



Yearly Meeting of the  
Religious Society of Friends  
(Quakers) in Britain

## **Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees**

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **1. Summary of purpose**

**1.1** Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees are accountable to the Yearly Meeting for the right stewardship of its centrally managed work, assets and property and legally responsible for the broad direction, general control and management of the administration of the affairs of the charity, Britain Yearly Meeting, with the objective of enabling the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain to be sustained, witness, flourish and grow<sup>1</sup>.

**1.2** In these terms of reference: 'Quakers in Britain' is used to refer to the church; 'Britain Yearly Meeting' (or BYM) is used to refer to the charity; and, 'Yearly Meeting' is used to describe the annual event, and the body of Quakers in attendance.

#### **2. Authority, relationships and delegation**

**2.1** Trustees are responsible for the implementation of the long-term vision articulated by Meeting for Sufferings, consulting that body when work which might impact that vision is being proposed.

**2.2** Trustees may establish committees, including standing committees, or trading companies, and delegate to them those aspects of the work of trustees as can be more effectively carried out by such arrangements. All such appointments and delegation shall be in accordance with the provisions set out in the Britain Yearly Meeting governing document<sup>2</sup>.

**2.3** Trustees oversee the work of Management Meeting and are the employers of Britain Yearly Meeting staff. They may delegate tasks to staff, whilst holding overall accountability.

**2.4** Trustees undertake legal compliance, monitoring and scrutiny functions on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting. They ensure that the centrally managed work is being properly governed and managed consistent with the religious and charitable object of Britain Yearly Meeting<sup>3</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> See *Quaker faith & practice*, 8.17

<sup>2</sup> Constitution adopted 29/05/2006, as amended in 2006, 2008, and 2014 <https://tinyurl.com/y7oaqy2q>

<sup>3</sup> *Quaker faith & practice*, 8.03

### **3. Duties**

#### **3.1 Strategic direction<sup>4</sup>**

Meeting for Sufferings decides on the vision for Quakers in Britain<sup>5</sup>. Trustees should ensure that:

- a. the vision discerned by Meeting for Sufferings, and concerns articulated by Yearly Meeting, are pursued responsibly and within the available resources. Trustees provide strategic direction by establishing priorities and criteria for the development of the centrally managed work programmes, consulting with Meeting for Sufferings for this purpose;
- b. there is multi-year planning, to include an operational plan and budget for the centrally managed work and a process for measuring progress;
- c. they provide regular progress reports on how the centrally managed work is meeting the concerns of Meeting for Sufferings and Yearly Meeting. They should consult and seek guidance from Meeting for Sufferings on changes to the planned work which might impact the agreed vision<sup>6</sup>;
- d. they keep under review the work of the committees reporting to them, monitor their terms of reference and if necessary amend them. Where required, they should bring suggested changes to Meeting for Sufferings, or to Yearly Meeting, for consideration and approval<sup>7</sup>.

#### **3.2 Stewardship of resources**

Trustees are responsible for:

- a. raising funds for the centrally managed work of Britain Yearly Meeting;
- b. monitoring financial and operational performance against the operational plan;
- c. determining, and ensuring the application of, appropriate policies for accounting and investment;
- d. ensuring that systems are in place to maintain:
  - the sustainable stewardship of assets;
  - the financial probity and solvency of the operations of the centrally managed work;
  - the discharge of the appropriate legal and regulatory obligations;
- e. ensuring the sound management and usage of all assets, property, and systems (e.g. I.T.) in the ownership of Britain Yearly Meeting.

---

<sup>4</sup> That is, BYM's 'direction of travel' Ibid 8.17

<sup>5</sup> Ibid 7.02

<sup>6</sup> Ibid 7.03

<sup>7</sup> Ibid 8.18

### **3.3 Employment**

Trustees act on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting as the employer of all the staff engaged on the centrally managed work. The Trustees are responsible for:

- a. the recruitment and appointment of senior staff at Management Meeting level, including the Recording Clerk;
- b. the work of the Recording Clerk, through their clerk;
- c. the constitution and oversight of Management Meeting.

### **3.4 Governance**

Trustees are responsible for ensuring the good governance and legal compliance of the centrally managed work. They have the duty to:

- a. appoint the external auditors; to consider and approve the *Annual report and accounts* and to present this for information to Meeting for Sufferings and submission to Yearly Meeting. Trustees are responsible for filing the annual report and accounts with the Charity Commission;
- b. ensure that an appropriate process is in place to assess and manage the risks faced by the centrally managed work, and to keep under review systems of governance and internal audit to ensure that necessary standards are maintained, through the adoption and implementation of suitable policies, and in other ways;
- c. liaise with the Charity Commission, the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (through General Meeting for Scotland, working with its constituent area meetings), and other statutory bodies on behalf of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain;
- d. agree Memoranda of Understanding as required for work with other bodies;
- e. undertake any task laid upon them by Yearly Meeting or to report their reasons for failing to do so.

## **4. Membership and attendance**

**4.1** Twelve trustees are appointed by Yearly Meeting on the nomination of the Central Nominations Committee, to serve for a three-year period. The period of service will normally begin on 1st January of the year following appointment at Yearly Meeting and end on 31st December of the relevant year. Reappointment is possible for a second term and exceptionally for a third. Trustees may appoint an assistant clerk from within their number if they wish.

**4.2** In addition to the trustees in 4.1, a clerk is appointed by Yearly Meeting on the nomination of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees. The period of service is normally for a three-year period beginning on 1st January of the year following appointment at Yearly Meeting.

**4.3** The Yearly Meeting treasurer will serve ex-officio as a trustee, and is appointed by Yearly Meeting on the nomination of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees, normally for a three-year period beginning on 1st January of the year following appointment at Yearly Meeting.

**4.4** On a vacancy arising by death or request for release, interim appointments may be made by Meeting for Sufferings, on the nomination of Central Nominations Committee, or in the case of the clerk, or Yearly Meeting Treasurer on the nomination of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees, and recorded at the following Yearly Meeting.

**4.5** Every trustee must comply with the legal requirements for eligibility as a trustee and accept responsibility as a trustee for the centrally managed work of Britain Yearly Meeting.

**4.6** There will be no remuneration for service as a trustee.

**4.7** The Recording Clerk, as secretary to the trustees; the Deputy Recording Clerk; and other members of Management Meeting will normally attend meetings of the trustees. Other members of staff may be asked to attend by invitation of the clerk. No member of staff will be designated as carrying trustee responsibility.

**4.8** All trustees serve *ex officio* on Meeting for Sufferings.

## **5. Conduct and frequency of meetings**

**5.1** Meetings of Trustees are meetings for worship for business, held in faithful waiting on the Spirit, with the expectation of being guided to uphold the religious imperatives and values of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain.

**5.2** Trustees shall meet at least twice each year and additionally as required. They may agree to hold some of these meetings by video conference.

**5.3** Trustees should agree a procedure for making decisions between meetings when necessary.

## **6. Agreement and review of the Terms of Reference**

**6.1** The terms of reference shall be reviewed in 2026.

**6.2** Approved by minute 28 of Britain Yearly Meeting held on 6 August 2021.