

# Meeting House Matters

Notes from events in 2025



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There is an archive of the notes from past meetings on the BYM employers' pages of the website, [www.quaker.org.uk/employers](http://www.quaker.org.uk/employers).

## About these notes

The notes in this document were taken during a Meeting House Matters discussion. They are taken by those present and shared to try to help us all get a flavour of the conversations that took place. There is a small amount of editing to get them into this form for the follow-up notes. They may not be entirely accurate but serve as close a record of what was shared during the time together.

There may be times when the views expressed are of individual's and not quite the same as the view of Quakers in Britain. Please get in touch with us if there is anything that has been shared that you think should be edited or removed.

## In person events in 2025

- ~~Winchester LM on Thursday, 1 May~~
- Cardiff LM on Thursday, 12 June
- Darlington LM on Tuesday, 21 October
- Booking form for in-person events, <https://forms.quaker.org.uk/mhm-25/>

## Online events in 2025 (no booking required for online and blended online sessions)

- ~~Wednesday, 12 February~~
- Wednesday, 20 August
- Tuesday, 16 December

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://quaker.zoom.us/j/81586087624?pwd=aYxukeWCrw0Z80E9OuxluJuZvXr8do.1>

Meeting ID: 815 8608 7624

Passcode: MHM-online

## Contact details

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Quakers in Britain | [www.quaker.org.uk](http://www.quaker.org.uk)

Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ | T: 020 7663 1000 | E: [enquiries@quaker.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@quaker.org.uk)

Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) | Registered charity number 1127633

## 1 May 2025 (Winchester) –Quaker structures / Hiring a professional manager

This time there was a full day event at Winchester LM and alongside a blended session for people to join online. The three key sessions that we held during the day were:

- **Session 1:** Where are we in the Quaker structure? What's our support?
- **Session 2:** Exploring the questions and queries brought by the participants
- **Session 3:** Appointing a professional manager – learning from experience and things to look out for. (blended)

### Notes

#### Where are we in the structure? What's our support?

The presentation (pdf) sent with these notes is on the basic Quaker structures from the perspective of a Quaker worker. Only small images of each slide are in these notes. If you haven't got a copy of the presentation and would like it, please email [oliverw@quaker.org.uk](mailto:oliverw@quaker.org.uk).

#### What is a Quaker community?

As a faith community the primary purpose is to offer regular public meetings for worship. To enable public worship to take place the following should be considered:

- Nurturing and sustaining the spiritual life of the community and the pastoral care of those associated with it, including welcoming newcomers
- It offers education and support for individual members and attenders, not just MfW.
- Taking responsibility for all its own business and hold regular meetings for church affairs

#### What is a Quaker community?

##### What does it offer?

- Offering public meetings for Worship

##### What does the community need to make that happen?

- Pastoral care and spiritual nurture
- Witness, activism and outreach
- Community and fellowship for all ages
- Good support from role-holders and workers
- Well supported governance

[www.quaker.org.uk/employers](http://www.quaker.org.uk/employers)

What does the community need to make that happen?

- Pastoral care and nurture for people of all ages with a special focus on children & young people
- Witness activities: which may be actively engaging on an area of Concern, or upholding an individual acting under Concern
- Holding events and activities to build community and offer fellowship for Friends of all age
- Role-holders and workers who know their roles and are well supported to deliver
- Governance for the charity that is proportionate and meets the needs of the community.

#### What spiritually underpins this work?

Quaker faith and practice 13.33,  
<https://qfp.quaker.org.uk/passage/13-33/>.

As Friends, we cannot separate our religious calling from our practical work for the kingdom of God. As Friends concerned for wardenship, we make our contributions in the local community to those who come to our meeting house. We appear to offer our facilities, but in fact we offer our love.

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Quaker Home Service conference on wardenship, 1981

<https://qfp.quaker.org.uk/chapter/13/>

Quaker Home Service conference on wardenship, 1981

Also see within Quaker faith & practice, 13.33 to 13.40 which talks about wardens, their work and how to support them in their role. The section refers to wardens but has relevance to all employees and voluntary role-holders.

## What does the Quaker structure look like? (from a worker perspective)

### Local Meeting

- The place where worship is held.
- Most commonly where the work takes place.
- Local decisions are made and is often the place where Concerns begin before being taken further in the structure.
- Most commonly, where support and management for workers is held.

### Area Meeting

- Also a worshipping community.
- The place where church and charity governance is usually held locally (there are changes to Quaker charity structures in some parts of Britain).
- Quaker membership is held at area meeting level.
- Local representation to national Quaker structures is at area meeting level.
- Are there other workers doing similar work in your AM or charity? Can you connect with them?

### Connections with other organisations?

- With others doing similar work in neighbouring area meetings?
- As part of Quaker charity merging possibilities.
- General or Regional Quaker meeting.
- Friends Trusts Limited (FTL). Property sale or purchase, some changes to buildings.
- Grants organisations e.g. [Quakers in Britain](#), [National Churches Trust](#), and [other possibilities listed by Ecclesiastical](#).

### Yearly Meeting

- Joining and network or event such as Meeting House Matters.
- Connecting with others doing similar work nationally.
- Quaker Life via [Local Development Workers](#).

## Who else might we work with?

Role-holders locally and within our area meeting including:

- Members of premises / wardenship committee (if there is one).
- Finance role-holders, treasurer, bookkeeper.
- Clerks (local or area meeting).
- Trustees or sub-groups of trustees (of area meeting or Quaker charity).

What does our Quaker structure look like?



Who else might we work with?



## Questions and queries brought by the participants

Here is a list of the points raised at the session. We explored them during the conversations.

- Keeping sight of the spiritual in all the practical issues.
- Discerning overall priorities.
- Speedy action on issues when they arise V Quaker processes when we are all volunteers.
- Doing the “right” thing by our employees – i.e. doing a professional job when we are volunteers.
- Managing letting / hiring properties with problems due to the age of the building.
- Lack of expertise but weight of responsibility.
- Dealing with tenants and increasing regulation.
- Dealing with the large amounts of money matters “properly” yet not bureaucratically.
- We’re getting old!
- Cultural thinking – does it need to change or have a reset on?
  - Health & Safety
  - Risk assessments
  - Safeguarding
- Record-keeping for Meeting House.
- More effective use of the building / grounds, involving the local community.
- Promoting Quakers beyond just a historic building.
- Engaging volunteers. Not enough people available to volunteer.
- Volunteers are a resource, but often lack time.

## Appointing a professional manager – learning from experience and things to look out for

### Some questions

These are the conversation points that were considered during the session. There was time as a whole group together and time in smaller groups to explore our own scenarios.

- How is the role of a professional manager viewed?
- What does “professionally” actually mean. Volunteers can be professional in their work, but employees are more accountable for their work.
- What differences are there if the role holder is a Quaker or a non-Quaker?
- Consider: Managing work and Managing people. Managing people can include other employees, volunteers and potentially those giving Quaker service.
- What are the types of work we can see being done “professionally” that have traditionally been covered by Friends giving service. In this age of compliance and regulation, is there work where it is “better” to pay for someone to do it?
- Do we pay people so that they are able to give service to the Meeting?
- Do we need to revisit our structures to include integration of paid employees?
- How do we support our employees, volunteers and role holders? Do we develop clear policies and procedures to support people?
- How do we manage people, whether employed or otherwise?
- Do we need professional line management and management structures? Do we provide management training? How do we ensure continuity when Trustees change?
- How do we recognise and use employee knowledge and expertise? Do we accept that employees can have a role as advisors to Trustees etc? Do we recognise that our employees can often be advisors to the charity or act as executive officers of the charity?
- Is there consistency in employment practice throughout the charity? Is it understood that all employees are the responsibility of the Trustee body?
- Do we pay attention to potential conflicts of interest if we ask employees to take on roles within the Meeting?

## 12 February 2025 – Thinking about Meeting House Matters events in 2025

This week's meeting was a chance to look at the programme of Meeting House Matters across 2025. The theme for the events in 2025 is going to be:

*What is in the toolbox for supporting the running of Quaker premises and Quaker Workers?*

We will explore this theme throughout the year. It will include many if not all the following parts throughout 2025. Once a final plan for the year has been put together it will be shared so you know what will happen at each session.

- Bringing in a professional Manager
- What are the key policies that are needed in place?
- Exploring the relationship between trustees, AM and workers
- Sharing documents online
- You are here → Structure of BYM and how workers fit within it
- All meetings need → Some meetings need → exploration on the support that keeps meetings running
- Employer / employee – what support is available?

Meetings will be at the following times in 2025:

- Thursday, 1 May 2025, Winchester
- Thursday, 12 June 2025, Cardiff
- Wednesday, 20 August, online
- Tuesday, 21 October 2025, Darlington
- Tuesday, 16 December, online

Each in-person meeting will have a blended session during the afternoon for everyone to join. As there has been there will be notes to follow-up from every session held.

### Notes from 12 February

#### Other things that we might include as part of the plan for 2025

- Not having a warden and how can we cope?
  - Interaction with hirers when we are not present.
- Outsourcing, now having problems with that meeting. What is dropping between the cracks?
- Practical things, a this is how you do it guide on:
  - Installing public wifi
  - Setting up access and calendar systems
- How to find new hirers, where might we look?
  - Example, banking hubs: <https://www.cashaccess.co.uk/hubs/>
- Line management / task management and how to set up? Professional V volunteer management options.
- A crash course in Quaker structures and Quaker governance.
- Support on employing people – could there be a central HR consultant?
- Fewer Quakers mean there is a blurring of the line between service and staff (conversation).
- Property strategy – checklists.
  - Disposal of premises, helping with decision-making.
- Use of premises by people other than the Quaker community.
- Spreadsheet that calculates staff holiday and TOIL.
- Using AI, what can we use it for? Is it safe to use?

## Signposting to support from BYM

### Property

Property pages of the Quaker website, [www.quaker.org.uk/property](http://www.quaker.org.uk/property). These pages include:

- Property Guidance Sheets: [www.quaker.org.uk/documents/property-guidance-sheets-2019](http://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/property-guidance-sheets-2019)
- Meeting House Handbook Template: [www.quaker.org.uk/documents/meeting-house-handbook-template](http://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/meeting-house-handbook-template).
- Ideas on grants for property.
- Sustainability and buildings advice.

Contact property support: [propertysupport@quaker.org.uk](mailto:propertysupport@quaker.org.uk)

### Employment

Employers and volunteer support is on the website, [www.quaker.org.uk/employers](http://www.quaker.org.uk/employers). These pages include:

- Employers resources (updated annually): [www.quaker.org.uk/documents/er-quaker-employers-resource-2018](http://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/er-quaker-employers-resource-2018).
- A suite of template documents and guidance for Quaker meetings looking to engage workers on a paid or voluntary basis.

Contact: [supportmeetings@quaker.org.uk](mailto:supportmeetings@quaker.org.uk)

### Money

Advice and support for treasurers, [www.quaker.org.uk/treasurers](http://www.quaker.org.uk/treasurers). On this page:

- Treasurers Guidance Sheets: [www.quaker.org.uk/documents/treasurers-guidance-sheets-nov2019](http://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/treasurers-guidance-sheets-nov2019).
- Find further advice and support for treasurers on managing Quaker finances and contributions.

### Quaker charities (usually AMs)

Support for trustees on the running of Quaker charities, [www.quaker.org.uk/trustees](http://www.quaker.org.uk/trustees).

- Trustee handbook (2024 edition): [www.quaker.org.uk/documents/quaker-trustee-handbook](http://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/quaker-trustee-handbook)
- Many other example and template policies and guidance given in advice for running Quaker charities.

### Data safety

Information and support for managing data safety in your LM and AM, [www.quaker.org.uk/datasafety](http://www.quaker.org.uk/datasafety).

- Data protection handbook: [www.quaker.org.uk/documents/data-protection-handbook-for-meetings-2019](http://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/data-protection-handbook-for-meetings-2019)
- Other guidance and support for Quaker good practice in data handling and management.

### Safeguarding

Advice and support for Quakers on safeguarding, [www.quaker.org.uk/safeguarding](http://www.quaker.org.uk/safeguarding).

- Model safeguarding policy for AMs: [www.quaker.org.uk/documents/model-safeguarding-policy-for-area-meetings](http://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/model-safeguarding-policy-for-area-meetings).
- Other pages to support good practice, DBS and PVG checking.

Contact: [safe@quaker.org.uk](mailto:safe@quaker.org.uk).