

# Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee



## TERMS OF REFERENCE

Quaker Peace & Social Witness works with and on behalf of Friends in Britain Yearly Meeting to translate our faith into action.

As Quakers we are impelled by our faith to make our lives an active witness for peace and justice. Our historic testimonies to equality, justice, peace, simplicity and truth challenge us to alleviate suffering and create positive social change.  
(part of *Quaker faith & practice* 8.11, fifth edition).

### 1. Summary of Purpose

- 1.1. Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee discerns a programme of work and provides strategic guidance and oversight for the work of Quaker Peace & Social Witness. The work may be taken forward in many ways, e.g. by staff, the Committee, its sub-committees and groups, Friends, or partner organisations.

### 2. Authority, Delegation and Relationships

- 2.1. Quaker Peace & Social Witness 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 Peace & Social Witness and is required to plan and prioritise a strategic programme of work, 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 should send a representative (normally the clerk) to the annual forum of the Quaker World Relations Committee in order to facilitate communication and co-ordination between the committees.
- 2.9. 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.
- 2.10. 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 Peace & Social Witness, consulting with other relevant committees of the Yearly Meeting and agreed by Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees;
  - 3.1.3. Oversee the work of Quaker Peace & Social Witness together 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 Peace & Social Witness. 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. Reports should be timed to enable Trustees to report to Yearly Meeting.
- 3.2. The Committee will ensure that the work of Quaker Peace & Social Witness:
  - 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;

- 3.2.5. Ensures that Britain Yearly Meeting's views are presented to governments, intergovernmental bodies and other political institutions, interpreting Quaker values and testimonies as evidenced in the work;
- 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 Quaker Peace & Social Witness' work:
  - 3.3.1. Is coherent with other centrally managed work, by liaising 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. Shares experience and expertise, by working with 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. Advances Quaker concerns by working with the members of Churches Together in Britain & Ireland and with other inter-church and interfaith groups, other churches and faiths at home and abroad;
- 3.4. The Committee will 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 should ensure on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees that the Quaker Housing Trust is appropriately serviced;
- 3.7. 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 15 members [from 2015].
- 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 the 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. Other Friends, specialists or members of staff may be asked to attend by invitation of the clerk for specific agenda items.
- 4.6. 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.

## **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 Peace & Social Witness.
- 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 with effect from 1 January 2015 under the authority of minute BYMT-2014-10-15 of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees held 3 October 2014.
- 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.