

QUAKER LIFE CENTRAL COMMITTEE LIBRARY COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

As from 30 November 2003

1. SUMMARY OF PURPOSE

- 1.1 Within the context of overall Quaker Life Central Committee policy, the purpose of Library Committee is to ensure the continuing central collection, safe custody and making appropriately available material, both historical and current, produced by and about the Religious Society of Friends, its faith, insights, works and witness; to employ best professional practice to this end within budgetary constraints, and to encourage such practices in these areas to Friends locally. The Committee shall set policy and determine priorities for the work delegated to it by Quaker Life Central Committee.

2. MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1 The Committee comprises six members appointed triennially by Quaker Life Central Committee, names having been submitted by its Nominations Committee, with one-third retiring annually on a rolling basis. Each member is appointed for an initial term of three years but could be invited to serve for a second term. Exceptionally a Friend could be invited to serve for successive triennia up to a maximum of three according to the needs of the Committee for continuity and to retain specialist skills. The Woodbrooke librarian shall be invited to serve *ex officio*.
- 2.2 Membership of the Committee shall be drawn from Friends and attenders with the appropriate skills and experience, including knowledge of the work of libraries, museums and archives, as well as management and IT developments, and wide Quaker experience. The Committee shall maintain short biographies on all its members to aid induction and the sharing of skills and experience.
- 2.3 The Committee shall appoint a clerk and assistant clerk from its number.
- 2.4 A member of staff, usually the Librarian, designated through the general secretary, will normally attend meetings and act as secretary to the Committee. Meetings without the secretary should only occur with the general secretary's agreement.
- 2.5 The clerk and general secretary of Quaker Life Central Committee can attend meetings *ex officio*. Quaker Life Central Committee may appoint a link person to the Committee who may also attend.

- 2.6 The Committee may invite the attendance of other Friends or specialists on an *ad hoc* basis to help on particular issues on its behalf, but may not co-opt on a permanent basis.
- 2.7 The deputy Librarian can attend meetings. Other members of staff may be asked to attend for specific agenda items by invitation of the clerk.

3. FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

- 3.1 The Committee shall meet as frequently as appropriate for discernment and accountability, normally four times a year. Meetings should fit in with the calendar agreed with the general secretary on behalf of Quaker Life Central Committee.
- 3.2 The Committee shall seek an appropriate balance between meeting together and communicating individually or collectively in other ways.

4. DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 The Committee is responsible for the maintenance of the Library at Friends House (comprising books, manuscripts, pictures and other material relating to Quaker thought, testimony and service) and for the proper custody of Britain Yearly Meeting's central archives.
- 4.2 The Committee is authorised to accept in the name of Meeting for Sufferings material by gift or on temporary or permanent loan.
- 4.3 In exercising these responsibilities, the Committee shall work closely with the librarian and library staff in an advisory or consultative role, offering support, encouragement and appreciation. The librarian is responsible for day to day management of the library.
- 4.4 The Committee shall regularly monitor progress by receiving reports on the work of the library and by reviewing the implementation of the agreed action plan.
- 4.5 The Committee shall work closely with the librarian in developing collection and retention policies, access and use policies, and budgetary priorities. The Committee shall offer guidance in interpreting these policies and priorities.
- 4.6 The Committee shall carry out its work professionally within budgetary constraints, working with staff to plan and set priorities. Staff will report to the Committee on their setting and management of the budget, including monitoring of expenditure and income. The Committee will set policy on maximizing income and advise on methods of maximising it from sales and other sources, so far as is reconcilable with core purposes.
- 4.7 The Committee shall ensure that the processes which have created and brought together an unrivalled central body of Quaker archival, manuscript, printed and illustrative resources continue; and that these resources are

further improved, by using best current professional practice in librarianship, archive administration and records management, and by encouraging continued acquisition of these materials by purchase, negotiation and gift, so far as is possible within budgetary constraints.

- 4.8 The Committee shall encourage a deeper knowledge of Quaker life, faith and thought, among Friends and others through appropriate access to the Library's own holdings, and by making the Library's holdings better known, as well as by advice on holdings in Great Britain and overseas, of other libraries, repositories and institutions, and of meetings, as well as suggesting avenues for discovery of related resources; and to this end shall maintain in the Library adequate lists and guides to materials held here and elsewhere.
- 4.9 The Committee shall develop policy to ensure that access to resources in the Library's care, for staff and committees within Friends House, and for other users, is as efficient, effective and swift as possible within management constraints; and that the existence of these resources, and of such Library services as records management, biographical and historical information, and provision of illustrations, is known to those who may need or benefit from their use.
- 4.10 The Committee shall ensure that advice is given, both generally and individually, to the creators and custodians of central/corporate Quaker records, towards good practice in keeping and continuing care of their records, including appropriate deposit; and to this end shall maintain an understanding of the increasing range of methods of record-creation and preservation, and of the diversity of practice.
- 4.11 The Committee shall ensure that, in support of meetings, advice is given to the creators and custodians of local Quaker records towards good practice in keeping and continuing care of their records, including appropriate deposit, and to this end shall maintain an understanding of the increasing range of methods of record-creation and preservation, and of the diversity of practice. Similarly it shall ensure that local meeting librarians and others involved in the care of Quaker and Quaker-related libraries are given advice on good practice and appropriate acquisition and care of their collections, and on making them suitably accessible; and shall understand local needs, problems and achievements to this end.
- 4.12 The Committee shall have the responsibility to arrange for appropriate legitimate reproduction of material from our resources for use elsewhere, for knowledge, outreach and profit, within budgetary limits.
- 4.13 The Committee shall have the responsibility to ensure that specialist finding aids and guides compiled in the Library, which go beyond standard catalogues and listings (such as the various biographical and geographical guides), which make both our holdings and the Society's life, faith and work more intelligible to Friends and others, are maintained and made known more widely.
- 4.14 The Committee shall have the responsibility to ensure that in areas where library staff have specialist professionally-related skills which may relate to legal questions (e.g. copyright) or to efficiency (e.g. indexing), these are made known and drawn on.

5. AUTHORITY & ACCOUNTABILITY

- 5.1 The Committee is accountable to Quaker Life Central Committee and draws its authority from it.
- 5.2 The Committee shall make reports, including a written annual report, to Quaker Life Central Committee as required.
- 5.3 The Committee shall work to the policies of Quaker Life Central Committee in producing strategic and operational plans.
- 5.4 The Committee is a functional committee with both policy making and operational responsibilities. On operational matters it works in partnership with staff who have the responsibility to coordinate central work. The Committee shall operate according to the policies and procedures on delegation determined by Meeting for Sufferings and Quaker Life Central Committee, and as outlined in chapters 6, 7 and 8 of *Quaker faith and practice*
- 5.5 The Committee shall work according to the Quaker business method, as described in chapter 3 and elsewhere in *Quaker faith and practice*.
- 5.6 The Committee shall minute its decisions in its meetings, and forward its minutes to Quaker Life Central Committee.
- 5.7 The Committee may communicate formally by minute with Quaker Life Central Committee and its functional committees and working and support groups. Formal communication with other committees and bodies outside Quaker Life shall be through central committee (see also 5.8). If a formal link is required with a functional committee or working group of another central committee, this shall be with the permission of the central committees concerned.
- 5.8 When appropriate Library Committee may communicate by minute directly to Meeting for Sufferings (*Quaker faith & practice* 8.18).
- 5.9 The Committee shall keep a minute book and a “Gold Book” of minutes and supporting papers current to its operation.
- 5.10 The Committee may set up, appoint or lay down sub-committees and working groups, drawing their membership from outside the committee as required, and delegating to them the responsibility to implement and oversee specific policy areas or tasks
- 5.11 The Committee shall work within the budget drawn up by the general secretary on behalf of Quaker Life Central Committee, following the budget and planning processes of Meeting for Sufferings.

5.12 The Committee shall work within these terms of reference, under the authority of Minute 2003/78 of Quaker Life Central Committee held 29-30 of November 2003.

Complementary documents:

1. Job descriptions of the Librarian.
2. Terms of Reference of Quaker Life Central Committee.
3. Report of the Quaker Life Review Group for Library Committee, January 2003.
4. Committee Handbook
5. The current Library Committee strategic plan.
6. Sections 4.41, 4.45-4.46, 8.20 and 13.40 of *Quaker faith and practice*.