

THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS) IN BRITAIN

GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

GOVERNING DOCUMENT

Adopted on the 10th day of March 2007 by Minute 8 of General Meeting for Scotland and updated by Minute 21/06/10 of General Meeting for Scotland on 21st June 2021.

1. Definitions

- i) The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain refers to the church in Britain in its entirety, including all its local meetings for worship and its constituent meetings for church affairs, as well as all their work.
- ii) Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) [Britain Yearly Meeting] refers to the centrally held and managed policy, property, employment and work. Britain Yearly Meeting appoints trustees to manage the central work, assets and property held directly by the Yearly Meeting.
- iii) Meeting for Sufferings is the standing representative body entrusted with the general care of matters affecting the Religious Society of Friends in Britain. It takes decisions on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting in the intervals between Yearly Meetings and receives reports from the BYM Trustees.
- iv) General Meeting for Scotland has national responsibilities on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting to represent and advance the life and witness of the Religious Society of Friends in Scotland, including participating in ACTS [Action of Churches Together in Scotland], and dealing with the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Government, the Scotland Office and with such procedures as may be required by the Scottish legal system. It is a separate charitable entity, registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.
- v) Area Meetings are the main local meetings for church affairs and these are the level of the Society at which individual membership is held. Each Area Meeting within Scotland is a separate charitable entity and is registered as such with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.
- vi) The term Friend refers to a member of the Religious Society of Friends.
- vii) The term Attender refers to a person not a member of the Religious Society of Friends but who attends its Meetings for Worship.

2. Governing Document

General Meeting for Scotland and its property shall be administered and managed in accordance with the provisions in this governing document. Further guidance is contained in the Book of Christian Discipline of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain (current online edition Quaker Faith and Practice, London, 2021).

3. Name

The name of the charitable body is General Meeting for Scotland of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain (abbreviated as General Meeting).

4. Object

The object of General Meeting for Scotland is the furtherance of the general religious and charitable purposes of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain in Scotland and beyond, as laid down in our Book of Christian Discipline.

5. Administration

Subject to the matters set out below the property of the General Meeting shall be administered in accordance with this governing document by the trustees constituted by Clause 14.

6. Application of the Income and Property

Within General Meeting for Scotland money and property are used to further the General Meeting's object by work such as:

- i) strengthening the life and witness of Quaker meetings in Scotland and beyond;
- ii) spreading the message of Quakers, interpreting and developing their thought and practice, and providing educational programmes;
- iii) undertaking Quaker service for the relief of suffering at home and abroad;
- iv) funding the concerns that Quakers in Scotland have adopted or agreed to support;
- v) administering and maintaining the organisation of the General Meeting and contributing to the support of Britain Yearly Meeting;
- vi) undertaking such tasks on behalf of Scottish Area Meetings as may more effectively be performed at a Scotland-wide level, subject always to the agreement of those Area Meetings;
- vii) providing opportunities for training and mutual support for those with special responsibilities, in conjunction with the associated Area Meetings and Quaker bodies.
- viii) participating in ACTS [Action of Churches Together in Scotland] and working with other churches and interfaith groups in Scotland;
- ix) representing the views of the Religious Society of Friends in Scotland to the wider community, including the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Government, the Scotland Office and in such procedures as may be required by the Scottish legal system.

7. Dissolution

If after publication of the proposal to all local Meetings and its introduction at the previous meeting, a session of General Meeting decides that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the General 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 the General 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 a successor general meeting covering Scotland, to one or more Scottish Area Meetings, to Britain Yearly Meeting, or to some other

charitable institution or institutions having objects similar to that of the General Meeting, and failing that for such other charitable purpose as Britain Yearly Meeting shall direct.

8. Amendments

After publication to all local Meetings of the proposed changes, and their introduction at the previous meeting, any amendments to this governing document shall be agreed by General Meeting in session and recorded by minute of the General Meeting.

9. Membership

The membership of General Meeting for Scotland comprises all members of the Scottish Area Meetings.

10. Termination of Membership

The membership of anyone shall cease when a record to this effect is made in the minutes of the Area Meeting to which he or she belongs.

11. Meetings for Church Affairs

Meetings for church affairs, in which the Society conducts its business, are meetings for worship based on stillness, 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 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, circulating the agenda, 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.

General Meeting for Scotland shall meet at least once but normally four times pa. The Clerk may arrange for a special General Meeting to be held if necessary. Meetings may be held using video conferencing, either exclusively or in combination with a physical meeting.

- i) The sessions of General Meeting are open to all members of Area Meetings in Scotland; other Friends who have notified the Clerk of their presence; and Attenders, by permission of the Clerk.
- ii) The business and activities of the General Meeting shall at all times be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the current edition of the Book of Christian Discipline.
- iii) It shall be the duty of the General Meeting in session to appoint an auditor or independent examiner of the General Meeting accounts.

12. Constituent Meetings

- i) General Meeting for Scotland consists of all the local Meetings in Scotland.
- ii) Arrangements for the establishment, running or dissolution of such constituent meetings shall be in accordance with our Book of Christian Discipline.

13. Appointment of Officers of the Meeting

- i) The General Meeting shall appoint from its membership a Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Treasurer, nominations group convener and other officers and committees as appropriate.
- ii) The 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.

14. Appointment of Trustees

- i) The General Meeting shall appoint from its membership a body of trustees not ordinarily fewer than five or more than ten persons.
- ii) The trustees shall so far as practicable include the General Meeting treasurer and representatives of each Area Meeting in Scotland, but not the Clerk of the General Meeting, nor any employee of the General Meeting.
- iii) One trustee, but not the General Meeting Treasurer, shall be appointed by General 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 as a trustee of the General Meeting not exceeding nine years. That person cannot then be reappointed as a trustee of the General Meeting until three years have elapsed after the end of the last period of service in that capacity.

15. General duties of Trustees

Trustees must:

- i) act in the interests of General Meeting for Scotland;
- ii) seek, in good faith, to ensure that General Meeting for Scotland operates in a manner that is consistent with its object;
- iii) act with due care and diligence;
- iv) ensure that General Meeting for Scotland complies with the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, and other relevant legislation.

16. Eligibility, disqualification and removal of Trustees

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

- i) notifies to the Clerk of the General Meeting a wish to be released from service as a trustee, and is released from service by the General Meeting in session;
- ii) ceases to be a member of an Area Meeting in Scotland;
- iii) is determined by the General Meeting to no longer be a fit or suitable person to carry out the duties of a trustee;
- iv) becomes incapable by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury of managing and administering his or her own affairs; or
- v) comes to the end of his or her permitted term of service.

Removal of a trustee under the terms of (iii) or (iv) above shall require a decision of the General Meeting. An individual trustee may make an appeal against such a decision to Meeting for Sufferings, whose decision shall be final and binding.

Members of the Religious Society of Friends who are legally ineligible to act or who are disqualified from acting as trustees shall not be able so to act nor continue so to act.

Release of a trustee from office shall be recorded by minute of the General Meeting.

17. Powers of Trustees

The trustees shall have the following powers, in exercise of which they shall at all times be guided by the Book of Christian Discipline referred to in Clause 2 of this governing document:

- i) to raise funds from contributions; from legacies; from grants and other sources outside the General Meeting for Scotland; from investments and the use of assets; and from the sale of goods or services provided in furtherance of the General Meeting's objects;
- ii) to buy, lease or acquire property, and to dispose of it, subject to the terms of Clause 19 (vii) below;
- iii) to borrow money;
- iv) to set aside income as a reserve, making investments in accordance with legal constraints and the ethical testimonies of the Religious Society of Friends;
- v) to co-operate with other charities or to enter into partnerships;
- vi) to establish or support trusts or institutions formed for charitable purposes within the General Meeting's objects;
- vii) to obtain and pay for goods and services;

- viii) to open and operate bank accounts;
- ix) to delegate their powers or functions as set out in Clause 20, below;
- x) to appoint one or more sub-committees for the purpose of making any inquiry or carrying out an agreed programme of work which in the opinion of the trustees would be more conveniently undertaken or carried out by a sub-committee, provided that all acts and proceedings of any such sub-committees shall be fully and promptly reported to the trustees; this power to include, on the authorisation of the trustees, delegation to any of the General Meeting's function groups or committees the opening of a bank account and the appointment of signatories; such action to be recorded by minute of the function group or committee and reported without delay to the trustees.
- xi) to employ staff;
- xii) to pay pensions;
- xiii) to do any other lawful thing that is necessary or desirable for the achievement of the objects of the General Meeting;
- xiv) to insure themselves as charity trustees, or for 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.

18. Trustees not to be personally interested

- i) Subject to the provisions of sub-clause (ii) of this clause, and subject to sub-clause 17(xiv) no trustee shall acquire any interest in property belonging to the General 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 his firm when instructed by the other trustees to act on behalf of the General 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.

19. Meetings and proceedings of the trustees

- i) Trustees shall conduct their meetings according to the Quaker business method as described in our Book of Christian Discipline.
- 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 consent 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 the Book of Christian Discipline. The trustees shall keep minutes of the proceedings at meetings of the trustees and 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. Meetings of trustees may be held by video conferencing.
- vii) The trustees shall report to General Meeting at least once a year. They shall also refer to General Meeting in session any major decisions such as those involving the acquisition, disposal or major alteration of land or buildings.

20. 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 of the trustees.
- ii) The trustees may impose conditions when delegating, including for instance 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 committee must be fully and promptly reported to the trustees.

21. Annual Report and Accounts

- i) The trustees shall ensure that an annual report and statement of accounts for General Meeting is prepared in compliance with current charities legislation.
- ii) The report and statement of accounts must be presented to General Meeting in session for consideration and acceptance not later than eight months after the end of the financial year.
- iii) The trustees shall submit an appropriate annual return to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator in compliance with current legislation.

22. Income and Expenditure

- i) The funds of the General Meeting shall be safeguarded by depositing in a bank account. The bank account or accounts shall be held in the name of General Meeting for Scotland or in the name of any groups or committees contained within the General Meeting and not in the name of any individual.
- ii) The funds belonging to General Meeting shall be applied only in furthering the objects of General Meeting as defined in Clause 4, above.
- iii) General Meeting may raise funds for its activities via a quota or levy on the Area Meetings in Scotland.

23. Property and investments

- i) Ordinarily the trustees shall cause the title of all real property and investments held by or in trust for General Meeting for Scotland to be held in the name of the trustees for the General Meeting.
- ii) All premises must be adequately insured, including third party and accident insurance as well as buildings and contents insurance. The trustees shall also insure suitably in respect of public liability and employer's liability.

24. Registered particulars

General Meeting for Scotland shall be registered as a charity with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator which should be notified of any changes to this governing document.

Signed: . . . Elizabeth Allen. Clerk of General Meeting for Scotland

and one of the following:

. Assistant Clerk of General Meeting for Scotland

Martin Burnell Clerk of Trustees of General Meeting for Scotland

. Treasurer of General Meeting for Scotland

21st June 2021