
**THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS) IN
BRITAIN**

**NORTH WEST LONDON AREA QUAKER MEETING
(PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS HAMPSTEAD MONTHLY MEETING)
CONSTITUTION**

Adopted on the 13th September 2007 by Minute 66.07 of Hampstead Monthly Meeting

Definitions

- i) The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain [referred to below as the Religious Society] refers to the church in Britain, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man in its entirety, including all its local meetings for worship and its constituent meetings for church affairs, as well as all their work.
- ii) Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) (Britain Yearly Meeting) refers to the centrally held and managed policy, property, employment and work of the Religious Society.
- iii) Meeting for Sufferings is the standing representative body entrusted with the general care of matters affecting the Religious Society.
- iv) Area Meetings are the main meetings for church affairs. They are the level of the Religious Society at which individual membership is held. Each Area Meeting is a separate charitable entity and may be registered as such with the Charity Commission.
- v) The term Friend refers to a member of the Religious Society.
- vi) The term Attender refers to a person who is not a member of the Religious Society but who regularly attends its meetings for worship.
- vii) Reference is made in the text to the word 'concern'. This has a particular meaning when used by members of the Religious Society which is - when an individual feels that he or she has a prompting, leading, or call to action and believes it to be divinely inspired. If the backing of the Religious Society is asked for, the concern is tested in local meetings/area meetings of members and, if appropriate, nationally to see if others feel it has legitimacy. A concern may be about a local issue but could have wide implications. Concerns are laid down when their purpose is achieved or force spent. Further elucidation may be obtained from Quaker Faith and Practice.
- viii) Friends Trust Ltd is an associated charity which is the custodian trustee for the Religious Society

1. Constitution.

North West London Area Quaker Meeting and its property shall be administered and managed in accordance with the provisions in this constitution. A full account of the governance of the Religious Society is given in the Book of Christian Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain; the current edition is entitled Quaker Faith & Practice (London 2005). This constitution is a shortened version produced for the purposes of registering with the Charity Commission. If any confusion should arise between this document and Quaker Faith & Practice, Quaker Faith and Practice shall prevail.

2. Name

The name of the charitable body is North West London Area Quaker Meeting (Religious Society of Friends) (abbreviated as North West London Area Meeting or as Area Meeting)

3. Object

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

4. Application of Resources

Within North West London Area Quaker Meeting volunteering, money and property are used to further the Area Meeting's object by work such as:

- i) strengthening the life and witness of Quaker meetings both in the area of North West London Area Quaker Meeting and beyond;
- ii) spreading the message of Quakers and interpreting and developing the thought and practice of the Religious Society of Friends;
- iii) undertaking Quaker service for the relief of suffering at home and abroad;
- iv) funding the concerns that Quaker meetings in the area of North West London Area Quaker Meeting or beyond have adopted or agreed to support (see the section Definitions for the meaning of the word 'concern' in this context);
- v) providing for the pastoral care of individual members and attenders including assistance to those in need and for education;
- vi) contributing to the maintenance and development of Quaker meeting houses as places for public worship and from which to carry our witness into the world;
- vii) administering and maintaining the organisation and activities of North West London Area Quaker Meeting and contributing to the support of Britain Yearly Meeting. To do this it may :

- A. Raise funds from contributions, from legacies, from grants and other sources outside the area meeting' from investments and the use of assets' and from the sale of goods or services provided in furtherance of the Area Meeting's objects;
- B. Initiate the purchase, leasing or acquisition of property. The Area Meeting should communicate with Six Weeks Meeting (SWM) at an early stage about their intention, and what role Six Weeks Meeting will be asked to take. The disposal of property will be undertaken by Six Weeks Meeting on the decision of the Area Meeting, taking into consideration any advice given by Six Weeks Meeting.
- C. Borrow money and give security for loans (but only in accordance with the restrictions imposed by the Charities Act 1993 as amended from time to time);
- D. Set aside income as a reserve and for designated purposes, making investments in accordance with the ethical testimonies of Britain Yearly Meeting and any testimonies adopted by the Area Meeting;
- E. Co-operate with other charities or enter into partnerships. In particular, the Area Meeting should co-operate with Six Weeks Meeting to facilitate their management of property and pooled funds;
- F. Establish or support trusts or institutions formed for charitable purposes within the Area Meeting's objectives;
- G. Employ staff;
- H. Pay pensions;
- I. Obtain and pay for goods and services;
- J. Effect insurance;
- K. Open, operate and close bank accounts and appoint signatories;
- L. Reimburse reasonable expenses, including those of the trustees incurred when acting on behalf of the Area Meeting;
- M. Authorise any of the Area Meeting's local meetings or committees to open a bank account and to appoint signatories, such action to be recorded by minute of the constituent meeting;
- N. Do any other lawful thing that is necessary or desirable for the achievement of the objects of the Area Meeting.

5. Administration of Property

5.1 Meeting Houses and their Gardens.

Major items of expenditure and other matters relating to the care of property will be made by an associated charity, Six Weeks Meeting. This is comprised of members appointed by the seven Area Meetings in the London area. Those appointed to serve on Six Weeks Meeting become trustees of all the meeting houses and other property of the seven Area Meetings. The Area Meetings appoint Premises Committees for each meeting house to administer the property on a day-to-day basis. A detailed description of the functions of the Area Meetings, the Six Weeks Meeting, and the premises committees in relation to property is contained in the booklet entitled "Six Weeks Meeting Handbook".

5.2 Jordans Burial Ground.

North West London Area Quaker Meeting part owns with a neighbouring Area Meeting, West London Area Quaker Meeting, a burial ground known as Jordans Burial Ground, which is in Jordans Buckinghamshire. Three Friends are appointed by North West London Area Meeting to serve for three years on a committee which administers this property. The committee's annual accounts and activities are considered annually by this charity.

6. Dissolution

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

7. Amendments

- i) Amendments to this constitution shall be agreed by North West London Area Quaker Meeting in session and recorded by minute of the Area Meeting.
- ii) No amendment may be made that affects the object of the Area Meeting (Clause 3) or the benefits to trustees (Clause 18) without the prior written consent of the Charity Commission, nor may the charitable status of the Area Meeting be affected.

8. Membership

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

9. Termination of Membership

- i) The membership of anyone shall cease when a record to this effect is made in the minutes of North West London Area Quaker Meeting; this includes members transferring to another Area Meeting.
- ii) If a member is dissatisfied with a final decision of the Area Meeting affecting her or him, the member may appeal in writing to Meeting for Sufferings against the decision of the Area Meeting.

10. Meetings for Church Affairs

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

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

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

11. Constituent Meetings

- i) North West London Area Quaker Meeting includes all the local meetings contained within its area.
- ii) Arrangements for the establishment, running or dissolution of such constituent meetings shall be in accordance with the Book of Christian Discipline.

12. Appointments of Officers

- i) The Area Meeting in session shall appoint people to act as clerk, assistant clerk and treasurer. The roles may be shared between more than one person. All post holders shall be members of the Religious Society except that the Treasurer may be a long standing attender or be in good standing with the Religious Society.
- ii) The appointments shall be made for a fixed term, generally not more than three years. Only in exceptional circumstances shall an appointee remain continuously in post for more than six years.

13. Appointment of Trustees

- i) The Area Meeting shall appoint Friends, normally from its own membership, to form a body of trustees comprising not fewer than 5 or more than 20 persons.
- ii) The trustees shall normally, in so far as is practicable, include the Area Meeting clerk, Area Meeting treasurer and at least one representative of each local meeting, usually the clerk and/or treasurer, but not any employee of the Area Meeting.
- iii) One trustee, usually the Area Meeting clerk, shall be appointed by Area Meeting in session to act as clerk to the trustees.
- iv) The appointments shall be reviewed at intervals not exceeding three years. A trustee can be reappointed on no more than two occasions to give an unbroken term of service as a trustee of the Area Meeting not exceeding nine years. That person cannot then be reappointed as a trustee of that Area Meeting until three years have elapsed after the end of the last period of service in that capacity.
- v) Trustees should feel free to consult any member of the Area Meeting.

14. Trustees Eligibility, Disqualification and Removal

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

- i) notifies to the clerk of the Area Meeting that he or she wishes to be released from service as a trustee;
- ii) ceases to be a member of North West London Area Meeting;
- iii) is believed by the Area Meeting to no longer be a fit or suitable person to carry out the duties of a trustee;
- iv) comes to the end of his or her term of service.

Removal of a trustee under the terms of (iii) above shall require a decision of the Area Meeting in session. An individual trustee may make an appeal against such a decision to Meeting for Sufferings, whose decision shall be final and binding.

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

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

15. Trustees Functions

- i) Trustees oversee the implementation of the decisions of North West London Area Quaker Meeting and ensure that tasks are carried out effectively and correctly. They have a legal obligation to ensure that the assets of North West London Area Quaker Meeting are used for the purposes mentioned in Clause 3 of this constitution and for that purpose only.
- ii) Trustees shall ensure that North West London Area Quaker Meeting complies with regulatory, statutory and legal requirements and implements good practice.
- iii) Trustees shall ensure that an annual report and statement of accounts for North West London Area Quaker Meeting (including the local meetings it contains) is prepared in compliance with current charities legislation. The report and statement of accounts must be presented to Area Meeting in session for consideration and acceptance not later than eight months after the end of the financial year.
- iv) The trustees shall report to North West London Area Quaker Meeting at least once a year. They shall also refer to the Area Meeting in session any major issues for decisions.
- v) The trustees shall submit an appropriate annual return to the Charity Commission in compliance with current legislation.

16. Trustees Power to Delegate

- i) The trustees may delegate any of their powers or functions, but not their responsibility, to an individual or committee.
- ii) The trustees may impose conditions when delegating, including the conditions that:
 - a) the relevant powers are to be exercised exclusively by the committee to which they are delegated.

- b) no expenditure may be incurred except in accordance with a budget previously agreed with the trustees.
- iii) The trustees may revoke or alter a delegation.

17. Trustees Meetings and Proceedings

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

18. Trustees not to be personally interested.

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

- iii) The Area Meeting may insure Trustees against the costs of a successful defence of a criminal prosecution brought against them as charity trustees or against personal liability incurred in respect of any act or omission which is or is alleged to be in breach of trust or in breach of duty.

19. Income and Expenditure.

- i) Subject to Clause 20ii) below, the funds of North West London Area Quaker Meeting shall be safeguarded by depositing in a bank account or accounts. The bank account or accounts shall be held in the name of North West London Area Quaker Meeting or in the name of any of the local meetings or committees contained within the Area Meeting and not in the name of any individual.
- ii) The funds belonging to North West London Area Quaker Meeting shall be applied only in furthering the objects of North West London Area Quaker Meeting as defined in Clause 3, above.

20. Property and investments.

- i) Property: Six Weeks Meeting will arrange for all properties to be held in the name of Friends Trust Limited as custodian trustees.
- ii) Investments: Investments held by or in trust for North West London Area Quaker Meeting will be held in the name of North West London Area Quaker Meeting or in the name of Friends Trust Limited as custodian trustees. If the trustees decide to use a different custodian trustee to hold investments, they must apply to the Charity Commission for an Order discharging Friends Trust Limited from their trusteeship.
- iii) Insurance: Six Weeks Meeting shall make arrangements for all premises to be adequately insured, including third party, accident, buildings contents, public and employers liability.

Signed.....Clerk of North West London Area Quaker Meeting.

.....Treasurer of North West London Area Quaker Meeting.