# Britain Yearly Meeting Houses Funds: Guidance notes for applicants

## Purpose and scope of assistance

The Meeting Houses Funds provides financial assistance to meetings for carrying out improvements to their premises, both meeting houses and wardens’/caretakers’ accommodation, including:

* acquiring and developing new premises and
* enhancements and substantial repairs to existing premises

The purpose is to provide funds towards buildings which support facilities for the spiritual life of the meeting and its witness/community use. It is not generally intended for routine maintenance, nor ‘investment properties’. However, consideration may be given to an application from an area meeting with unexpected repairs to several of its meeting houses, or to cover other circumstances that might include routine maintenance.

## Premises ownership, and responsibility for the application to the BYM Meeting Houses Funds

This section is quite technical from a legal perspective. It is important that the grant or loan is made to the correct body.

Legal title (i.e. legal ownership) to the meeting house is probably held by Friends Trusts Ltd as *custodian trustee* on behalf of the area meeting. The role of Friends Trusts Ltd as *custodian trustee* is not normally relevant to applications. Therefore it is **not** necessary to have any input from Friends Trusts Ltd as *custodian trustee*.

The area meeting is known as the *beneficial owner and managing trustee*. The area meeting probably delegates its property management function to trustees or to a finance & property committee.

The offer of a grant and/or loan will only be made to the body that is the *beneficial owner or managing trustee* as it is the *managing trustees* who have responsibility for decisions about the property. In practice this means that most grants and loans will be made to area meetings.

In some cases the *beneficial owner and/or the managing trustee* is not an area meeting. It may be that a separate trust manages the property for the area meeting or local meeting. Where this is the case, the application must come from that other body which is the *beneficial owner and/or the managing trustee.*

However in all cases Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) wishes to know that that the application has the support of both the area meeting and the local meeting that uses the property via supporting minutes.

If you are unsure of the status of the area meeting ownership please contact Friends Trusts Ltd who can help, [friendstrusts@quaker.org.uk](mailto:friendstrusts@quaker.org.uk) or 0207 663 1082.

## Financial assistance provided

Meetings may apply for the following grant and / or loan:

1. a grant of up to £15,000 or
2. a loan of between £10,000 and £40,000 or
3. a grant and loan totalling no more than £40,000

The total financial assistance will not be more than 50% of the total project cost.

Loans are interest free and usually repayable within five years of being received. Repayment process will commence one year after the loan has been received.

## Other sources of funding

The BYM Meeting Houses Funds have a finite resource. BYM expects that the project will have looked for funding from other sources.

Details of some other possible funding sources can be found on the BYM web site property page www.quaker.org.uk/property.

## Early payment of Meeting Houses Funds money - Landfill Community Fund

Some area meeting premises projects may be eligible for grants from the Landfill Community Fund which are administered through the Entrust organisation. Within certain limits and if the application is successful, a Landfill Community Fund grant may award up to ten times the third party funder commitment. The process of application and verification is lengthy, so forward planning is essential.

Grants made from the Meeting Houses Funds are not normally paid in advance of the project starting. However, recognising the requirements of the Landfill Community Fund for committed funding from other sources, the Meeting Houses Funds may provide third party funding for projects seeking Landfill Community Fund grants in advance of construction work starting.

BYM will expect applicants for assistance to have checked whether the project qualifies for assistance under the Landfill Community Fund*.*

## Technical advice and support

BYM will want to be assured that the project will be competently developed, designed and delivered.

There may be expert and professional advice available within the area meeting which is applying for funding. If this is not the case, meetings are strongly advised to obtain external professional support at an early stage of a property project.

The property page of the BYM web site [www.quaker.org.uk/property](http://www.quaker.org.uk/property) offers some basic advice about development projects. The property advice e-group is open to anyone to join and seek experience and knowledge from all other members via the sign-up link on the property page of the web site.

## Sustainable development

Meetings are encouraged to use the opportunity to take into account the principles and practice of sustainability in the design of schemes and in any improvements to buildings. Depending on what changes are planned, combining sustainability improvements to a building with those other changes can save both disruption to the users of the building and be cheaper than doing them separately.

## Accessibility

Many people using a meeting house have difficulties with mobility, seeing and hearing. Changes to make it easier for them to use the building should be considered when planning other upgrade works. As with sustainability improvements, it can be less disruptive and cheaper to do everything as one project.

## The applications process

The application should be made by the body that has legal responsibility for the premises i.e. the *beneficial owner and/or the managing trustee*.This is usually the area meeting trustees or by the Friend or committee authorised specifically to act on behalf of that body. The application form is available on the BYM website’s [Meeting House Funds page](https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/grant-making/meeting-houses-fund) or from the Finance & Property Department at Friends House.

The form should be completed and returned together with supporting documents and plans. Electronic applications will only be accepted to maintain sustainability and be environmentally friendly. If larger plans are considered essential, please contact the Finance & Property Department to discuss how they may be handled.

Applications should be sent to

* [finance@quaker.org.uk](mailto:finance@quaker.org.uk) marked for the attention of the Head of Finance & Resources,

Applicants will normally be advised of the decision on their application within a month of submitting the application subject to no queries with the application remaining unresolved. If timing is critical to the project please contact the Finance & Property Department to discuss document submission deadlines.

Applicants should ensure that all necessary supporting documents are included with the submission, see below.

* trustees’ minute: a minute from the area meeting (or other trust owning the building where applicable) (*beneficial owner/managing trustee*), showing the authority for the application
* area meeting minute: a supporting minute from the area meeting (which is responsible for the activities of the local meeting).
* local meeting minute: a supporting minute from the local meeting which is the prime user of the building for which the application is being made
* financial information/accounts: the balance sheet or statement of funds from the most recent accounts of both the area meeting and local meeting are required. Where the *beneficial owner or managing trustee* is not the area meeting then the most recent annual accounts from this body are also required. BYM needs to be able to see where financial responsibility lies and how each party is placed to carry out the proposed work.
* Architects’ plans and associated documents, planning and listed building consent (where applicable) applications and outcome reports

The applicant may be contacted to obtain clarification or further information obtained about the proposals. Please ensure that the named contact person is able to respond promptly otherwise the application may be delayed.

Successful applications

Successful applications are expected to sign the Grants Acceptance form. If a meeting is unable to take up the award within a year of the date of offer, then it should consider relinquishing the offer. As funds available are limited, this assists BYM to continue awarding grants. Grant commitments will be maintained for three years; if the funding requirement hasn’t arisen, then the grant offer will expire. The expectation is that re-applications would be encouraged.

## Information sources

For application forms and more information, please go to our website’s [Meeting House Funds page](https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/grant-making/meeting-houses-fund).

or contact:

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