safeguarding Co-ordinator. The list of Trustees is published each year in the OSAM Year Card.

Trustees are nominated by Area Meeting Nominations Committee, and appointed at a general meeting of the Charity. The officers are appointed by the Trustees from among themselves. The work of the Clerk as OSAM Charity Secretary and in dealing with OSAM Property and Management are shared by other Trustees.

### **Normal frequency of meetings**

The Annual General Meeting of the Company will be held in conjunction with an Area Meeting each May. Area Meeting meets every two months. Area Trustees: meet at least three times a year. Local Meetings meet every two months prior to Area Meeting. Finance/Property: if there is a Committee it should meet at least three times a year. If not, please inform the Clerk to Trustees of your arrangements.

### **Official designation**

*Please note the full formal designation of OSAM which appears on the title page of this Handbook. By law the statement has been placed outside the registered office at 43 St Giles. It should also appear on printed communications:*

Oxford and Swindon Area Quaker Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain is a Company Limited by Guarantee registered in England (Company Number 0694762) and with the Charity Commission for England and Wales (Charity Number 11137897) whose registered office is at 43 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LW

## **2. Properties of Oxford and Swindon Area Meeting**

The Trustees are responsible in Quaker custom and now in law for the properties of the Area Meeting. The responsibility for all properties, with one exception, is delegated to Local Meetings and supervised by a Trustee on behalf of the Clerk. The properties are:

### **Meeting Houses**

Burford with burial ground/garden\*

Charlbury with burial ground/garden\*

Faringdon with ancillary building and burial ground/garden\*

Marlborough with chairlift to first floor\*

Oxford with garden\*

Swindon with upper floor of 5 rooms let to two charities and small parking area\*

*\*with wheelchair access*

### **Other properties**

42 St Giles, Oxford, managed by Trustees and currently leased to a dental practice (The income from this building provides most of the annual income at the disposal of Trustees)

43 St Giles, Oxford, managed by Oxford Local Meeting.  
(Contains flats, office, three meeting rooms, library and kitchen)

Witney burial ground, the responsibility of Trustees ( maintained by the occupants of the properties built on the site of the former Witney FMH building)

### **Meetings without property**

Abingdon

Headington

Witney

### **3. Communications: Minutes, Oral Reports and Personal links**

Trustees are concerned to see that the outcomes of Meetings for Worship for Business within OSAM are regularly communicated to those who need to know them. So we have set out a pattern for the circulation of Minutes and also for the frequency of meetings.

We also wish to underline the value of oral reports, not just in the case of appointed Friends reporting back from Area Meetings but at all levels.

In addition, we propose that the kind of personal link which already exists between the AM Treasurer and LM Treasurers should also apply to other disciplines where we are subject to external regulation, namely Property, Safety, Safeguarding and Employment. A Trustee takes responsibility for each discipline and will be in contact with those responsible for it within each Local Meeting. The Trustees for each discipline will also ask for an Annual Report from each LM.

#### **Circulation of Minutes**

AM Minutes should be sent to Trustees as well as to LM Clerks.

AM Trustees' Minutes are sent to LM Clerks as well as to AM Clerk.

MfWB minutes within each LM should be sent to the Trustee of that Meeting and to those responsible for each discipline, whether present at MfWB or not.

#### **Personal links for current Triennium**

Here is the list of individual Trustees who are currently responsible for the main disciplines:

LM Treasurers	AM Treasurer (via Trustees' Clerk pro tem)
LM Property	Dennis Price (Headington) (to 2016)
LM Safety	tbc
LM Safeguarding	Adrian Allsop (Abingdon) (to 2015)
LM Employment	Katharine Nicholas (Oxford) (to 2015)

**Local Meetings will be asked to supply the name of a responsible individual for each discipline which applies to that LM. Treasurers are asked to provide Annual Budgets and Accounts. Trustees responsible for Property, Safety and Safeguarding will request Annual Reports.**

## **4. Finance**

### **4.1. General Objective**

The accounts of each constituent Local Meeting will be consolidated within the overall accounts for the Area Meeting which is the accounting unit of the charity. The consolidation to be completed by a qualified external auditor specialising in charity accounts.

### **4.2. Local meetings**

Each LM will appoint a sub-committee which will exercise financial oversight, but the same sub-committee may cover property matters as well in the smaller LMs with their own Meeting Houses. It will meet at least twice a year and record its decisions in minutes which will be copied to the LM Clerk.

Membership of the Finance (& Property) Sub-Committee shall be at least three and shall include the LM Treasurer and the Trustee for the LM, ex-officio. Additional appointments may be made by the LM as Collectors, Assistant Treasurers, etc according to need but oversight will be exercised by the Finance sub-committee, who should report when appropriate to the LM Meeting for Business.

### **4.3. Local Meeting Treasurer**

The accounts of the Local Meetings will be prepared by the LM Treasurer who is responsible both to their LM and to the AM Treasurer. The latter is vital to ensure the consolidated accounts are accurate and comply with current laws affecting charity finances. All LM Treasurers should be available to attend the annual Treasurer's workshop in December and to attend the independent examination in February or to send a suitable nominee. All finances and budgets must follow the layout provided by the AM Treasurer.

Any material changes in financial position should also be notified without delay. Any queries regarding any aspect of LM or AM finances should be directed to the Area Treasurer.

The LM Treasurer will complete the accounts for the previous year for presentation to a special LM Business Meeting on the third Sunday in February prior to the independent examination which will take place during the second half of February.

#### **4.4. Independent Examiner and External Auditor**

The examiner, who is appointed by the AM Treasurer, will be a person of recognised competence and will be the same examiner for all of the LMs with the exception only of Oxford. Due to its size Oxford will be examined by the external auditors preparing the consolidation. The AM Treasurer will take responsibility for ensuring all accounts are presented to the external auditor. All communications with the external auditor will be through the AM Treasurer and anyone wishing to discuss financial matters with the external auditor must go through the AM Treasurer with the exception of Oxford Meeting which will deal with the external auditor direct.

#### **4.5. Local Meeting Budgets**

The LM Treasurer, in consultation with the LM, should prepare a detailed budget to include all aspects of expected expenditure, allowances to be kept in reserve and any grants that may be required from OSAM Central Funds for the following year for approval as indicated in the Timetable below. Budgets should be presented in the format laid down by the AM Treasurer. Budgets should be approved by LM Business Meetings and sent to the AM Treasurer by December 1 in time for a Trustees' meeting to be held in January of the following year.

#### **4.6. Area Meeting General Fund requests**

The OSAM General Fund provides grants for activities which fall within the remit of Elders and Overseers, for example conference fees or training days Those within the AM who wish to apply for a grant from the OSAM General Fund during the next calendar year should apply to the AM Treasurer by December 1.

#### **4.7. Financial timetable for the year**

##### **4.7.1 Accounts for previous year**

LM accounts presented to AM Treasurer and external examiner in February

LM accounts presented to LM Business Meeting for approval in March

AM Treasurer then arranges consolidation of LM accounts with OSAM Central Funds accounts to form the Charity's accounts

The Charity's accounts are presented to Trustees for approval by end of April

The Charity's accounts are presented to the AGM, held to coincide with AM in May

The Charity's accounts are filed with the Charity Commission and Companies House by the end of September

#### 4.7.2 Budgets for next year

Requests for expenditure from OSAM Central Funds sent to AM Treasurer by Nov 1

LM budgets presented to, and approved by, LM Business Meeting in November

LM budgets presented to AM Treasurer by Dec 1

LM budgets and OSAM Central Funds budget, separately and also in consolidated form, presented by the AM Treasurer to the Board of Trustees for approval in January of next year

### 4.8. Shared Responsibilities

#### 4.8.1 Trustees

Financial management is the responsibility of the Trustees. To coordinate the work of Treasurers the AM Treasurer will arrange for meetings of Treasurers as required but any recommendations they make which change financial arrangements will be reported to and considered by the Trustees.

#### 4.8.2 Local Meetings

**Schedule** - To conduct the annual appeal for funds to support the work of the Area Meeting and the Society as a whole.

**Bank Account** - To open and operate bank or building society accounts, with two signatories being required for expenditure over £200. The AM Treasurer is to be informed in advance of these arrangements The names and addresses of the banks or building societies, and the signatories for the LM accounts, are to be recorded in the notes to LM annual accounts.

**Expenditure:** To commit expenditure within approved income and expenditure budgets, and transfer expenditure within main budget heads. If proposed expenditure will exceed budget, but by **more** than 15%, this will require the prior approval of the LM Trustee, the Property Trustee and the AM Treasurer. Such over-expenditure should not amount to more than £1000. Proposed over-expenditure above this level is to be reported to the AM Treasurer before it is committed, who will consult the Property Trustee and take such action as is deemed necessary in the circumstances. The matter should be reported in writing to Trustees at the earliest opportunity.

The Treasurer has found that there is no one suitable 'ethical' bank for current transactions and so LMs should keep their current arrangements if they are satisfactory. However there is a website which rates High Street Banks and Building Societies out of 20 for the extent to which their practices are considered ethical and Friends may wish to consult it:

[www.ethicalconsumer.org/buyersguides/money/bankingcurrentaccounts.aspx](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/buyersguides/money/bankingcurrentaccounts.aspx)

### **4.8.3 Reserves**

General operating costs and reserves are to be managed by the LM but any matters of concern brought at the earliest opportunity to the attention of the AM Treasurer. LMs may establish **designated funds**, for example from legacies received. (For legacies, please see below) Such funds should be accounted for and reported separately from general reserves.

We note that the Charity Commission requires that each Local Meeting should hold enough money to fund a full year's activities. In addition, it is OSAM policy that each LM with a meeting house should hold a Building Reserve based on the Quinquennial review and on an assessment of risks to be agreed with the AM Treasurer and the Property Trustee. It would be prudent to assume that there will be no support from AM funds. The AM Treasurer is always willing to discuss questions about reserves with LM Treasurers.

### **4.8.4 Legacies**

If an LM proposes to invest a Legacy in anything other than a savings account, the LM Treasurer should consult the AM Treasurer for guidance on the advantages and disadvantages of various forms of investment so that Area funds as a whole are protected.

### **4.8.5 Deposits**

A study by the Treasurer has shown that Triodos is the most suitable place for OSAM deposits.

### **4.8.6 Investments**

#### **OSAM investment policy**

LMs are recommended to recognize two kinds of investment:

Investment for Growth. This should be confined to securities that are approved for charitable funds and are of a broadly ethical nature : investment plans should be shown to the Treasurer for comment, covering the proportion of LM funds to be invested, and the choice of securities. The M&G Charibond is currently in use by OSAM and by Oxford LM.

## Finance

Social Investment. In this case funds are intended to support a suitable cause, such as a housing charity, rather than to produce a return. These should be subject to the consent of the Treasurer and Trustees.

Friends' House may also be able to provide advice if needed.

### Information to AM Treasurer

LMs intending to make any substantial change in their investments should first inform the AM Treasurer. All new investments made are to be reported to the AM Treasurer immediately with copies of certificates, bonds etc along with details of the money's origin and for what purpose it may be used, or the interest used.

### 4.8.7 Insurance

Insurance for all OSAM properties is arranged by the Treasurer, through whom all claims and inquiries should be made. A copy of the policy should be lodged in each LM. The annual cost of Insurance is divided pro rata among LMs with Meeting Houses. The Property sub-committee should ensure that the property meets all the requirements of the insurance policy, including provision of fire alarms and extinguishers, checks of electrical equipment and no-smoking notices. As the section on Hiring indicates, all those outside bodies who hire a Meeting House are responsible for arranging their own insurance cover for their own activities.

**For LMs without Meeting Houses:** It is the responsibility of the LM Clerk to ensure that premises they hire are covered by insurance (both for damage to the building arising from the Meeting's activities and for third party liability) and that any insurance requirements such as fire alarms or extinguishers are provided.

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**Ends**

# 5. Property

## 5.1. Local Meetings with Meeting Houses owned by the Area Meeting

### 5.1.1 Introduction

Properties, which may include Meeting Houses, burial grounds, houses and land, are owned by the Area Meeting and their management for AM is the responsibility of the Trustees. Any major decisions, which might change the extent of the property assets or involve leasing parts of the AM's property, should be reported to, and approved by, the Area Meeting Trustees.

### 5.1.2 LM Property sub-committee

Each constituent Local Meeting with a Meeting House should appoint a Property sub-committee, which may be combined with oversight of Finance in the smaller meetings. It will meet at least three times a year and its minutes will be copied to the LM Clerk. Membership of the Property sub-committee should be at least three and include the LM Trustee and Treasurer. Additional appointments and sub-committees may be made as needed to deal with property matters, but oversight is to be exercised by the Property sub-committee, who should report when appropriate to the LM Meeting for Business.

### 5.1.3 Procedures and powers

#### 5.1.3.1 Trustees will arrange for the following:

- The insurance of the property and contents, with the annual cost of insurance being divided annually pro rata among LMs with Meeting Houses
- The regular inspection (usually every 5 years) of the condition of the property and the provision of a detailed report by a suitably qualified person, any costs being met by the Area Meeting.
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#### 5.1.3.2 Trustees will decide the following on a minute from, or after consultation with the LM:

- Any matter where Local Authority or other official consents may be required.
- Any matter involving legal proceedings or advice or the services of our Surveyors.

- Leases or tenancies giving exclusive use of any part of the property to a third party.

## **Property**

- Alterations to the external or internal structure of the property, major internal change or re-equipment, or work affecting its boundary walls or the supply of services.
- Repair and maintenance contracts for these purposes estimated at **over £3,000** (normally 2 estimates are to be obtained).

### **5.1.3.3** The following powers are delegated to the **Local Meeting**:

- External repair and maintenance where the expected cost is below £ 3,000 and no permissions are required.
- Internal decoration and furnishing where no structural change is made; but the AM Treasurer is to be informed of any changes that may affect the insured value of the property or its contents
- Normally 2 estimates are to be obtained where the expected cost of these works is over £1000, but quality and value should be taken into account as well as price. A Minute of Record should be made in any case when the lower estimate is not accepted.
- Management of burial grounds and garden areas.
- Hire of rooms following the model agreement provided by Trustees. A register is to be maintained recording room hire and the charges due and paid. Charges are to be reviewed at least every 3 years.

### **5.1.4 Emergency expenditure** may be dealt with by a decision of any two of the following;

- The AM Treasurer, AM Clerk, the LM Treasurer, LM Trustee, LM Clerk, LM clerk to Property sub-committee.

Their action is to be reported to Trustees and the LM Business Meeting at the earliest opportunity.

### **5.1.5 Inspections by the LM**

At least once a year the buildings (including the roofs, gutters and drains, as far as they are visible from the ground) and the boundary walls are to be inspected visually, usually by members of the Property sub-committee. Any signs of cracking or movement in the structure or tiles should be reported to the Trustees. Any concern about the operation of services, gas, electricity, water and drainage, including

surface water drainage, should be checked by a member or members of the Property sub-committee.

## Property

**5.1.6 An annual report**, in a form for LMs with Meeting Houses, provided by the Trustees each autumn, should be approved by the Property sub-committee and submitted to the Trustee responsible for Property.

### **5.1.7 Insurance**

Insurance for all OSAM properties is arranged by the Treasurer, through whom all claims and inquiries should be made. A copy of the policy should be lodged in each LM. The annual cost of Insurance is divided pro rata among the Meetings with Meeting Houses and will be charged irrespective of any other contribution that is made to AM funds. The Property sub-committee should ensure that the property meets all the requirements of the insurance policy, including provision of fire alarms and extinguishers, checks of electrical equipment and no-smoking notices. As the section on Hiring indicates, all those outside bodies who hire a Meeting House are responsible for arranging their own insurance cover for their own activities.

### **5.1.8 Water, gas and electricity monitoring**

The rate of services usage should be monitored through the bills where this is metered. Apart from avoiding waste, this can, in the case of water, provide an indication of leaks that may lead to structural damage if left undetected.

### **5.1.9 Provision for those with disabilities**

All six Meeting Houses have provision for wheelchair access. The provision of a hearing aid loop should be a priority, together with arrangement for it to be switched on for all users.

### **5.1.10 Records**

A Property Record book (which may be combined with a Safety Record book for the smaller meetings) shall be maintained and kept available at the LM which shall record at the time they occur:

- all inspections carried out and by whom
- all work done and by whom, with the cost
- all reports of faults or suggestions for work required; entries to be made by any member of the LM.

### **5.1.11 Hiring out the Meeting House**

As enjoined by Quaker Faith and Practice (15:16), OSAM permits and encourages Local Meetings to serve their community and raise income by hiring out their Meeting

#### **Property**

Houses for suitable purposes. Classes, youth work, lectures, CAB, yoga, art, and literature groups are all examples. It is perhaps wise to draw a line between political hustings, with several parties represented, and single party gatherings. Alcohol, gambling and smoking are not permitted.

Hiring conditions will differ greatly between large and small meeting houses. LMs should write their own versions to take account of local needs and conditions, and to assist this process, Appendix B gives a skeleton hiring agreement, together with a list of matters to consider in drawing up this contract.

### **5.2. Local Meetings without Meeting Houses**

It is understood that the arrangements for establishing a meeting place for these LMs will vary greatly. The AM Trustees wish to ensure that the arrangements are on record, and that safety standards are met in all such premises.

**5.2.1 Tenancy arrangements** The Local Meeting should report the nature of the tenancy arrangements- whether a formal lease, short term hiring or informal arrangement with no fixed rent – and report them to the Trustee for Property who will maintain a record of the arrangements

#### **5.2.2 Safety**

Chapter 6 now covers Safety and asks for a named person to give attention to:

- Fire safety risk assessment and precautions
- Electricity and gas supply and equipment checks and inspections
- First aid box
- Disabled access (and egress in case of emergency)
- Maintain Safety Record

#### **5.2.3 Insurance**

The LM Clerk will ensure that Third Party insurance is arranged either by the provider or Landlord, or by the LM, and that any insurance requirements such as fire alarms and extinguishers are provided.

#### **5.2.4 Reports**

The Premises sub-committee will be asked to complete an annual Property report in a form provided by the Trustees (and specific to LMs without Meeting Houses) each autumn and return it to the Area Trustee responsible for Property. This should clarify the prevailing tenancy arrangements and will include questions about the responsible persons, the safety arrangements, fire precautions, disabled access, first aid and insurance.

**Ends**

## **6. Safety**

**This chapter includes all aspects of Safety precautions except for the Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults which is covered in chapter 7**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The various fields under this heading are all covered by legislation or regulation, so that in setting out guidance we are dealing with legal requirements on Trustees and on Local Meetings.

We would encourage all Local Meetings to look at the two basic websites which deal with the subject of Safety. [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk) is an official website which brings all the relevant subjects together in one place. Our insurers, Congregational Insurance, give guidance more specifically related to places of worship. The Health and Safety website [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk) also has much useful information as well as free downloads of "Approved Codes of Practice".

### **6.2 Policy**

Our policy, so far as is reasonably practical, is to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all members, attenders, visitors and contractors who may visit the meeting house and any associated buildings.

We will also aim to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all employees, casual labour and voluntary helpers and to provide such information, training and supervision as they need for this purpose.

### **6.3 Practical steps**

The practical arrangements needed to carry out this policy are set out below. Certain headings (marked \*) apply to all Meetings, whether or not they have their own premises.

## **LMs with a Meeting House**

We need to take account of the fact that a number of LMs with Meeting Houses do not have a formal Property subcommittee. So we ask all LMs with a Meeting House to nominate one person who will be the link with the Property Trustee and take general responsibility for ensuring that these arrangements are carried out.

## **LMs without premises**

## **Safety**

Those LMs which hold their meetings in hired premises should be aware of the headings marked (\*). They should also be aware of the electrical, gas and fire safety rules at these premises, make sure that inspections have been carried out, and draw any matters of concern to the attention of the owners of the property.

### **6.4 The Safety Record Book\***

Local Meetings are asked to maintain a Safety Record book. Every subject in this section requires records to be kept in the Safety Record book. Accidents (AND near misses) under any of these headings should also be recorded. In smaller Meetings the Safety Record Book can also be used for the Property Record.

### **6.5 Disability Access\***

The Equality Act 2010 is the most recent of the Acts which bear on this subject. It requires the provision of access to everyday services, including places of worship. It refers not just to physical access, but also to the need to make services easier to use for everyone.

We believe that wheelchair access to our buildings is now satisfactory. However we ask Local Meetings to report on provision of disabled toilets and on other provisions or perceived deficiencies in access for those with disabilities. Please include other items such as a hearing aid loop.

Local Meetings should note any difficulties experienced over access to the premises or facilities for people with disabilities and record these in the Safety Record giving the date and the circumstances. As appropriate these should be brought to the attention of the LM Property sub-committee, LM and Trustees.

Trustees will decide any questions that arise under the Disability Discrimination Act for access for people with disabilities upon a report or minute from its advisers, appointed members or Local Meetings.

### **6.6 Electrical Safety**

A regular visual check of the electrical wiring, fuseboards and appliances should be carried out at no longer than 6-monthly intervals by a member of the LM and a record made in the Safety Record book that this has been done. Any faults noted should be dealt with immediately.

All portable electrical equipment should have a PAT test before use. Thereafter regular maintenance and the 6-monthly inspection are sufficient. (The Health and Safety Executive has mounted a campaign to assure us that annual PAT testing is NOT required.) The certificates are to be filed in the Safety Record (or central filing system).

## **Safety**

The room hiring agreement should contain the advice that only electrical equipment that has been PAT tested can be brought onto the premises for use

At the time of every Quinquennial inspection the electrical circuitry of the building should be tested. The certificate is to be filed in the Safety Record.

### **6.7 Emergency Services \***

Local Meetings should include in the Safety Record a list of emergency numbers and contacts to deal with all matters of safety, with a note of the nearest public (or accessible) telephone point, though it would be preferable to ensure that a mobile phone is always available. The list should include:

- Ambulance
- Nearest Accident and Emergency department
- Nearest GP surgery and its location
- Night medical services
- Electrician
- Fire
- Gas
- Locations of Fire extinguishers and First Aid kit
- Police

And for those with premises:

- Locksmith
- Plumber

LMs may also wish to make a shorter list for use by hirers

### **6.8 Engineering**

Any engineering equipment, such as a chair lift, should be inspected and tested at the intervals prescribed by the manufacturer

### **6.9 Fire Safety**

LMs are responsible for the application of the Fire Safety regulations on their premises. This Handbook is issued with a copy of 'A short guide to making your premises safe from fire'. This is a government publication prepared by the Chief Fire Officers Association. LMs should nominate an individual to take responsibility for following the guidance in this publication. That person should preferably be a member of the Premises subcommittee.

## **Risk Assessment**

Also included with this Handbook are two pages from a longer document, setting out a model Risk Assessment and a blank form to be filled in. The person responsible for Fire Safety precautions should fill in the blank form and send a copy to The Trustee for Properties.

The longer document is "Fire Safety Risk Assessment; Small and Medium Places of Assembly", 170 pages long but well written and presented, issued by the Dept for Communities and Local Government. Trustees hold a copy of this longer publication which may be borrowed on application to the Clerk.

The following should be checked regularly at least every 6 months, and the check recorded in the Safety Record book:

- all heaters to be free of obstructions
- any alarm systems tested
- all emergency exits to be clear of obstruction and correctly signed
- fire extinguishers to be in position and correctly signed

Annual maintenance of fire extinguishers is to be carried out by an authorised person and the certificates filed in the Safety Record. **Remember that fire extinguishers are not all-purpose, and be clear about which type of extinguisher is suitable for which type of fire.**

### **6.10 First Aid\***

LMs should have a First Aid kit available and readily accessible. There is no official list of suggested contents, so please buy a good quality kit and remember to replace material that is used. More serious incidents (eg if an ambulance has to be called) should be recorded in the Safety Record.

### **6.11 Food Hygiene\***

LMs should practice good hygiene in preparing and serving food. LMs should be aware of the Hygiene Regulations and apply them if their operations require it. This

could arise, for example, if food is “regularly prepared to be sold or given to the public”. If a Meeting is required to register as a ‘food business’ it is probable that it will be classed as low risk and the inspection regime will be designed accordingly, at the discretion of the local Environmental Health Officer.

Organisations which hire our Meeting House premises and serve food are responsible for the maintenance of good hygiene. Our hiring agreements should make known the facilities that we make available to hirers and where their responsibilities rest.

## 6.12 Gas

## Safety

LMS are responsible for arranging the annual inspection and testing of gas appliances at their premises by an engineer registered by the Gas Safe Register. The certificate should be filed in the Safety Record. For new appliances, the contractor is required to report the installation, and the Gas Safety Register will automatically arrange a first inspection.

## 6.13 Employees’ Health and Safety

In law, all employees are now employed by Oxford and Swindon Area Quaker Meeting Trustees, who delegate their responsibilities as employers to Local Meetings: for full guidance see chapter 8. If LMs do employ staff the LM is responsible for their appointment and conditions of service.

OSAM’s Health and Safety policy (relating to employees) is set out at the end of this chapter on an official HSE form together with a Risk Assessment template to be completed for employees. The three sheets are between text pages 19 and 20.

### Contractors and cleaners

. Meetings should also ensure that any contractors comply with Health and Safety requirements and are adequately insured. ‘Contractors’ would include people such as cleaners who provide a regular service. **In the case of cleaners in particular, it is advisable to issue a letter of employment which makes it clear that they are self-employed.**

This responsibility should be undertaken by the Property sub-committee or an identified person. The name, address and contact details of the employee or any other person who may work frequently on the premises should be recorded in the Property Record book. If difficulties arise or advice is needed the Trustee for Employment should be consulted.

Local Meetings can also consult the Environmental Health Officer of their Council who will be able to clarify their particular responsibilities for Health and Safety.

The LM should record accidents (AND near misses) in the Safety Record and report them as required.

#### **6.14 Action**

Local Meetings with their own premises should delegate Safety matters to a named individual, whether or not there is a Property committee. The person concerned should ensure that the required periodic checks are carried out, and that a Safety Record book is opened and maintained.

## **7. Safeguarding**

### **Oxford and Swindon Area Meeting policy for Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

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7.4.	Responding to allegations, suspicion or admission of abuse
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7.6.	Working with offenders
Appendix	Contact Details for People and Organisations

#### **7.1 Statement of Intent**

**“Rejoice in the presence of children and young people in your Meeting and recognise the gifts they bring. Remember that the Meeting as a whole shares the responsibility for every child in its care.... Do you invite them to share insight with you?” (Faith and Practice 1.19)**

It is important that every activity for children and vulnerable adults is organised in a safe place where people are not abused. If abuse is discovered, suspected or declared it will be reported to the appropriate authority for investigation.

#### **7.2 Creating a structure for safeguarding within Oxford and Swindon Area Meeting**

- (a) A Safeguarding Coordinator and Deputy shall be appointed by Area Meeting (referred to as “Safeguarding Coordinators” below)
- (b) OSAM Nominations Committee, in consultation with trustees, will bring names forward for consideration of Area Meeting
- (c) Safeguarding Coordinators with trustees will ensure that OSAM has a Safeguarding Policy which is reviewed annually (Faith and Practice 4.14)

- (d) Trustees and Safeguarding Coordinators will ensure that Local Meetings have procedures in place as part of the Area Meeting Safeguarding Policy and that each Local Meeting appoints a safeguarding representative
- (e) Trustees shall have regular and clear communication with Safeguarding Coordinators and support their on-going training
- (f) Safeguarding Coordinators with Trustees will arrange collation of AM & LM Safeguarding Procedures
- (g) In addition to the above, the role of the Safeguarding Coordinator is to
  - (i) Collate and clarify suspicions or allegations of abuse (whether or not it originates within AM) and determine appropriate procedures
  - (ii) Seek advice from the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS)
  - (iii) Pass information to statutory agencies (Social Service and police) with a legal duty to investigate if circumstances warrant this and if so advised
  - (iv) At all times communicate discreetly and liaise with the Trustees (see also section 4)
  - (v) Provide guidance for Trustees and LMs
  - (vi) The Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator shall act if the Safeguarding Coordinator is not available and if the Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator is also not available the BYM Safeguarding Officer shall act.

### **7. 3. Prevention and Supervision**

- (a) Local Meetings must document well-considered procedures to protect children and vulnerable adults against risks of physical, mental, and emotional harm. Safeguarding Coordinators can offer assistance, and Trustees and more experienced LMs can offer support in the preparation and implementation of such procedures. These procedures should be reviewed annually.
- (b) Procedures should be agreed with the Safeguarding Coordinator, should comply with this Policy and should address
  - (i) Local Meeting conditions: size, experience, building, numbers, unsafe areas and situations
  - (ii) How activities will be organised to minimise the potential for unjustified accusations or suspicion of abuse being raised against the Meeting or those supervising the activities of working with the children or vulnerable adults
  - (iii) How those who work with children and vulnerable adults become known, trusted and supported within the LM

- (iv) How, when and with whom the LM procedures are discussed with a new volunteer
  - (v) How and when the whole meeting should compose and review the procedures
  - (vi) Advice and guidance from Quaker Life, CCPAS "Safe & Secure"
  - (vii) The inclusion of a list of local safeguarding contacts
- (c) All those who supervise activities for children or vulnerable adults in the absence of parents or carers must be formally appointed by the Meeting organising the activity: the appointment procedure must include written self-declaration of suitability, written references and a satisfactory CRB Disclosure where this is appropriate and permitted.
- (d) Adult helpers may be co-opted occasionally provided they are well known to the Meeting and are appropriately supported and supervised at all times. Unauthorised adults must not be given unsupervised access.
- (e) All activities must be appropriately planned and supervised. When parents and carers are not immediately available in person, (e.g. outings and residential trips)
- (i) Registration forms if parents or carers are not expected to be present shall include a request for information regarding participants' health conditions, of which the supervisor must be aware and which other leaders/adults must be aware to the extent that this is necessary for the health and safety of the child or vulnerable adult
  - (ii) The event leader must ensure that a First Aid kit and appropriate means of calling and/or reaching emergency services are available throughout
  - (iii) Any overnight event will need at least two formally appointed adults one male (appointed as above if boys take part) and one female

#### **7.4 Responding to allegations/suspicion or admissions of abuse**

Meetings may be the first to be told about, or witness evidence of abuse to vulnerable adults or children. It is essential that the following steps are taken:

- (a) Under no circumstances should LMs or the reporter of allegations or suspicion or admission of abuse carry out his/her own investigation. This is a delicate task requiring skill and training.
- (b) Allegations, suspicions or admission of abuse should be referred promptly to the Safeguarding Coordinator or Deputy
- (c) Written records should be kept at all stages in the process including by the person initiating the process, and should be kept in a secure place

- (d) The Safeguarding Coordinator will collate information and clarify details where required
- (e) The Safeguarding Coordinator will seek advice from CCPAS as to the need to inform the appropriate authority.
- (f) The Safeguarding Coordinator will pass all information to the appropriate authority if so advised by the CCPAS(See Appendix 1)
- (g) The Statutory Authority will investigate the matter if appropriate
- (h) The Safeguarding Coordinator will be strict about disclosing the information to only those who need to know
- (i) The Safeguarding Coordinator will communicate with trustees
- (j) Trustees may be required to inform their insurers and the Charity Commission
- (k) No-one other than the Safeguarding Coordinator or deputy should communicate with the media and this only after taking advice from BYM's Press officer (See Appendix 1)

### **7.5 Responding to those affected by abuse**

- (a) Allow the child or adult to speak without interruption
- (b) Advise that you will try to offer support but must consult others
- (c) Acknowledge that there will be strong feelings which may include guilt and isolation and that working through these feelings may be a long and complicated process.
- (d) Consult the Safeguarding Coordinator
- (e) Do not take further action yourself
- (f) OSAM Overseers will arrange appropriate support through statutory agencies
- (g) Trustees of OSAM are committed to encouragement and support for Meetings in their response to those affected by abuse

### **7.6 Working with offenders**

When someone attending our Meetings is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to vulnerable adults

- (a) Overseers will supervise the individual concerned
- (b) Procedures for pastoral care will be arranged

- (c) Boundaries will be set for that person to minimise close contact or familiarisation with children or vulnerable adults
- (d) The boundaries may include a formal agreement
- (e) It is expected that agreements will be kept
- (f) There may be events where it is unsuitable for the person to attend

## APPENDIX: CONTACT DETAILS FOR PEOPLE & ORGANISATIONS

### QUAKERS

1. **OSAM Safeguarding Coordinator**  
Adrian Allsop, phone: 0845 345 2107 email [safeguard@abingdonquakers.org.uk](mailto:safeguard@abingdonquakers.org.uk)
2. **OSAM Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator**  
Simon Clark email [simonstandlake@hotmail.com](mailto:simonstandlake@hotmail.com)
3. **Quaker Meetings Safeguarding Advice**  
BYM Safeguarding Officer: Michael Booth phone: 020 7663 1023  
email [michaelsb@quaker.org.uk](mailto:michaelsb@quaker.org.uk)
4. **Media advice**  
BYM Press officer: Anne van Staveren phone: 020 7663 1048 or 07958 009703  
email

### CHURCHES CHILD PROTECTION ADVISORY SERVICE (CCPAS)

(OSAM is a member of CCPAS entitling us to their advice and publications)  
**Helpline** 0845 120 45 50  
 Address: PO BOX 133, SWANLEY, KENT BR8 7UK  
 Website: <http://www.ccpas.co.uk>

### LOCAL AUTHORITY & POLICE CONTACTS

Referral should be made to the appropriate authority in the area where the incident occurred.

#### 1. OXFORDSHIRE

##### (a) Children

Oxfordshire Child Protection Board Assessment Teams  
 Tel: 01865 897983 (0800 833 408 out of hours emergency)

##### (b) Vulnerable adults

Oxfordshire County Council Adult Social Services  
 Tel. 0845 050 76666 & (0800 833 408 for out of hours emergencies)

##### (c) Children or vulnerable adults

Thames Valley Police Safeguarding Unit  
 Tel. 0845 850 5505

#### 2. SWINDON

(a) **Children**

Swindon Local Safeguarding Children Board  
Children's Services Tel. 01793 466903 (01793 436699 out of hours)

**or**

Police Child Protection Unit Tel. 01793 507910  
(0845 408700 out of hours)

(b) **Vulnerable adults**

Swindon "Care Line" 0800 085 66 66

**3. WILTSHIRE**

(a) **Children**

Wiltshire Area Services Team Tel 01380 730055

(b) **Vulnerable adults**

Vulnerable Adults Social Care Tel. 0300 456 0888  
(0845 607 0888 out of hours)

**ends**

## **8. Employment**

### **8.1 Introduction**

All employees within OSAM are employed by the Area, and not the individual meeting. The employment chapter begins with the scheme of **Delegation** which sets out what matters to do with recruiting and managing employees are the responsibility of individual local meetings, and what responsibilities are reserved to the Area Meeting. There is a statement of **Good Practice**, which is intended to give general guidance. The documents on **Performance management** and **Redundancy** give guidance and advice in these matters, and the **Disciplinary** and **Grievance** procedures set out in detail how disciplinary issues and grievances should be handled.

### **Health and Safety**

Advice relating to the health and safety of employees is in the Safety chapter of this Handbook at section 6.13. At the end of the chapter there is a Health and Safety Policy (relating to employees) and a Risk Assessment template to be completed. Completion of these Risk Assessments is required by law in any organisation of more than 5 employees, but OSAM requires their completion in any event.

### **8.2 Scheme of Delegation**

When any person is employed in an OSAM local meeting, the legal employer is Oxford and Swindon Area Quaker Meeting (OSAQM).

Responsibility for recruitment and management of employees will be delegated to Local Meetings by OSAM Trustees.

OSAM will normally appoint one Trustee to have special responsibility for employment matters, the “link person” for employment.

OSAM will reserve the following responsibilities:

1. The approval of new contracts of employment, of contracts to outsource labour, and of any written contract for service for a self-employed person who undertakes regular work for a local meeting. The Trustees will expect these contracts to be based on the templates provided in the Quaker Life Website.

Trustees may delegate to the “link person” the task of approving such contracts.

Once approval is given, the contract may be signed by the local meeting clerk or the convenor of the relevant committee.

2. The final decision to dismiss an employee, whether for reason of redundancy or any other reason.

## **Employment**

OSAM Trustees will expect to be informed of the following by local meetings:

1. Any person bringing a formal grievance in accordance with the grievance policy.
2. Any formal disciplinary proceedings against any OSAM employee.
3. Any potential redundancy situation.
4. Any situation which may give rise to an Employment Tribunal claim or any notification of such a claim.

The delegation of health and safety matters from Trustees to local meetings is set out in the Safety section of the handbook.

### **8.3 Statement of Good Practice**

OSAM aims to be a good employer.

When engaging people to work for them, local meetings should consider the employment status of the individual, i.e. whether those people are volunteers, workers, employees, or self-employed.

The difference between employment and self-employment is largely a question of how much control the hirer has over, for example, the hours worked and tasks required of the hired person. There is guidance on what distinguishes an employed from a self-employed person on [www.quaker.org.uk](http://www.quaker.org.uk) Wardens are unlikely to be self-employed.

OSAM is committed to promoting equal opportunities in employment and understands the statutory requirements laid down by the Equality Act 2010. We will

not discriminate on grounds of disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

We do not discriminate on grounds of religion, although, in order to do their work effectively within the community in which they are being asked to work, employees may need to be understanding of and sympathetic to, Quaker values.

OSAM has in place a grievance policy for employees and a disciplinary policy for use of the employer. Employees have a right to use the grievance policy, and the employer should use the disciplinary policy in the case of misconduct on the part of the employee. However local meetings are also reminded that in some cases it may be helpful to consider whether other measures such as the involvement of elders or overseers, a meeting for clearness, or secular mediation would assist if a problem arises. It is likely that these other processes would be most effective at the early stages a difficulty presenting itself.

## **Employment**

### **8.4 Performance Management**

It is important to be professional in the approach to managing employees, and there need be no conflict between taking such an approach and Quaker values. Being professional should ensure that employer and employee can work together within a clear and mutually understood framework.

Good performance management starts with recruitment. LMs should consider what tasks a prospective employee should undertake, and what qualities and/or educational attainment is required to undertake them. Drawing up a job description is a helpful part of this process. Once a person is in post, the job description should be updated regularly.

Every employee should have a line manager who gives them instructions, and discusses performance with them. In the case of some very demanding jobs (such as the post of resident warden) the employee might receive support from people other than their line manager, but if this happens then those people should be identified by the relevant business committee.

Regular meetings between line manager and employee are important, and the purpose of these meetings is to make the employment successful for both sides. Both sides should be able to discuss problems and difficulties when they arise. It is important, if there are difficulties, that they are addressed early on. Regular meetings are also an opportunity to provide praise and encouragement.

The more hours an employee works, and the more responsibility the job entails, the more formal the structure of performance management should be. Every full-time employee should have an annual appraisal, a written record of this kept and (if

agreed) signed by both sides as an accurate record. There is a pro-forma annual appraisal form on [www.quaker.org.uk](http://www.quaker.org.uk)

If a local meeting has self-employed people who work for them regularly it is also good practice to check with them from time to time that they are satisfied with their working arrangements.

## 8.5 Redundancy

## Employment

Circumstances may arise where there could be a redundancy situation.

The first thing to be clear about is whether the situation does indeed fall within the legal definition of redundancy, always bearing in mind that in a redundancy situation it is the post that is redundant not any particular employee.

Broadly, redundancy situations fall into three categories:

- Business closure (that is, closure of the organisation altogether).
- Workplace closure (that is, closure of one of several sites, or relocation to a new site).
- Diminished requirements of the organisation for employees to do work of a particular kind.

Redundancy situations can arise due to economic pressures.

Where a LM considers that there is a possibility for a redundancy situation arising, close consultation with the Trustees, and in particular the Trustee with responsibility for employment matters within OSAM, is required, so that appropriate advice and guidance can be sought on procedural matters and the general handling of the situation, including from an employment lawyer if necessary. This should happen before any discussion takes place with the employee.

Consideration should be given to whether there are ways of avoiding compulsory redundancies, such as redeploying the employee in another role.

All affected employees should be communicated with clearly and treated fairly, reasonably and without discrimination. A consultation process should be undertaken before any decision is made and OASM will make the final decision as to whether to terminate the employee's employment.

If employment is terminated by reason of redundancy then provided that the employee has had two years service, he/she must as a minimum be paid statutory redundancy pay. This is calculated on the basis of the length of employment, the employee's age and their weekly pay (which is subject to a statutory cap). If the employee's statement of terms and conditions gives a higher entitlement then this higher sum must be paid. Difficult personal and managerial issues can arise in such a situation, and these will need to be handled with sensitivity always bearing in mind the need for appropriate confidentiality. All of those directly involved with the

### **Employment**

situation will wish to give the utmost support to the employee(s) affected. At the same time however it is important to remember that redundancy is a complex area of the law with detailed procedures which have to be followed. As with every aspect of employment, dealing with issues in a proper and professional manner is the best way to be supportive and effective as an employer.

## **8.6 OXFORD AND SWINDON AREA QUAKER MEETING DISCIPLINARY AND CAPABILITY PROCEDURE**

### **Purpose and scope**

The Area Meeting's aim is to encourage improvement, where needed, in an employee's: performance ('capability'); and conduct ('disciplinary'). This procedure sets out the action which will be taken when performance is considered to be below the required standard or when disciplinary rules are breached.

Punishment is not a primary objective. The aim is to enable the employee to understand the nature of the complaint, to identify how improvements can be made and to provide the help and support needed to implement those improvements.

The procedure will be operated in a manner which is clear, understandable, fair and equitable to all the individuals involved.

The procedure applies to employees but not self-employed persons or volunteers.

***This procedure does not form a part of your contract of employment and may be changed from time to time.***

### **Day to Day management of capability issues (performance)**

Where there is a concern about an employee's capability to perform the duties of the post to a satisfactory standard, the Line Manager will ensure that these matters are first addressed through normal management procedures such as regular 1-1 meetings. Areas where there is a need for improvement will be identified and the

means of securing the improvement will also be identified including, where necessary, access to training and to support for the employee.

Where action using the normal management procedures fails to secure the required improvement, the Line Manager may invoke the formal procedure outlined below.

If the lack of capability is due to ill health then the issue will be addressed as a sickness issue.

If the lack of capability may be due to a disability, then medical opinion may be obtained and any reasonable adjustments will be determined and implemented before action is taken under this procedure.

### **Informal disciplinary discussions (conduct)**

Where there is misconduct which is of a minor nature or is such that the Line Manager feels that it is best dealt with informally or through normal day to day contact with the employee, then the Line Manager will act informally, informing the employee of the nature of the concern and explaining that the misconduct should not recur. However, if the Line Manager feels that the matter is of such a serious nature, or if minor infringements persist, he/she may invoke the formal disciplinary procedures.

### **RESPONSIBILITY GRID**

The following grid shows responsibilities at each stage of the disciplinary and capability procedure.

<b>STAGE</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	<b>APPEAL TO</b>
Written Warning	Line Manager	2 Members of the Finance and Premises Committee or other appropriate Committee (not including the Line Manager)
Final Warning	Convenor of the Finance and Premises Committee or other appropriate Committee (who may be the Line Manager) in consultation with the Trustee with responsibility for employment matters or if unavailable the Clerk/Convenor of	2 Trustees

	Trustees	
Dismissal	Trustee with responsibility for employment matters or if unavailable the Clerk/Convenor of Trustees in consultation with the Convenor of the Finance and Premises Committee or other appropriate Committee	A panel comprising not less than two nor more than four of the remaining Trustees not previously involved

## Employment

### FORMAL DISCIPLINARY/CAPABILITY ACTION

#### Principles

- a) The procedure is designed to establish the facts quickly and to deal consistently with disciplinary and capability issues. No disciplinary/capability action will be taken until the matter has been fully investigated.
- b) At every stage employees will be informed in writing of the disciplinary or capability issue, will have the opportunity to state their case at a disciplinary/capability meeting and may be accompanied, if they wish, by a trade union representative or a work colleague or another suitable person.
- c) An employee has the right to appeal against any formal warning or performance note given under this procedure.

#### The Procedure

##### 1. Establish the facts of the case

Necessary investigations of potential disciplinary/capability matters will be undertaken without unreasonable delay to establish the facts of the case. In some cases this will require the holding of an investigatory meeting with the employee before proceeding to a formal disciplinary or capability meeting under this procedure.

In others, the investigatory stage will be the collation of evidence by the employer for use at any disciplinary or capability hearing.

In misconduct cases, where practicable, different people will carry out the investigation and disciplinary hearing.

An investigatory meeting will not in itself result in any formal warning or other sanction under this procedure.

In cases where a period of suspension with pay is considered necessary, this period will be as brief as possible, will be kept under review and it will be made clear that the suspension is not considered a disciplinary action.

## **2. Inform the employee of the problem**

If it is decided that there is a disciplinary/capability case to answer, the employee will be notified of this in writing. This notification will contain sufficient information about the alleged misconduct or poor performance and its possible consequences to enable the employee to prepare to answer the case at a formal disciplinary or capability meeting. Copies of any written evidence, which may include any witness statements, will be provided with the notification.

### **Employment**

The notification should also give details of the time and venue for the formal meeting and advise the employee of their right to be accompanied at that meeting.

## **3. Hold a formal meeting with the employee to discuss the problem**

The formal disciplinary or capability meeting will be held without unreasonable delay whilst allowing the employee reasonable time to prepare their case.

All parties will make every effort to attend the meeting. At the meeting the employer will explain the complaint against the employee and go through the evidence that has been gathered.

The employee will be:

- allowed to set out his/her case and answer any allegations that have been made or concerns that are raised.
- given a reasonable opportunity to ask questions, present evidence and call relevant witnesses.
- given an opportunity to raise points about any information provided by witnesses.

Where an employer or employee intends to call relevant witnesses they should give advance notice that they intend to do this.

#### 4. Allow the employee to be accompanied at the meeting

The employee has a legal right to be accompanied by a companion where the disciplinary or capability meeting could result in:

- a formal warning or improvement note being issued; or
- the taking of some other disciplinary action; or
- the confirmation of a warning or some other disciplinary action (ie appeal hearings).

To exercise the statutory right to be accompanied workers must make a reasonable request. What is reasonable will depend on the circumstances of each individual case. However, it would not normally be reasonable, for example, for workers to insist on being accompanied by a companion whose presence would prejudice the hearing.

The companion will be allowed to address the hearing to put and sum up the worker's case, respond on behalf of the worker to any views expressed at the meeting and confer with the worker during the hearing.

The companion does not, however, have the right to answer questions on the worker's behalf, address the hearing if the worker does not wish it or prevent the employer from explaining their case.

## Employment

#### 5. Decide on appropriate action

**After** the meeting the employer will consider the issue and decide whether or not action is justified under this procedure and inform the employee accordingly in writing.

##### Possible actions

- If it is determined that there is no misconduct and that performance is acceptable, there will be **no disciplinary or capability warning**.
- Where misconduct is confirmed or the employee is found to be performing unsatisfactorily it is usual to give the employee a **written warning or**, in the case of underperformance, an **improvement note**. A further confirmed act of misconduct or failure to improve performance within a set period would normally result (after a further disciplinary hearing) in a **final written warning**.
- If an employee's first misconduct or unsatisfactory performance is deemed sufficiently serious at a first disciplinary hearing, it may be appropriate to move directly to a **final written warning**. This might occur where the

employee's actions have had, or are liable to have, a serious or harmful impact on the Meeting or Quakers generally.

- A first or final written warning will set out the nature of the misconduct or poor performance and the change in behaviour or improvement in performance required. The warning will include the timescale over which improvement should occur and the timescale over which improvement must be maintained. The employee should be told how long the warning will remain current, which will normally be 6 months in the case of a first written warning and 12 months in the case of a final written warning. The employee should be informed of the consequences of further misconduct, or failure to improve performance, within the set period following a final warning, ie that it may result in dismissal.
- The warning will be held confidentially on the employee's file.
- If conduct or performance achieves and maintains the required standard in the timescale indicated in the warning, and there is no further occurrence of misconduct or underperformance for the duration of the warning, the warning will be disregarded as 'spent.'
- A **decision to dismiss** will only be taken by a person who has the authority to do so. The employee should be informed as soon as possible of the reasons for the dismissal, the date on which the employment contract will end, the appropriate period of notice and their right of appeal.
- Dismissal will normally only occur after there has been at least a final written warning. However, some acts, termed **gross misconduct**, are so serious in themselves or have such serious consequences that they may call for **Employment**
- dismissal without notice for a first offence. But a fair disciplinary process, which may involve immediate suspension and an investigation, will always be followed, before dismissing for gross misconduct.

## 6. Provide the employee with the opportunity to appeal

Where an employee feels that disciplinary or capability action taken against them is wrong or unjust they may appeal as set out in the responsibility grid above:

- Against a written warning: the employee should address appeal in writing, stating their grounds for appeal, to the Convenor of the Finance and Premises Committee or other appropriate Committee within 5 working days
- Against a final warning: the employee should address the appeal in writing to the Trustee with responsibility for employment matters or if the post is unfilled, the Clerk/Convenor to the Trustees within 5 working days
- Against dismissal: the employee should address the appeal in writing to the Trustee with responsibility for employment matters or if the post is unfilled, the Clerk/Convenor to the Trustees within five working days.

In each case the recipient will arrange for the appeal to be dealt with impartially and by individuals who have not previously been involved in the case (see responsibility grid).

Appeals will be heard without unreasonable delay and at an agreed time and place.

There is a statutory right as above to be accompanied at appeal hearings.

Employees will be informed in writing of the results of the appeal hearing as soon as possible.

There is no further right to appeal.

### **Failure to attend a disciplinary or capability meeting**

Where an employee is persistently unable or unwilling to attend a disciplinary or capability meeting without good cause, a decision will be made on the evidence available.

### **Gross Misconduct**

Acts which may be deemed to be gross misconduct include:

- theft, fraud and deliberate falsification of records;
  - physical violence;
  - damage to property;
  - fraudulent misuse of the Meeting's property or name;
  - incapacity for work due to being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs whilst at work;
  - serious negligence which causes unacceptable loss, damage or injury;
  - serious infringement of health and safety rules;
  - serious breach of confidentiality,
- Employment**
- serious breach of the Meeting's equal opportunities policy or standards
  - any other acts which are deemed to be of sufficient seriousness as to constitute gross misconduct.

This is not an exhaustive list.

Acts which may be deemed to be serious are those which, if found to be proved within the balance of probability, would lead the employer to believe that the relationship of trust and confidence between the employer and the employee has broken down.

# **OXFORD AND SWINDON AREA QUAKER MEETING GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

*This procedure does not form a part of your contract of employment and may be changed from time to time. This procedure applies to employees and not to volunteers or self-employed people.*

## **Dealing with grievances informally**

If you have a grievance or complaint to do with your work or the people you work with you should, wherever possible, start by talking it over with your Line Manager. You may be able to agree a solution informally between you.

## **FORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

If the matter is serious and/or you wish to raise the matter formally, you may follow the formal grievance procedure outlined below.

### **Principles**

- Meetings under this procedure will be held without unreasonable delay.
- All parties should make every effort to attend a grievance meeting.
- You will be allowed to explain your grievance and how you think it should be resolved.
- The meeting may be adjourned for any investigation that may be necessary
- The need for confidentiality will be respected during every stage of the procedure.

### **Putting your grievance in writing**

You should set out the grievance in writing to your Line Manager. You should stick to the facts and avoid language that is insulting or abusive.

Where your grievance is against your Line Manager and you feel unable to approach him or her you should put your grievance in writing to the Clerk to the Local Meeting, or if the Clerk is your Line Manager, then to one of the Elders.

Your Line Manager (or other person to whom you set out your Grievance) may send a copy to the person or people against whom the grievance is made who may then respond in writing. You will be sent a copy of any response.

### **Grievance meeting**

Your Line Manager will call you to a meeting, where possible within 14 days, to hear your grievance. The Line Manager will normally be accompanied by another member of the local meeting, to support him/her with decision-making.

If your grievance is against your Line Manager, the person to whom you set out your grievance will call you to a meeting as above and an independent panel of two or three people selected from the Clerk to the Local Meeting, the Elders and Overseers will hear your grievance.

You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative, or other appropriate person at this meeting. The companion will be allowed to address the hearing to put and sum up your case, respond on your behalf to any views expressed at the meeting and confer with you during the hearing. The companion does not, however, have the right to answer questions on your behalf or address the hearing if you do not wish it.

Those hearing the grievance have discretion as to whether they should also hold a separate meeting with the person against whom the grievance is made and any other persons involved.

After the meeting those who have heard the grievance will give you a decision in writing, without unreasonable delay. Where appropriate, they will set out what action will be taken to resolve the grievance. You will be informed that you can appeal if you are not content with the action taken to resolve your grievance. You will be told to whom you should address any appeal.

### **Appeal procedure**

If you are unhappy with the decision from the grievance meeting, you should make an appeal in writing within 5 working days of receipt of the decision to the Trustee with responsibility for employment matters or if the post is unfilled the Clerk/Convenor of Trustees. Your written appeal should contain your grounds for appeal. Your appeal will be dealt with impartially and by a panel consisting of not less than two nor more than four Trustees who have not previously been involved in the case.

The Trustees have wide discretion in the conduct of the Appeal. They may seek a written response to the grounds of appeal from the person against whom the grievance is made. If such a response is made, a copy will be sent to you.

They may invite you to an appeal meeting in which case this will be held without unreasonable delay. You have the right, as above, to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative or other appropriate person at any such meeting.

The Trustees may also call a separate meeting with the person against whom the grievance is made or any other persons involved.

You will be given a decision without unreasonable delay. Where appropriate, the decision will set out what action will be taken to resolve the grievance. This decision is final and there is no further right of appeal.

**ends**

## 9. Data Protection

The object of the UK regulations is to ensure that information about a person belongs to that person, and that they have the right to say how it is used, and to know how it is going to be used. OSAM is legally obliged to conform to the regulations.

Without obtaining specific consent, an organisation can hold basic details about its members eg name, address telephone number etc and can use them for the reasonable administration of the organisation, provided access to this 'official register' is restricted to those who need to know.

If it is intended, in addition, to publish such personal details for general circulation eg. in a contact list or share it with other bodies then the person must be informed and has the right to withhold their consent.

Each person may give or refuse consent only for themselves and not on behalf of any other person. The exception is for children aged under 18, in this case consent must be given or withheld by a parent or guardian.

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**In our Area Meeting** we ask to publish details of our Members and Attenders in the following ways:

- In a contact list which will circulate within a Local Meeting
- In the Area Meeting's Book of Members and Attenders
- Shared with BYM's contact database
- Shared with other Quaker bodies
- 

We undertake individually, and as an Area Meeting, not to pass any name, unless it is already published in the Book of Meetings, to any other individual or non-Quaker body, society or organisation.

The rules concerning consent for Members and non-members (Attenders) are

### **Members – consent assumed**

When someone comes into formal Membership or transfers their Membership from another Area Meeting, Area Meeting sends them a small welcome pack which includes a consent form indicating how their contact details will be used. If the form is not completed and returned it can be assumed that we have their full consent.

However, they may opt not to have their details (other than name) included in any of the ways listed above by completing the form and returning it to the Area Meeting Membership Clerk who will inform the Local Meeting Clerk of the consents withheld.

A record will be kept on the Area Meeting database and the form filed for future reference.

The Member's details will still be kept on the official register as outlined above.

### **Attendees - consent not assumed**

When the time has arrived to ask an Attender if their name may be included on the Local Meeting list, they must be asked to complete a consent form.

Spouses/partners or family members will not be included unless they also are attending, in which case they must give their own explicit consent.

**The current data consent form is available**, in hardcopy or email attachment, from the AM Membership Clerk.

**When a record has been made by the Local Meeting** of what consents or otherwise have been given, the form is forwarded to the AM Membership Clerk who will update the AM database and file the form for future reference.

**Children.** Details of children under 18 may be included on a published list only with the explicit consent of their parents or guardian. Birth dates and email addresses will not be published.

**Committees and Officers.** Individual Members or Attendees may ask to see and approve any information about them held by elders, overseers or other officers.

**Reports for Membership.** It should be clear to appointed visitors or meetings for clearness that their reports should be factual and should not contain opinions about an individual, or any information which is likely to be confidential or sensitive. Such reports should be retained only for as long as required by Area Meeting.

**Visitors Books.** Visitors should not be asked for their address if this is to be shown in a book left on open display. They could however indicate their own Local Meeting or town/city.

**Local Meetings.** A person should be appointed in each Local Meeting to oversee the records which are kept of Members and Attendees to ensure compliance with Data Protection regulations. It is recommended that Local Meetings review Data Protection at least once a year to ensure that all in the Meeting are aware of the requirements.

As a 'not for profit' organization, OSAM is not required to register with the Information Commissioner's Office, but it is still obliged to comply with the Data Protection regulations.

# 10. Records Management

## Guidance for Meetings

### Types of Records to be deposited

**The minutes of all committees** which keep formal minutes should be deposited. (Clerks, especially those of Elders and Overseers, should be aware of the need for sensitivity in minuting personal information).

These should be deposited in the Oxford Record Office via the AM's Custodian of Records after say 5 years and certainly after 15 years.

**Printed list of Members** – an unused copy should be sent to Custodian of Records when published.

### Type of Paper to be used

The recommendation from Friends House is acid-free paper. But this may prove too expensive for LMs. Good quality paper is acceptable.

### Minute Books

Ideally minutes should be professionally bound. But alternatively a good four-post binder is acceptable. They should be marked 'Property of Oxford and Swindon Area Quaker Meeting, 43 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LW

Once records are deposited the AM Custodian of Records will provide the sender with a receipt from the Oxford Record Office. This receipt together with a minute of record should be minuted.

Further information and more details can be found in

'Your Meeting's Records. A handbook for clerks and custodians of records.'

Published by Friends House Library Committee.

The latest edition can be accessed on their website

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/meeting-libraries-and-records>

If in doubt please contact AM Custodian of Records, Marney Binns (Faringdon)

## Appendices

A. Management checklist for LMs with their own Meeting House

B. Specimen Hiring agreement for smaller Meetings, with Notes

C. **'A Short Guide to making your premises safe from fire'**

Published by HM Government for the Chief Fire Officers' Association

## A. Management checklist

### For Local Meetings with their own Meeting House

Meetings without premises should go to the Property chapter at para 5.2 on page 14, and also to the marked paragraphs in the Safety chapter

### Property and Safety actions should be recorded in the appropriate Record Book

Check	Action by	Frequency/when
<b>Finance</b>		
Annual accounts -examn	Treasurer	February
Annual a/cs to LM BM	Treasurer	March
Annual budget	Treasurer	November
Annual appeal	Collector or Treasurer	March/April
<b>Property and Safety</b>		
Property record	Clerk F&P	Continuous
Safety record	Clerk F&P	Continuous
Property Report	Clerk F&P	Annual
Visual check of building	Clerk F&P	Twice a year
Visual electrical equipment and wiring checks	Clerk F&P	Twice a year
Test electrical circuitry	Clerk F&P	Every 3 years
PAT test of portable electrical appliances	Clerk F&P	New equipment
First Aid kit	Clerk F&P	After use and twice a year
Health & Safety Act compliance	Clerk F&P	Twice a year
Hygiene regulations	Clerk F&P	Continuous
Fire safety checks-pg 20	Clerk F&P	Continuous with formal check twice a year
Insurance checks –pg14 Copies of policy and certificate as well as safety items	Clerk F&P	Annual
<b>Safeguarding</b>	Safeguarding officer	Annual report
<b>Data Protection</b>		
Members' list	Clerk	Annual
<b>Records Management</b>		
LM records	Clerk	Continuous
Finance	Treasurer	Continuous
Property & Safety	Clerk F&P	Continuous
<b>Safety</b>		
Gas Safe Register inspection	Clerk F&P	Annual

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## Appendix B. Specimen Hiring Agreement

This is provided for guidance. LMs who wish to vary the content or format to suit their own needs may do so, but should consult the notes that follow the proforma

**Oxford and Swindon Area Meeting** ..... **Local Quaker Meeting.**

THIS LICENSE AGREEMENT is made on  
.....(date) between .....Local Quaker  
Meeting [the Licensor] and .....  
of ..... [the Licensee].

The Licensor agrees to let the buildings and garden known as The Quaker Meeting House....., ..... [the Premises] to the Licensee, on the following dates:

.....  
.....

The License fee will be based on £ ..... per day/ per 3 hr session, to include heating and utility bills, and will be payable in advance / arrears.

Terms are agreed on the basis that the Licensee will observe the following conditions:

Prior to occupation to produce for the Licensor a copy of their insurance certificate providing Public Liability cover

To ensure that any electrical appliances brought onto the premises will have a current PAT certificate

Not to obstruct the fire escapes, and if any furniture is moved during any session to replace it in its original position at the end of the session

To ensure, at the end of each session, that all doors and windows are properly locked and secure, and that all electric lights and portable equipment are switched off (except equipment controlled by timer and thermostat)

Not to engage in activities on the premises which are inconsistent with Quaker principles, and in particular not to bring alcohol or drugs onto the premises, or to smoke or gamble in or on the premises

Any accidents should be recorded in the accident book in (...place...), and the Booking Clerk should be notified

Not to attach notices or displays to the walls, and to leave the premises clean and tidy at the end of each session

The kitchen is not equipped or certified for public catering, and its use should be restricted to the preparation of drinks and light refreshments

At the end of the letting arrangements to return all keys to the premises to the Booking Clerk

To notify the Licensor immediately of any defects in or damage to the property

To inform the Booking Clerk of any changes or cancellations of bookings

Signed for and on behalf of the Licensor:

..... date:  
.....

### **Notes on OSAM Hiring Conditions**

#### **All hiring agreements should now carry the official designation of the charity shown on the cover page**

Local Meetings may also wish to consider the following matters in drawing up a contract with hirers which meets the particular needs of their Meeting House.

#### **1. Booking conditions**

Dates and times agreed in advance. Notice of cancellation, if required. Name and address of responsible contact person. Name and address for invoicing if different, with any arrangement eg for frequency of invoicing. Signature on behalf of hirer and Meeting.

#### **2. Users and uses**

Individuals or organisations whose aims are in harmony with principles of the Society of Friends. No alcohol, gambling or smoking.

#### **3. Insurance and Safeguarding are Hirer's responsibility** Note possible wording:

'xxx Meeting House cannot accept any responsibility for any activities organised by those hiring rooms, who should ensure that their own public liability insurance is arranged to cover against any claim made against them in respect of any activity they are responsible for or any equipment that they bring onto the premises. This is particularly important in respect of physical activities eg country dancing, yoga, aerobics and the preparation of food.'

'When appropriate Hirers must have policies for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults'

#### **4.Fire**

Hirer to identify all **Fire Exits**. Meeting to provide a list in the Conditions and also a plan in a prominent place in the building. Check on arrival and departure that Fire Exits are not obstructed. Advise hirer to consider how to evacuate any wheelchairs or people with movement difficulties. Hirers to be reminded to draw the attention of their audience to the location of the Fire Exits at the beginning of their event

**Fire extinguishers** – state that the location and type of each extinguisher is marked on the same plan as the Fire Exits. (Type=physical type and uses).

#### **Premises**

Keep good order during activities and on arrival and departure. Do not stick or fix posters or notices to the walls

Leave premises clean and tidy, and replace furniture in its accustomed position. A diagram could be supplied. Ensure that windows are all closed and all lights switched off. Check that electric appliances and heaters are switched off.

Inform Bookings clerk of any defects or damage to the property.

#### **Kitchen**

Not certified for public catering, so may only be used for preparation of drinks and light refreshments. Regular hirers may leave supplies by arrangement. Arrangements for rubbish and recycling. Fair Trade policy (if the Meeting has one)

#### **Heating**

Each Meeting should word this item to fit its own circumstances

#### **Hirer's electrical appliances**

Any electrical appliances brought into the Meeting House should have a current PAT certificate.

#### **Keys**

Each Meeting should describe its own arrangements. If keys are lent to regular hirers they should be checked in at the end of the hiring period.

#### **Disabled access**

Each Meeting to describe its own arrangements

#### **Charges**

Rates for different periods and to various classes of hirer

#### **Ends**





