

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Quaker Life Central Committee



TERMS OF REFERENCE

“...to support and strengthen Quaker life throughout the yearly meeting, a remit which covers faith and practice: both spiritual nurture and the practical tasks required for the running of our Quaker meetings...”
[*Quaker faith & practice* part of 8.08, fifth edition].

1. Summary of Purpose

- 1.1. Quaker Life Central Committee’s purpose is to support and strengthen Quaker life throughout the Yearly Meeting to help to deepen our experience of God’s grace, its consequent expression in our lives and in all our meetings, and to increase awareness of and interest in Quakers in Britain. This remit covers faith and practice, spiritual nurture and the practical tasks required for the running of our Quaker meetings.
- 1.2. Quaker Life Central Committee discerns a programme of work and provides strategic guidance and oversight for the work of Quaker Life. The work may be taken forward in many ways, e.g. by staff, the Committee, Friends, or partner organisations.

2. Authority, Delegation and Relationships

- 2.1. Quaker Life Central Committee is appointed by Meeting for Sufferings and is accountable to Britain Yearly Meeting through Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees.
- 2.2. The Committee oversees the work of Quaker Life and is required to plan and prioritise a strategic programme, agreed and resourced by Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees within the context of the long-term framework and operational plan.
- 2.3. The Committee’s meetings and work are conducted in faithful waiting on the spirit, in the expectation of being guided. We cannot constrain the spirit. If the Committee’s leadings would take it out of the area outlined in these terms of reference it should record its leading in a minute to Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees who may discern the way forward or seek the guidance of Meeting for Sufferings.
- 2.4. The Committee should monitor and consider the outcomes of its work and report its conclusions annually through Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees.
- 2.5. The Committee’s annual report should help Trustees to ensure that the overall work is well-governed, coherent (in line with the vision expressed by Meeting for Sufferings), and appropriately resourced. The report should focus on the strategic role of the Committee described in section 3.1, and include future plans. Staff work is reported to Trustees in other ways.
- 2.6. The Committee will develop a dialogue with Meeting for Sufferings, engaging them on principles, exploring the framework vision, focussing on major changes and seeking guidance on the future.
- 2.7. The Committee may communicate by minute with Meeting for Sufferings, Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees and other Central and Standing Committees of Britain Yearly Meeting.

- 2.8. The Committee is responsible for establishing functional sub-committees and working groups as required, for appointments to these subsidiary bodies and for their terms of reference. The Committee is expected to determine priorities for any subsidiary bodies, to monitor and consider the outcomes of their work and to report its conclusions to Trustees. If required, the Committee is also expected to establish an effective nominations committee and to work closely with Central Nominations Committee.
- 2.9. The Committee may delegate its responsibilities to subsidiary bodies that it may appoint and may seek assistance from staff, and from its own and other working parties, groups and committees as appropriate.

3. Duties

3.1. The Committee should:

- 3.1.1. Develop and test policies (including public policy positions) and strategic objectives for long-standing, new and emerging corporate concerns;
- 3.1.2. Determine, develop and prioritise the work of Quaker Life, consulting with other relevant committees of the Yearly Meeting and agreed by Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees;
- 3.1.3. Oversee the work of Quaker Life in collaboration with Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees;
- 3.1.4. Help Yearly Meeting, Meeting for Sufferings and Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees to come to an informed judgement about new corporate concerns, as well as fostering those which are already recognised;
- 3.1.5. Review activities in the life of Britain Yearly Meeting, test concerns, and discern emerging issues, growing points and risks in relation to the Committee's vision and strategy. Advise Trustees concerning changes to the broad priorities and the shape and balance of the work;
- 3.1.6. Monitor the work done and the resources expended within Quaker Life in relation to the strategic programme (see section 2.2). Consider the outcomes achieved, and report its conclusions to Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees, including proposals to finance the work, especially for new work or other major changes (see section 2.5). Reports should be timed to enable Trustees to report to Yearly Meeting.

3.2. The Committee will ensure that the work of Quaker Life:

- 3.2.1. Undertakes work laid upon it by Britain Yearly Meeting, Meeting for Sufferings and Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees, working within resources made available by Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees;
- 3.2.2. Considers communication opportunities from an early stage in the planning of all work, consulting with the Communication and Services department;
- 3.2.3. Communicates its strategy and policies to Friends as appropriate;
- 3.2.4. Maintains effective communications within the structures of Britain Yearly Meeting and operates within the policies adopted by Meeting for Sufferings on "speaking out" as regards external communications;

- 3.3. To achieve the aims of the Committee's overall strategy in accordance with agreed procedures of Britain Yearly Meeting, the Committee is encouraged to ensure that the work of Quaker Life:
 - 3.3.1. Is coherent with other centrally managed work, by liaison with other committees and groups, or more widely as appropriate;
 - 3.3.2. Is well understood tested and supported, by working with Friends within Britain Yearly Meeting through Quaker structures and processes;
 - 3.3.3. Promotes sharing of experience and expertise, by working with Woodbrooke Quaker Study centre and other Quaker bodies nationally and internationally;
 - 3.3.4. Witnesses to Quaker values and testimonies, by engaging in dialogue with policy and decision shapers and institutions, nationally, internationally and globally;
 - 3.3.5. Advances shared concerns by working with secular organisations nationally and internationally;
 - 3.3.6. Includes maintaining and developing policies supporting the right holding of meetings for worship and meetings for church affairs, including policies for those taking special responsibilities as clerks, elders and overseers, wardens, librarians, registering officers, and in nominations work or other ways;
 - 3.3.7. Includes maintaining and developing policies supporting spiritual development and religious learning, both with and for adults and with and for children and young people, with those already within the Society and those who may be interested in becoming involved;
 - 3.3.8. Includes maintaining and developing policies supporting membership matters and outreach, including monitoring membership trends and responding to enquirers.
- 3.4. The Committee should ensure that appropriate induction and training are provided for its own members and members of its sub-committees and working groups;
- 3.5. The Committee will provide appropriate advice for work on projects by liaising with staff and volunteers;
- 3.6. The Committee has responsibility for and shall appoint the Library Committee as a functional committee which should report through Quaker Life Central Committee;
- 3.7. The Committee is responsible for the arrangements for the holding of Junior Yearly Meeting, see *Quaker faith & practice* 8.08, (Fifth edition)
- 3.8. The Committee should consult with Meeting for Sufferings through Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees in the circumstances laid down in section 7.03 of *Quaker faith & practice* (5th edition).

4. Membership and attendance

- 4.1. The Committee will have a maximum of 12 members.
- 4.2. Members are appointed by Meeting for Sufferings on behalf of Yearly Meeting for a three-year period, one third retiring annually on a rolling basis, with names submitted by Central Nominations Committee. Reappointment is possible for a second term and exceptionally for a third.

- 4.3. The clerk and assistant clerk are appointed by the Committee from their number;
- 4.4. The Clerk of Meeting for Sufferings, the Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees and the Recording Clerk (or his/her nominee) may attend meetings ex-officio.
- 4.5. The clerk of Quaker Life Representative Council may attend ex officio.
- 4.6. Other Friends, specialists or members of staff may be asked to attend by invitation of the clerk for specific agenda items.
- 4.7. A member of staff, designated by the Recording Clerk, will normally attend Committee meetings to act as secretary to the Committee. Meeting without the secretary will only be with that person's or with the Recording Clerk's agreement.
- 4.8. Members of the Committee are members of Quaker Life Representative Council, which they are encouraged to attend.

5. Frequency of Meetings

- 5.1. The Committee should meet as frequently as appropriate for discernment and accountability, with meetings fitting within the calendar agreed with the Recording Clerk's Office.
- 5.2. The Committee will meet sufficiently frequently to ensure the effective use of the resources it manages and to make timely contributions to the planning, review and reporting cycle for the work of Quaker Life.
- 5.3. The Committee should agree a mechanism for conducting business between meetings.

6. Agreement of the Terms of Reference

- 6.1. The Committee shall work within these terms of reference under the authority of minute BYMT-2014-10-15 of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees held 3 October 2014 amended by minute BYMT-2015-11-16 of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees held 13 November 2015.
- 6.2. The terms of reference shall be reviewed at least triennially and may in the interim be amended by minuted decisions of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees.