



Britain Yearly Meeting  
of the Religious  
Society of Friends

# QUAKER LIFE CENTRAL COMMITTEE QUAKER LIFE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

As from January 2013

### 1. SUMMARY OF PURPOSE

- 1.1 Within the context of overall Quaker Life Central Committee policy and its given task of helping 'to deepen our experience of God's grace and its consequent expression in our lives and in all our meetings', the principal purposes of Quaker Life Representative Council shall be to act as a channel of communication between the Quaker Life Central Committee and local Meetings and to facilitate the enrichment of the life of Meetings through the sharing and development of life in the Spirit.

### 2. MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1 Membership of the Representative Council shall comprise:
- a. the appointed representative and appointed deputy of each area meeting within Britain Yearly Meeting (normally one or the other attending each Council meeting);
  - b. two representatives of Young Friends General Meeting appointed on a triennial basis or less;
  - c. all members of Quaker Life Central Committee;
  - d. the clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting, the clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees and the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings, all ex officio;
  - f. the appointed clerk and assistant clerk of Representative Council (if not already members).

Members shall normally be appointed on a triennial basis, with representative members being appointed normally for the full triennium.

- 2.2 The clerk and assistant clerk shall be nominated by the Quaker Life Nominations Committee and appointed by Quaker Life Central Committee on a triennial basis. The clerk shall be ex officio a member of Quaker Life Central Committee.
- 2.3 Speakers shall be invited to attend as the clerks and Planning Committee shall see fit.
- 2.4 Each Quaker Life functional committee and long term working group shall be invited to send a member and/or an associated member of Quaker Life staff to each Council meeting. Other Quaker Life working groups may also be invited to send a representative when appropriate.
- 2.5 A member of staff appointed by the Quaker Life general secretary shall act as secretary to the Council and attend the Council and any planning meetings.
- 2.6 The Quaker Life general secretary and/or the assistant general secretary will normally attend each Council meeting.
- 2.7 Other Friends and members of staff may attend on the invitation of the clerks.

### **3. FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS**

- 3.1 Representative Council shall normally meet twice each year, residentially over a weekend in the spring and the autumn.
- 3.2 Meetings shall be planned to fit within the calendar agreed by the general secretary on behalf of Quaker Life Central Committee.

### **4. DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 4.1 The Council will help Quaker Life committees and working groups to:
  - keep in touch with the life of meetings
  - communicate and co-ordinate work on shared initiatives and issues
  - nurture the spiritual and practical life of meetings and Friends.
- 4.2 The Council will provide opportunities for sharing with meetings an understanding of work done on their behalf by Quaker Life committees and working groups.

- 4.3 The Council will provide opportunities for networking between meetings, and for sharing and learning from each other's successes and failures.
- 4.4 Planning of the Council's programme will bear in mind the work of those Listed Informal Groups whose interests relate to the work of Quaker Life. They will be invited to contribute to the programme where appropriate.
- 4.5 The Council will seek to develop the confidence of individual representatives, enabling them to play a fuller part both in their own Meetings and in the life of the Yearly Meeting.
- 4.6 The Council shall work within the budget drawn up initially by the general secretary and approved by Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees.
- 4.7 The Council will be largely self-financing, monthly meetings being charged sufficient to cover most costs of each meeting, any addition required being met through the Quaker Life budget approved for that purpose.
- 4.8 A report of each Council meeting shall be circulated to all those entitled to attend.

## **5. AUTHORITY & ACCOUNTABILITY**

- 5.1 The Representative Council shall be accountable to Quaker Life Central Committee and draw its authority from it but shall have responsibility through Central Committee to area meetings, who appoint most of its members.
- 5.2 The Council shall work according to the Quaker business method, as described in chapter 3 and elsewhere in *Quaker faith & practice*.
- 5.3 The Council shall not normally minute its business except for the appointment of clerks and any substantive issues which arise, where the clerks discern that a minute will be helpful, but written notes of each meeting shall be recorded, with any minutes made, in a minute book and a record of key documents and minutes shall be kept in a gold minute file.
- 5.4 Any formal communication by minute which the Council may wish to have with other bodies shall be conducted through Quaker Life Central Committee, but the clerks are encouraged to communicate informally with other Quaker bodies where this will benefit the work of the Council.
- 5.5 The Council does not receive minutes from area meetings as formal communication by minute is through Meeting for Sufferings.
- 5.6 The Clerks shall make a written annual report to Quaker Life Central Committee, which will be sent by Central Committee to area meetings.

## **6. PLANNING**

- 6.1 Meetings of the Representative Council shall be arranged by a Planning Committee comprising three members of the Council, appointed by Quaker Life Central Committee normally for the remainder of their current triennium, plus its clerk, assistant clerk and secretary and one other member of Quaker Life Central Committee. The general secretary and the assistant general secretary may attend ex officio. The Planning Committee shall meet between each Council meeting.

Approved by minute **12/52** of Quaker Life Central Committee held 14-16 September 2012.