

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

EAST CHESHIRE AREA QUAKER MEETING

GOVERNING DOCUMENT

Adopted 09 May 2010 for implementation on 01 January 2011

THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS) IN BRITAIN

EAST CHESHIRE AREA QUAKER MEETING

GOVERNING DOCUMENT

Adopted on the ninth day of May 2010 by Minute 11 of East Cheshire Area Quaker Meeting to come into force on the first day of January 2011.

Definitions

- i) **The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain** 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. It is referred to below as the Religious Society.
- ii) **Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)** refers to the centrally held and managed policy, property, employment and work of the Religious Society. It is referred to below as Britain Yearly Meeting.
- iii) **Meeting for Sufferings** is the standing representative body entrusted with the general care of matters affecting the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain.
- iv) **Area Quaker Meetings** are the main district meetings for church affairs. They are the level of the Religious Society at which individual membership is held. Each Area Quaker Meeting is a separate charitable entity and may be registered as such with the Charity Commission.
- v) A **Local Meeting** is any group of Friends recorded as such by minute of an Area Quaker Meeting, which meets under the auspices of that Area Meeting.
- vi) The charity constituted by this document is **East Cheshire Area Quaker Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain** [referred to below as East Cheshire Quaker Meeting or the Area Meeting] formerly known as Cheshire Monthly Meeting.
- vii) The current edition of the **Book of Christian Discipline of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain** is Quaker faith & practice (London, 2009) [referred to below as Quaker faith and practice].
- viii) The term **Friend** refers to a member of the Religious Society.
- ix) The term **attender** refers to a person who is not a member of the Religious Society but who frequently attends a specific meeting for worship.

1. Governing Document

East Cheshire Area Quaker Meeting and its property shall be administered and managed in accordance with the provisions in this governing document. Further guidance is contained in Quaker faith and practice.

2. Name

The name of the charitable body constituted by this document is East Cheshire Area Quaker Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain (abbreviated as East Cheshire Quaker Meeting).

3. Object

The object of East Cheshire 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 East Cheshire Quaker Meeting and beyond.

4. Administration

Subject to the matters set out below the property of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting shall be administered in accordance with this governing document by the trustees constituted by Clause 13.

5. Application of the Income and Property

Within East Cheshire Quaker Meeting income 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 East Cheshire Quaker Meeting and beyond;
- ii) spreading the Quaker message and interpreting and developing the thought and practice of the Religious Society;
- iii) undertaking Quaker service for the relief of suffering at home and abroad;
- iv) funding the concerns that Quaker meetings in the area covered by East Cheshire Quaker Meeting or beyond have adopted or agreed to support;
- v) providing for the pastoral care of individual members and attenders including assistance to those in need and for education;
- vi) maintaining and developing Quaker meeting houses as places for public worship and from which to carry Quaker witness into the world;
- vii) administering and maintaining the organisation of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting and contributing to the support of Britain Yearly Meeting, and other Quaker meetings as appropriate.

6. Dissolution

If at a meeting of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting the members decide that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Area Meeting or to amalgamate with another area meeting and this is agreed by Meeting for Sufferings, the trustees shall have the power to realise any assets held by or on behalf of East Cheshire Quaker 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 East Cheshire Quaker Meeting, and failing that for such other charitable purpose as Britain Yearly Meeting shall direct.

7. Amendments

- i) Amendments to this governing document shall be agreed by East Cheshire 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 16) 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 any person in East Cheshire Quaker Meeting begins when a record to this effect is made in the minutes of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting.
- ii) East Cheshire 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 East Cheshire Quaker Meeting.

9. Termination of Membership

- i) The membership of any Friend shall cease when a record to this effect is made in the minutes of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting.
- ii) If a member is dissatisfied with a final decision of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting affecting her or him, the member may appeal in writing against the decision in accordance with Britain Yearly Meeting's appeals process.

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.

East Cheshire Quaker Meeting shall hold meetings for church affairs at such frequency, times and places as the Meeting itself shall direct. The clerk may arrange for a special meeting to be held if necessary. Such a meeting must be arranged by the clerk if a written request from five members is received. As wide a notice as possible of a special meeting should be given in each constituent local meeting.

- i) The sessions of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting are open to all Friends and to attenders with the permission of the clerk.
- ii) The business and activities of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting shall at all times be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the current edition of Quaker faith and practice.
- iii) If the clerk is absent from any meeting, those present shall choose a Friend to be clerk at that meeting before any business is transacted.
- iv) It shall be the duty of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting in session to appoint an auditor or independent examiner of the Meeting accounts.

11. Constituent Meetings

- i) East Cheshire Quaker Meeting includes all constituent local meetings contained within its area, as recorded in the minutes of the Area Meeting.
- ii) Arrangements for the establishment, running or dissolution of such constituent meetings shall be in accordance with Quaker faith and practice.

12. Appointments

- i) East Cheshire Quaker Meeting shall appoint a clerk, assistant clerk, treasurer, registering officer, and nominations committee, who shall be members of the Religious Society.
- ii) These 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. Trustees

- i) East Cheshire Quaker Meeting shall appoint Friends, normally from its own membership, to act as a body of trustees ordinarily containing not fewer than five or more than fifteen persons.
- ii) The trustees shall, so far as practicable, include the treasurer of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting and representatives of each local meeting contained within East Cheshire Quaker Meeting, but not the clerk of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting, nor any employee of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting.
- iii) One trustee, but not the treasurer of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting, shall be appointed by East Cheshire Quaker 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 not exceeding nine years as a trustee of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting. That person cannot then be reappointed as a trustee of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting until three years have elapsed after the end of the last period of service in that capacity.

14. Eligibility, disqualification and removal of Trustees

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

- i) notifies to the clerk of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting a wish to be released from service as a trustee;
- ii) ceases to be a member of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting;
- iii) is determined by East Cheshire Quaker Meeting to be no longer a fit or suitable person to carry out the duties of a trustee;
- iv) is believed by East Cheshire Quaker Meeting to have become incapable by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury of managing and administering her or his own affairs;
- v) becomes ineligible to act or is disqualified from acting as a trustee; or
- vi) comes to the end of her or his term of service.

Release of a trustee under the terms of i) or ii) or removal of a trustee under the terms of iii), iv) or v) above shall require a decision of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting. An individual trustee may make an appeal against such a decision in accordance with Britain Yearly Meeting's appeal process.

Members of the Religious Society who are legally ineligible to act or who are disqualified from acting as trustees shall not so act or continue to do so.

Release or removal of a trustee from office shall be recorded by minute of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting.

15 Powers of Trustees

The Trustees shall have the following powers, in exercise of which they shall at all times be guided by Quaker faith and practice:

- i) To raise funds from contributions and 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 object of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting;
- ii) To buy, lease or acquire property, and to sell, grant a lease on or dispose of property, subject to the terms of sub-clause 17vii) below;
- iii) To borrow money and to give security for loans, but only in accordance with the restrictions imposed by the Charities Act 1993 as amended from time to time, and subject to the terms of sub-clause 17vii) below;
- iv) To set aside income as a reserve;

- v) To make investments in accordance with legal constraints and the ethical testimonies of the Religious Society and subject to the terms of sub-clause 17vii) below;
- vi) To co-operate with other charities or to enter into partnerships;
- vii) To establish or support trusts or institutions formed for charitable purposes within East Cheshire Quaker Meeting's object, subject to the terms of sub-clause 17vii) below;
- viii) To employ staff;
- ix) To pay pensions;
- x) To obtain and pay for goods and services;
- xi) To reimburse reasonable expenses, including those of the trustees, incurred when acting on behalf of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting;
- xii) To open and operate bank accounts;
- xiii) To effect insurance;
- xiv) To seek professional advice as appropriate.
- xv) To insure themselves against the costs of a successful defence to 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 breach of duty, subject to the terms of sub-clause 17vii) below;
- xvi) To delegate their powers or functions as set out in Clause 18 below;
- xvii) To establish committees or working groups for carrying out agreed programmes of work;
- xviii) To authorise any of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting's constituent local meetings or committees to open bank accounts and to appoint signatories; such action to be recorded by minute of the local meeting or committee and reported without delay to the trustees;
- xix) To do any other lawful thing that is necessary or desirable for the achievement of the object of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting.

16. Trustees not to be personally interested

- i) Subject to the provisions of sub-clause ii) of this clause, and subject to sub-clause 15xv), no trustee shall acquire any interest in property belonging to East Cheshire Quaker 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 trustee for the time being, who possesses specialist skills or knowledge, may charge and be paid reasonable fees for business done by her or him, or her or his 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 her or his own instruction or remuneration, or that of her or his firm, is under discussion.

17. Meetings and proceedings of the trustees

- i) Trustees shall conduct their meetings according to the Quaker business method as described in Quaker faith and practice.
- ii) The trustees shall hold at least two meetings 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 notice 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, normally represented by at least half of the trustees for the time being, should be present 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 Quaker faith and practice. The trustees shall keep minutes of the proceedings at meetings of the trustees and of 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 governing document.
- vii) The trustees shall report to East Cheshire Quaker Meeting at least once a year. They shall also refer to East Cheshire Quaker Meeting in session any major decisions such as
 - a) those involving the acquisition, disposal or major alteration of land or buildings (see sub-clause 15ii) above);
 - b) borrowing money and giving security for loans (see sub-clause 15iii));
 - c) change in investment policy or major restructuring of investments (see sub-clause 15v));
 - d) the establishment of trusts (see sub-clause 15vii)); and
 - e) effecting trustee insurance (see sub-clause 15xv));
 - f) any issues which might lead to litigation.

18. Power of Trustees to delegate

- i) The trustees may delegate any of their powers or functions to a committee including two or more trustees but the terms of any such delegation must be recorded by minute.
- 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.
- iv) All acts and proceedings of any such committee must be fully and promptly reported to the trustees.

19. Annual Report and Accounts

- i) The trustees shall ensure that an annual report and statement of accounts for East Cheshire Quaker Meeting (including its constituent local meetings) is prepared in compliance with current charities legislation.
- ii) The report and statement of accounts must be presented to East Cheshire Quaker Meeting in session for consideration and acceptance, not later than nine months after the end of the financial year.
- iii) The trustees shall submit an appropriate annual return to the Charity Commission in compliance with current legislation.

20. Income and Expenditure

- i) The liquid assets of East Cheshire 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 East Cheshire Quaker Meeting or in the name of any of the meetings or committees contained within East Cheshire Quaker Meeting and not in the name of any individual.
- ii) The funds belonging to East Cheshire Quaker Meeting shall be applied only in furthering the object of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting as defined in Clause 3 above.

21. Property and investments

- i) Ordinarily the trustees shall cause the title of all real property and investments held by or in trust for East Cheshire Quaker Meeting to be held in the name of Friends Trusts Limited as custodian trustee.
- ii) If the trustees decide to use a separate nominee to hold investments, they must apply to the Charity Commission for an Order discharging Friends Trusts Limited from its custodian trusteeship and vesting all land in Friends Trusts Limited as the nominee. Friends Trusts Limited shall be granted the same level of protection as it would enjoy under the provisions of Section 4(2) of the Public Trustee Act 1906, as if it were acting as custodian trustee.
- iii) It is the responsibility of trustees to insure all property, including buildings and contents, in the joint names of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting and Friends Trusts Limited, for replacement values which shall be reviewed regularly. It is also the trustees' responsibility to maintain in force all appropriate liability insurances, including employer's, occupier's and public liability.

Signed:

..... Ben Evans

Clerk of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting
and one of the following:

..... David Fisher

Assistant Clerk of East Cheshire Quaker
Meeting

..... Michael Hennessy

Treasurer of East Cheshire Quaker Meeting