

# Wardens (et al) Talking notes (ongoing)

An ongoing record of the notes taken at online Wardens (et al)  
Talking meetings.



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## Archive of notes

- [Notes from discussions in 2020](#)
- [Notes from discussions in 2021](#)

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## 29 November 2022

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Tuesday, 29 November 2022**. There were 7 people who joined the meeting. There is a new set of notes beginning in 2022 attached to this message. This time we explored marketing and promotion.

The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday, 21 December at 2.30pm**. I invite you to bring a drink and something to nibble as we will have an end of the year celebration and fellowship session. The joining details for the meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking
- Time: 21 November 2022 2.30PM
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: WToonline

### Links or attachments

- UK Government: [Energy Bills Relief Scheme](#)

### Topics

#### Grant-making for church buildings and property

Where, in addition to BYM, can Quaker meetings find grants for building projects and property maintenance or upgrades?

- BYM Property Grants: [www.quaker.org.uk/grants](http://www.quaker.org.uk/grants)
- National Churches and Chapels Trust: [www.nationalchurchestrust.org/get-support/grants](http://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/get-support/grants)
- Listed Building Local Authority Grants: search for locally
- Listed Place of Worship Grant Scheme: [www.lpwscheme.org.uk/](http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/)
- Quaker Housing Trust: [www.qht.org.uk/](http://www.qht.org.uk/)
- Recycling credits system (check locally for details)
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation: [www.jrf.org.uk/funding/apply-for-funding](http://www.jrf.org.uk/funding/apply-for-funding)
- Local Historic Churches Trusts: (search locally)

#### Property and wardenship

There was a brief conversation about property and wardenship. Not much to note other than an acknowledgement that property is managed in very different ways in different places. In some places property is overseen and managed by committee. In other places property management is delegated to wardens or managers. Overall responsibility can't be delegated and is ultimately held by AM trustees.

#### Future of Wardens Talking

A conversation about the future of the online session took place. There is a desire to hold some in-person events in 2023. I have names of Friends who offered to help with these and will start planning.

We talked about whether the purpose of the group is right. It has been a space where we have discussed the range of issues that Quaker workers meet, and how their work can

be supported. And it has also been a place where there has been the opportunity to be pastorally supportive. Both purposes are important but may not be possible to be met in the same space fully. There is a parallel meeting starting to take of specifically around pastoral care for workers which allows these meetings to be more focused on practical aspects of support.

#### *Name of the sessions*

These sessions are no longer specifically warden or worker focused and so it would be good to think of a new name that is more reflective of what they offer. The discussions are for workers and those overseeing the management of Quaker premises. We talk about a range of things that are about practical management, policy-making, compliance and best Quaker practice.

Please send any suggestions you have for a new name to [oliverw@quaker.org.uk](mailto:oliverw@quaker.org.uk).

#### *Topics for 2023*

We gathered a list of topics to cover during 2023. There has been a sense that as there is not the huge focus of a pandemic taking all of our attention we could have a topic at each meeting for some of the time and use any time left over for topics that are brought on the day or that are part of local or national interest at the time.

- Quinquennial surveys (property)
- Management of cleaning and methods of looking after various surfaces
- Online presence and social media
- Meeting house handbook
  - Promoting the handbook more
- Outreach
  - Getting copies of posters, artwork supplied in a scalable file
- Viability and livelihood of meetings
- How to support residential wardens when they retire
- General support for employees
  - Cover for wardens when they are not working
  - Employment practices

If there are topics that you would like to have a session on, please let me know. And if you know someone who could lead a session please send me a message to [oliverw@quaker.org.uk](mailto:oliverw@quaker.org.uk).

## 11 November 2022 – Marketing and Promotion

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Friday, 11 November 2022**. There were 9 people who joined the meeting. There is a new set of notes beginning in 2022 attached to this message. This time we explored marketing and promotion.

The next meeting will take place on **Tuesday, 29 November at 2pm**. The joining details for the meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking
- Time: 29 November 2022 2PM
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: WTONline

### Links or attachments

- UK Government: [Energy Bills Relief Scheme](#)

### Marketing and promotion

#### What can meeting houses offer?

- Flexibility of the spaces that are available for hire
- Flexibility of attitude towards hirers and groups
- Single level premises good for accessibility (not universal)
- Wifi and other tech is now becoming more available
- Some meetings offer refreshments or hospitality packages
- Access to the kitchen or other facilities
- Relatively inexpensive

#### Why do people want to hire Quaker premises?

- Sometimes people passing ask for some quiet
- Clean and spacious and airy premises
- Discreet, tucked away and ideal for counseling and one-to-one sessions
- Often say that the building has a lovely energy about it
- Like that there are other groups in the building that are not to do with them. Mix of activities
- Groups share Quaker values, peace group, environmental group
- Quiet atmosphere, calm space
- Good public transport links (not all)
- Access to a car park private to the building

#### Who are our current hirers?

- Lot of one-to-one therapists
- Large variety of 12 steps groups
- Lots of funerals - near to many funeral directors
- Various discussion groups
- Craft groups

- Adult daycare for adults with learning difficulties
- Toddler groups and nurseries
- Food banks
- People who rent individual office spaces on a permanent let
- Fair trade meeting
- U3A - who cover lots of space Sep to Easter
- Lots of NHS groups as near to the Hospital

#### **Who would we like to become our hirers?**

- Increase counseling type bookings
- More hirers who use the large space (balance needed with the ability for users to park on premises)
- More training / learning groups and events
- Local XR group – anxious about how Quakers might receive! them so would need to have a process of discernment
- Could a very big cupboard be hired out? Ideas please?
  - Hired for storage
  - Music practice room
- Broader mix of groups
- Quiet retreat days – premises would lend itself to that activity

#### **Quaker use of the building**

- Clause in contract about cancelling for Quaker activities occasionally. Usually only happens for a memorial meeting.

#### **What marketing tools do we use?**

- Word of mouth (WoM) by far the biggest
- Notice boards outside on the road facing the pavement
- Combination of WoM and good online presence
- Meeting website - Facebook page - Hallshire.com
- Other social media?
  - Instagram ineffectively
  - Twitter not successful
  - Would like to see TikTok used
- Advert in the local paper - brought in good bookings
- Open for local Heritage Day, brings people into the building
- Part of warm spaces initiative

#### **How can we make the most of the tools we have available to us?**

- Photographs
  - Would like to get agreement from people to be photographed for use in promotional materials
  - Photographs of the meeting house, rooms and spaces etc.
- Better use of social media - keep posting things regularly to keep interest / engagement
- Keep the website up-to-date, well-structured and relevant or clear
- Join in with local initiatives

- Outreach – part of secret gardens event in the town
- Keeping room hire separate to Quaker activity on the website but linking through the Quaker values
- Try to make websites more visually interesting and interactive (if possible) to show what a progressive space the meeting house can be
- Held an open day and advertised to the whole neighbourhood

#### **Things to learn more about**

- Like to learn about using social media more effectively
  - Other platforms such as nextdoor app
- Ticker board tape (electric) in a shopping centre to advertise space to hire or activities
- Area meeting looking into employing a Comms Officer - not sure if outreach focused so hoping to work alongside

#### **Other ideas or things we could do together?**

- Website that has all the MH for hire across the whole country. Could we ask QMN about it?
- Look at some other meeting websites, both good and bad, for some inspiration.
- Guidance and training in social media, used to get occasional messages with advice. What has happened?
- Session on social media at wardens talking (Oliver will look into this)
- Paper leaflet - what too include?
  - What goes on in the MH?
  - Images of the rooms
  - Examples attached with the notes
- Poster size for the outside of the building
- QR codes for hirer groups available inside the building with links to websites / booking

#### **Examples**

- Bristol AM website, updates with details of each premises for hire, pictures and booking details, <https://bristolquakers.org.uk/room-hire>

#### *Attachments to the email*

- Horfield Quaker Meeting room hire leaflet/poster
- Paper leaflet examples from Walthamstow LM

## 19 October 2022

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Wednesday, 19 October 2022**. There were 16 people who joined the meeting. There is a new set of notes beginning in 2022 attached to this message.

The next meeting will take place on **Friday, 11 November at 10.30am**. The joining details for the meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking
- Time: 11 November 2022 10.30AM
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: WToonline

### Links or attachments

- UK Government: [Energy Bills Relief Scheme](#)
- [www.quaker.org.uk/events](http://www.quaker.org.uk/events) (for warm spaces outreach sessions)

### Topics

#### Non-domestic Energy Bills Relief Scheme

The Government has published details of the [Energy Bills Relief Scheme](#) for non-domestic customers. Discounts will be applied to energy usage for an initial 6 month period between 1 October 2022 and 31 March 2023. The scheme will apply in England, Scotland and Wales. Customers do not need to apply as the discount will be automatically applied to bills.

#### Providing storage for hirers and charging

See also [previous notes in this document](#).

- Are there any implications for your buildings/contents insurance? Think about max value of items left in storage etc.
- Is it possible to treat all hirers equally? Example of a square plastic box at set size available to all hirers.
- Some larger items charged for, such as stackable exercise mats which take up floor space. Charged weekly/monthly by the floorspace taken up.

#### Warm spaces

BYM is running national online discussions on warm spaces in November. Visit the [BYM events page](#) to attend.

- Is the idea to open intentionally for this purpose or to make use of residual heat in the building?
- Some MH opening weekends, which may start to become a social time for Friends to meet up as well as for warmth.
- If your meeting does not have the human resource to offer its own building find out about other venues in your locality and join with them.
- Many local Council's are starting to organise warm spaces and will be looking for venues and communities to be involved.

- Carry out an assessment of the risk to ensure that you can offer the space safely. It does not need to be onerous, but you might want to ask your AM trustees for support with this.

### **How to get a contract cleaner to do what they are asked to do in the way they are asked to do it?**

What can you do when you find that it is hard to negotiate with a cleaner (or another worker) and don't want to let them go. Are there things you can do if they don't engage with requests to change the way that they work.

- Creating a list of duties with details of how often they need to be done. Can also include a tick-off sheet.
  - Each time
  - Regularly but not every time
  - Occasionally
- Find someone who the worker trusts to sit with you both and them to go through it with them present.
- Think about how you engage with them. Not everyone will have had a positive experience of line-management in the past and may be resistant to even having a conversation.
- Can the relationship be about more than line or task management? Does it feel like a two-way relationship? How do you think they might perceive you/their manager?
- Can be helpful to say that decisions are from management rather than from the line manager or supervisor.

### **Simplifying structures**

What might fall between the cracks or not get done at all as many LM and AMs start to think about simplifying their structures? Will workers be left with more or unreasonable levels of responsibility?

- Things are not being done adequately, such as data protection.
- Some committees are being amalgamated, eg. premises and hospitality. Not all of the responsibility that was held by both is now being carried out. Not clear who will pick up the work or if it won't happen.
- Membership records are not being kept up-to-date and some AMs are not following the BYM system for transferring Friends' membership.
- Meetings and groups not wanting to let go of things that should be let go of which is making simplifying impossible.
- Trying to work on the relationships between LM and AM and trustees to help know if anything is not being done that needs to be.
- Paid for AM bookkeeper across which makes it easier to find treasurers in each LM.

### **Supporting wardens talking**

How can we help keep WT happening and be a space that is supportive of workers and those overseeing the running of Quaker premises?

- Key purpose is to bring people together and share the challenges that we are all facing.



- Sometimes this needs to include the space to have a moan and a grumble.
- Many meetings only have one worker who can feel quite isolated, the space helps provide support and
- Think about the structure of the sessions to help keep interest.
- More themed sessions and could mix theme and open discussion. This has worked in the occasions it has been tried.
- Could move to 4 weekly or monthly as this should regular enough.
- There is a thought about providing an additional pastoral space for anyone to ask for or join as needed.
- Is there an eldership/pastoral role for Friends locally? Not all manage to look after workers well. Is WT filling a gap that could in part be addressed locally?

#### *Meeting in person*

- Can we organise one or more gatherings in person in 2023?
- Could we form a body nationally that can hold ownership of the work and organise the events?
- Names were taken during the meeting of people keen to be involved, if you are willing and weren't present please get in touch with Oliver, [oliverw@quaker.org.uk](mailto:oliverw@quaker.org.uk).
- Is there an event that could be run nationally (possibly at Woodbrooke) like a revived version of Managing our Meeting Houses? Not like for like but with a re-think.

#### *Other things*

- There is a wealth of knowledge in the notes, could some work be done on the notes over the last 3 years to build a resource? Anyone with ideas or interest in doing this get in touch with Oliver, [oliverw@quaker.org.uk](mailto:oliverw@quaker.org.uk).

## 30 September 2022 –Sustainability Project Property Database

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Friday, 30 September 2022**. There were 10 people who joined the meeting. There is a new set of notes beginning in 2022 attached to this message. Til Geiger came to our meeting to tell us about Woodbrooke's sustainability project and the property database that has been developed and is starting to be populated.

PLEASE ADD DETAILS OF PROJECTS YOUR MEETING HAS DONE TO MAKE BUILDINGS MORE SUSTAINABLE (instructions on how below).

The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday, 19 October at 14.00pm**. The joining details for the meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking
- Time: 19 October 2022 2PM
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: WToonline

### Links or attachments

- [Sustainability project property database](#)
- AM trustees: [www.quaker.org.uk/trustees](http://www.quaker.org.uk/trustees)
- Meeting House Grants: [www.quaker.org.uk/mhfunds](http://www.quaker.org.uk/mhfunds)
- National Churches Trust: [www.nationalchurchestrust.org/get-support/grants](http://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/get-support/grants)
- Mindful Business Services: [A-Z of Meeting Houses](#)

### Topics

#### Woodbrooke sustainability project – property database

Til Geiger introduced the project and the need for the new database.

*“We have embarked on our journey to make our meetings more sustainable. The task seems daunting and yet urgent. All our meetings are unique – some have old meeting houses which are rarely used but loved; others busy but difficult and expensive to upgrade. Yet our journey is a shared one. There is so much we can learn from our experiences along the way.*

*At the moment, we know too little about the actions individual local and area meetings are taking. These actions may be small steps like becoming an eco-church or holding meetings for learning, which might lead to bigger steps like better insulating the meeting house or installing a heat pump or infrared heating panels.*

*As a first step, Woodbrooke is developing a database to collect all this information. This work is part of Woodbrooke's Climate Crisis; spiritual nurturing and learning project funded by Britain Yearly Meeting. The intention is that this will help meetings to connect that are discerning how best to use their property and resources in the face of the climate crisis with those that have done this and made changes. These might be small or large, might be getting solar panels for the meeting house or moving to a new meeting house or developing a garden as a place of sanctuary. Sharing the process of*

*discernment of deciding on small steps will be as important as telling the story of a major refurbishment.*

*The database is currently being developed and we urgently need Friends to help us by filling in the questionnaire using the link below. Your feedback about the form would be useful as we are developing the database.*

*We also know that there is a lot of expertise about property and resources in the Quaker community – on making buildings sustainable, project planning, care of burial grounds, natural gardens and so on. We hope that some of those who have this expertise would be willing to share it with the Quaker community, either as service or for a fee.*

***If your meeting has experience of making changes to your property and use of resources to address the climate crisis and to make it more sustainable – or if you have expertise in this area – and you are happy to be contacted by Quaker meetings needing information and/or support, then please fill in the form below. If you are not sure how to fill in the form or would prefer to speak to someone, please contact [tracey.martin@woodbrooke.org.uk](mailto:tracey.martin@woodbrooke.org.uk)***

***Please use the following link to fill in the questionnaire:***

***[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1DLSnDn5VjKbuYy\\_EDYpesTSlaR0DlvJi6YM2JtY\\_yR0/viewform?edit\\_requested=true](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1DLSnDn5VjKbuYy_EDYpesTSlaR0DlvJi6YM2JtY_yR0/viewform?edit_requested=true)***

*Any information you give us will be protected under GDPR regulations and only shared with your consent. We will be in touch with some people for further information and are also interested in documenting experience to support learning. If you are interested in documenting your experience, please tick the box.*

*In this time of climate crisis Quakers need to support one another more than ever and we hope the database will enable us to do this in very practical ways.”*

### **Making sure our policies are fit for purpose**

How do we know that when a policy has been drafted for use across our AM it is fit for purpose? Are there steps that can be taken to help ensure our policies are compliant?

- Could be thinking of policies such as:
  - Health and safety
  - Lone working
  - Equalities (and others)
- Policies can be reviewed independently to ensure they meet requirements.
- There is a charge for this service but it may be cost effective if time and energy of trustees and other AM committee's is low.
- BYM does not have templates of all such policies as they are often too specific to the organisation.
- BYM has some examples of some AM's policies on the AM trustees' webpages, [www.quaker.org.uk/trustees](http://www.quaker.org.uk/trustees).
- We can put things in place to help ourselves, such as:
  - Regular walk round (at different intervals for different things) of premises to identify issues.
  - Invite users with accessibility requirement to give feedback on our premises.

- Develop risk assessment for the premises and update regularly.
- Improvements to the buildings, grants and loans:
  - BYM has grants and loans that are available for meetings to make improvement so buildings.
  - The [National Churches Trust](#) has grants schemes which Quaker meetings can apply for.

### **A-Z of meeting houses**

What do you do to help building users (Quakers and hirers) know what the building is used for and how to find their way around?

- There is an example [A-Z of meeting houses](#) linked from the [Mindful Business Services](#) website.
- Could you make a short film about how the meeting house is used?
- What literature or web-presence do you have to help people know what is on offer?

### **Is there a law saying that buildings must provide toilets for pregnant women?**

This came up in discussion following a warden being asked to provide the loo to someone who was not a building user.

- Meeting houses are only open to the public for worship so would not necessarily be required to provide a toilet for non-users at other times.
- Need to think of this alongside lone-working policy and keeping employees or volunteers safe.
- Would want to feel it would be possible to provide a toilet for someone in need if it feels safe and appropriate to do so.
- Make sure messages are clear so that if an employee or hirer open the door to someone they know how to respond.
- Need to ensure that building and people are safe.

## 7 September 2022

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Wednesday, 7 September 2022**. There were 14 people who joined the meeting. There is a new set of notes beginning in 2022 attached to this message.

The next meeting will take place on **Friday, 30 September at 10.30pm**. We will be joined by Till Geiger who will tell us more about QPSW sustainable property project. The joining details for the meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking
- Time: 30 September 2022 10.30AM
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: WTONline

### Links or attachments

- [www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus) (13 June 2022)
- [How to Build a Corsi-Rosenthal Box \(homemade air scrubber\)](#)

### Topics

#### Feeling bullied by a hirer

An example was given by a warden who had felt bullied by a new hirer. This led to a discussion about situations where workers have felt bullied by hirers or Friends.

To acknowledge this this is not singling out hirers and Friends and that bullying can take place at all levels in communities and organisations. We were only exploring examples related to Quaker workers.

#### *General examples*

- When bookings clash or when there is tension around a booking, such as a new client wanting to speed up the due diligence process.
- Sometimes people try to be assertive but occasionally this can cross into anger or rudeness which can feel like bullying or harassment.
- Workers who might be faceless, such as a bookkeeper or remote administrator, can sometime be the person who is treated unfairly or is bullied.
- An approximate ratio of hirers: 80% of whom are fine and cause no issues to 20% who are responsible for distress and additional time and effort. It is helpful for those managing, or for Friends overseeing premises, to know that a large amount of workers time is often spent dealing with a small percentage of customers.
- Not always sure or clear how to manage the expectation of Quakers who use the building.
- Quakers/Friends: Passive aggressive behaviour of other Quakers towards workers.
- Sometimes workers are ignored and seen as part of the community or valued for the work they do and the ideas they bring.
- Warden, manager or other worker brought to tears by Quakers/managers not acceptable.

- Line management structures can vary differently from very little interaction to feeling micromanaged. Non-professional line management structures sometimes allow bullying from other parts of the community to become problematic.
- Workers are in service but are not servants.

#### *What can help?*

- Trying to be flexible and clear about 'bottom lines'.
- Need to have clear line management structures that are understood and respected by everyone.
- AMs are responsible for employment and volunteering (trustees hold legal responsibilities). Policies should reflect equality across AMs and should be implemented consistently.
- There should be structures in place enabling workers to have adequate leave (for employee's legal minimums).
- AM/LM should have cover in place when workers take leave which should not be left to workers to arrange.
- AM/LM to understand the work that is being carried out on their behalf by workers so that in emergencies it can be carried on seamlessly.
- Workers might need to refer difficult people or situation up the organisational hierarchy to seek support.
- Recognition that while Quakers seek to have flat structures employees and volunteers have a hierarchy to support their service.

#### **Rosenthal Box (homemade air scrubber)**

- How to Build a Corsi-Rosenthal Box, College of Engineering (ucdavis.edu), <https://engineering.ucdavis.edu/news/science-action-how-build-corsi-rosenthal-box>

#### **Increasing hire charges**

- General sense is that we should be increasing room hire charges at least in line with inflation or to ensure that the cost of hiring the room is recouped with some surplus.
- This year there may be a need to increase by more than would be in a usual year due to the unprecedented cost of living increases.
- Increases can be added annually or with different regularity depending upon organisational need.
- Communication with customers is important to be sure they are aware of changes in the cost of hiring rooms.
- Other options might also include:
  - Heating supplement
  - Additional charges (for example if it is clear that a customer has left the heating on when they have left a room)
  - Staged increases
- Although letting rooms is not Quakers primary purpose, it is the main way that most Quaker meetings can generate income, apart from donations. We need to be sure that it is feasible to offer rooms for hire and cost effective.

## 10 August 2022

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Wednesday, 10 August 2022**. There were 9 people who joined the meeting. There is a new set of notes beginning in 2022 attached to this message.

The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday, 7 September at 2.00pm**. The joining details for the meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking
- Time: 7 September 2022 2PM
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: WTonline

### Links or attachments

- [www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus) (13 June 2022)
- Quaker Meeting Network: <https://quaker.app/about>
- Simpler Meetings Project: [www.quaker.org.uk/simpler](http://www.quaker.org.uk/simpler)
- [Meeting House Handbook template](#)

### Topics

#### **Making space for hirers on the meeting house notice board**

There are two ways that we discussed this: 1) making space to advertise that rooms are available to hire in the premises, and 2) making a space available to hirers to put notices of their own. The Quaker community will also have noticeboard space.

#### *To advertise that rooms are available to hire*

- Depending on the location of the premises and number of passers-by, it is good to advertise in the locality. If there is an external noticeboard a part of it could be for advertising the availability of rooms to hire.
- Physical noticeboards now sit alongside having an online presence which could be a website and/or social media. [Quaker Meetings Network](#) is an independent project designed to support Quaker meetings develop attractive and functional websites.
- Include images of each of the rooms available to hire so that people have a sense of the spaces that are available.

#### *A space for hirers to advertise what they offer*

- Can be a way to bring new people into the building and can act as Quaker outreach as well as on behalf of the hirer.
- Good to be clear that if a space is provided it will be routinely managed by premises staff to remove older messages, perhaps after a set time.

#### *For Quakers*

- If the meeting has a favourite 'outreach' poster that is getting a bit tired, Quaker Life can supply a new version to liven up the noticeboard. Email [supportmeetings@quaker.org.uk](mailto:supportmeetings@quaker.org.uk).



- Agree with the LM clerk or whoever in the meeting manages the noticeboard a way to keep it feeling fresh so that older material is removed in a timely way.

If you are looking for ideas why not visit other meeting houses to see what they do.

## **Sustaining a Quaker meeting house as a commercial enterprise**

*How can we ensure that Quaker businesses are well run and well managed when there is such pressure on role-holders?*

*Is too much responsibility now falling on staff at Quaker premises?*

*How are some AMs weathering the balance of responsibility shifting better than others?*

A discussion took place which touched on all of these questions. While there are no set answers there was some good collective knowledge and additional queries that arose from the conversation.

- There is a shift taking place at the moment towards paying for some things that might at one time have been carried out by volunteer (nominated) role-holders.
- Paying people to give service feels jarring for some Friends and the shift might feel uncomfortable. But we can take the view that by paying someone we are enabling them to give the service that they may not otherwise be able to offer.
- If we choose not to pay for some things that might previously have been considered Quaker service, are we putting our communities in jeopardy as the ability of Friends to give that service without remuneration diminishes?
- If we do not invest in making changes, such as in people, to help manage Quaker affairs are we ultimately being poor stewards of the resources that we have available?
- Might we put ourselves in a position where the reputation of Quakers locally or nationally is at risk if our communities are unable to meet the requirements of the charity regulators?
- There is much that we can learn from the simpler meetings project that Jonathan Carmichael led on when working for Quaker Life, [www.quaker.org.uk/simpler](http://www.quaker.org.uk/simpler).
- Many area meetings are testing the waters and trying out new models with employees at area meeting level to support trustees and help manage property, policy and offer professional line-management.
- Tools such as the [Meeting House Handbook template](#) can help to get systems in order and support Quakers to temporarily manage premises when staff (paid or voluntary) are unavailable or on annual leave.
- Staff (paid and voluntary) from across an AM can meet informally on a regular basis to share knowledge and support each other.

## **Warm spaces**

- What can we do with residual heat in Quaker premises?
- Is there a way that we can work with others community buildings in our locality to make premises available for individuals?
- Are there things that we can do for members of our own Quaker communities who might find the cost of energy too much this coming winter?
- Gateshead Council is an example of a local authority offering support, [Warm Spaces - Gateshead Council](#). Is there a similar scheme in your meeting's locality?



## 19 July 2022 – Heating systems

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Tuesday, 19 July 2022**. There were 32 people who joined the meeting. The session was on Heating and systems that we might start to use to reduce our dependency on gas. There is a new set of notes beginning in 2022 attached to this message.

The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday, 10 August at 2.30pm**. The joining details for the meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking
- Time: 10 August 2022 2.30PM
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: WTONline

### Links or attachments

- [www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus) (13 June 2022)

## Heating

### Introduction by Peter Griffin

Peter professional work is for Parity Projects, <https://parityprojects.com/>. Their work is to work on domestic property to help reach net zero or fuel efficiency targets.

The key take-away re is that we need to reduce our energy usage and in particular the dependence upon fossil fuels.

- If we are burning fuels at all it is not going to be okay for a net-zero economy.
- You can make a building much more efficient but in terms of decarbonisation if we are burning fuel it doesn't decarbonise.
- What will be the alternative? For most of the country this will look towards electric. A modern simple (direct) electric heating system is about as efficient as a very efficient gas system.

### Heat Pumps

- Air Sourced (ASHP) take heat from the air. They are like a fridge where the warm part (at the back) connects to the building sending heat into the home via the water system (Air to Water). Or they can blow warm or cold air via a fan (Air to Air) as an air conditioning unit does. They are much lower carbon than a Gas boiler in terms of efficiency.
- Ground Sourced (GSHP) take heat from the ground which tends to be a more regulated temperature. They require either:
  - a. A deep bore to be dug to extend the pipework into the ground to gather heat from the ground.
  - b. Or a shallow trench to be dug over a large area where the pipework can be lowered into.

### *Green-Gas / Hydrogen*

- Green Gas – is like collecting gas from compost such as food waste. Can't currently be scaled for nationwide use. There simply isn't enough land available for us to make the resources for green gas.
- Hydrogen – In every stage of the production of hydrogen there is a loss of energy, which when compared with a Heat Pump is significantly less efficient. The same is true when making hydrogen from natural gas as there is not a process that is able to capture the full amount of energy with current tech.

### *Fabric efficiency*

The Fabric Energy Efficiency Standard (FEES) is **the proposed maximum space heating and cooling energy demand for zero carbon homes**. – In the most basic terms this relates to the level of energy that is required to keep heating our homes, or in this case meeting houses? If buildings are 10% more energy efficient then we require 10% less energy. The more efficient our buildings are the less energy we need to use.

### *Energy cost*

Currently the cost of electricity is a lot more than gas. The costs are being looked at by the government. We may also find that as costs settle during and after the current fuel crisis, the costs will naturally find a better balance. However it is clear that the amount of energy required for newer systems is much lower and can be generated cleanly if they run on electricity.

### *The right solution for your building*

Meeting houses are all different and will take some thought to be sure that the right system is chosen for the building. It is vital to use any opportunity you have to blend in efficiency savings into the fabric of the building. If you can have a long-term plan for improving the building so that if there is any work required upgrades to efficiency of the building can be done at the same time.

### *How far can you go with efficiency savings?*

It is worth adding more to the efficiency of a building but the energy saving will become negligible at a certain point. Expert advice is really important and a survey will include details many areas that will affect the performance of the building.

### **Questions and comments**

- *The electricity supply to one meeting house was not good enough to power a heat pump.*  
An ASHP may not be the go-to solution at the moment but there are other products. Newer systems may be more efficient and not require such load on the power systems. It may be worth contacting other infrastructure suppliers to see if upgrades are planned in the near future.
- *Do heat pumps work best with underfloor heating?*  
ASHP is much more efficient at lower temperatures and so underfloor heating is ideal. However it is not necessary, in smaller spaces radiators can work just as well. There may need to be additional or bigger radiators fitted to ensure that enough heat can be generated to warm the building enough.
- *Does the carbon emissions of producing the physical materials outweigh the overall carbon efficiency?*

No, is the general answer because the long-term efficiency savings will be significantly greater. Some factors you might wish to consider are: a) How easily the materials can be recycled or re-used? b) Whether the parts would have needed to be replaced in the near future anyway?

- *Does building usage make a difference?*

Yes! Usage is a really important factor. If the building is used regularly and heated almost constantly the energy saving will be a major factor. However if a building that is just used for worship and in a location that is unlikely to mean it will be used more frequently it may be that there are other ways to use it comfortably.

- *Can you give advice on surveys?*

Some buildings will need a huge insulation upgrade before it would be possible to convert their gas boiler to an ASHP. Get a surveyor that you trust, that is ideally local and understand both the type of building and the type of appliance that you are considering installing. Some installers will do a survey for you but they may not be very detailed. Spending money on this kind of service is a very valid use of AM funds. Better not to cut corners as it may mean you may not get the right solutions for your building.

- GSHP has been being run in a cottage for hire for about 10 years. Had to encourage clients not to tamper with the thermostats but once they got used to it they were fine. [www.worfolkcottage.co.uk](http://www.worfolkcottage.co.uk)

### **Some examples from meetings**

#### *Hammersmith LM (London West AM)*

In a new building Hammersmith has a gas boiler in a very well insulated building. It also has Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery (MVHR). Keeps heat within the building rather than losing it and ventilates the building keeping the air fresh.

There are no figures on the performance as yet as the building is new. Once there has been a full year of operation it might be possible to see what the costs are. Anecdotally is that the building is warm and dry and at the moment cooler than outside.

Really need someone who knows how it works and can hand-hold with users to be sure that this can be used to its potential.

Might be possible to replace the gas boiler may be able to be replaced with an Air to Water ASHP in future which may add to the energy efficiency.

#### *Bristol Redland LM (Bristol AM)*

Looked into ASHP and the cost and efficiency savings didn't seem possible at the time. Also looked at more efficient gas boiler. Are still in the process but are seriously looking at modern radiant heaters that are suspended from the ceiling.

These are the most energy efficient but may not be the most cost effective considering the installations costs of gas and lower installation costs of a replacement gas boiler.

The AM is keen to move to carbon zero which these could be by choosing the right energy supplier and adding other modifications such as PV panels and battery storage.

As yet there is no data from their use as they have not been installed. As with Hammersmith we could check back in a year or so to see if there is data that supports their choices.

*Pickering LM (Pickering & Hull AM)*

Has had an ASHP for 11 years. I can't remember if John said whether it is Air to Water (heats the radiators via the water system) or is Air to Air (heats a fan like an air conditioning system). The meeting is now on its second unit as the first was a prototype system.

Now has 15kw unit and have a very dry building which costs about the same to heat as it did to heat the building before which remained damp in colder months.

If anyone would like to know more about Pickering's experience, the wardens phone number is listed as 01751 472827 or [pickeringwardens@gmail.com](mailto:pickeringwardens@gmail.com).

## 1 July 2022

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Friday, 1 July 2022**. There were 14 people who joined the meeting. There is a new set of notes beginning in 2022 attached to this message.

The next meeting will take place on **Tuesday, 19 July at 2.00pm**. The joining details for the meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking
- Time: 19 July 2022 2PM
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: WTonline

### Links or attachments

- [www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus) (13 June 2022)
- [Quaker Meeting Network](#)

### Topics

#### **Acoustic panels to help the sound in the main meeting room**

What can help with sound in a main meeting room whether for people in-person or to help make a blended setup work better? One Friend talked of their experience.

- If there is not anyone with experience of acoustics in your LM/AM good to seek professional advice about options and having a survey.
- Has had panels (material type) fitted to the ceiling and two of the walls. Not had anything done to the floor (Parquet).
- Made a huge difference to both the sound in the space itself and when using with a blended setup.

#### *Other thoughts*

- Echo can come from within the space or from the online setup. It is usually obvious but can sometimes be difficult to detect what is causing it.
- Getting the sound right can be a huge step towards people accepting new technology. If it is easy and comfortable to use it will be welcomed more readily.
- There are solutions for rooms of all shapes and sizes. Sometimes something as simple as putting a rug on a wooden floor can be transformative. Not all the options will be expensive.

#### **Promoting the meeting house in our locality**

This conversation arose from some thinking that due to the pandemic we may be getting out of the habit of promoting our premises to within their locality. Here are some thoughts on this.

- Is there a process for getting information about room hire on to the notice board or external signage?
- Most effective is now often a combination of word-of-mouth and online presence.
- Is there a public noticeboard, such as in a library, that you can put a flyer into?

- Could you organise an open-day to promote the building and let potential customers know what the building can offer?
- What do customers see in the building? Take a step away and see if you can have an objective look at the building to see what a hirer might see. If you can't do this yourself invite a customer or someone from another venue to do it. You could offer them the same in return.
- Could you get, or make, a promotional banner for the building?
- Suggest uses for the rooms that you have available. Eg. if you have a large space, yoga or other indoor exercise. If you have a space with good tech, conferencing or a meeting space.
- Search for your own MH on the leading online search-engines to see where it is listed.
  - Check information and claim the listing to be sure that you control it.
  - Register with Google Maps and ensure that the 'pin' is in the right spot.
  - Update and social medial tools and pages to be sure that the correct information is being displayed.
  - Try our different social media channels to reach new audiences which might become new hirers.
- Hallmaster: has a basic online page that you can put listing onto to advertise. This can be added to a website as a RSS link. Webmasters might be able to assist!
- Quaker Meeting Network, <https://quaker.app/about/>, has a range of packages that offer a simple landing page to an interactive tool for meetings.
- You can add your meeting to a conferencing network such as Calder Conferences, [www.calderconferences.co.uk](http://www.calderconferences.co.uk). Other services are available.

### **Sanitary bins**

- General agreement that sanitary bins are a MUST HAVE in any building that is open to hirers. Only small amounts can be disposed of in the normal rubbish.
- There are many companies that offer this service but be aware that some companies try to lock you into long contracts (3-5 years as standard). Some people found this very inflexible when we went into the pandemic.
- Read Terms and Conditions carefully and do not sign if you are not happy with what is offered.
- Businesses are legally required to provide appropriate ways for the collection and disposal of sanitary waste.
- Due to the hygiene requirement this is not work that should be left to wardens or volunteers. If this is to be done by a cleaner there should be appropriate disposal method for the waste in place and they should have adequate health and safety training and protection in place.

### **Access – doors and security**

Who has access to your meeting house and do they leave it the way that they found it?

- Key-holders do not have an automatic right to be in Quaker premises unless they have a reason to be there.
- Does your meeting have an agreement with key-holders that sets out the expectations of being a key-holder clear?

- In the event of an emergency does your meeting know when someone is in the building?
  - Is there a lone-worker policy?
  - Do your AM trustees know that they could be liable if there were an incident involving someone in the building alone?
- Is the building open for anyone to walk into? Is there a risk of theft from anyone entering?
- Has there been a conversation about the balance between the Quaker interests in the building and making it available for charitable/commercial hire? How does the use affect the access and security requirements?
- Electronic systems: What can be controlled remotely now?
  - Heating
  - Entry
  - Lighting
  - Ventilation
- [Hallmaster](#): there may be integrations with Hallmaster such as connecting with heating systems. Updates here when there is more detail.
- Access:
  - Get a survey for any changes to access in advance of making commitments in case the building design does not suit the chosen option.
  - Try to move away from physical keys, other options such as code locks, manual and electronic, are as good and are much easier to manage access.
  - Once you have a routine of changing codes or access it will not take long for everyone to get used to it. But don't introduce unilaterally, support from LM or premises committee is essential.

### **Seeking support as a worker**

Where might a worker turn if their usual support is a very small group of Friends who suddenly and unexpectedly become unavailable?

- If local support is not available responsibility will ultimately fall to AM trustees.
- There may be an agreement in place between trustees and each LM, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which should say where support for workers rests.
- Is there an emergency protocol in place to support workers if they are suddenly left without oversight?
- Might this be seen as a risk which should be included in an organisational risk assessment? What happens if no-one is available to:
  - offer line-management (or other personal support)
  - pay wages or for other required spending
  - carry out duties that are not part of a workers agreed role
- Do Quaker structures need a re-think to avoid being in a situation where workers in smaller or less developed communities are left vulnerable?

## 9 June 2022

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Thursday, 9 June 2022**. There were 13 people who joined the meeting. There is a new set of notes beginning in 2022 attached to this message.

The next meeting will take place on **Friday, 1 July at 2.00pm**. The joining details for the meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly
- Time: 1 July 2022 2PM
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: WTonline

### Links or attachments

- [www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus) (currently under review)
- Library Thing: [www.librarything.com](http://www.librarything.com)

### Topics

#### Covid and emerging from the pandemic

For many Quaker communities things have opened up allowing activities almost as they were before the pandemic. Others are still taking time to emerge more carefully. It was helpful to be reminded that we are not all in the same place and we need to be supportive of communities who are still being cautious. The main thread was about re-opening for business as a venue.

#### *Room hire charges*

- Should we review charges? If charges have not been reviewed in a while this is an ideal time to review them. The cost of everything is rising and so we must be sure that the income we receive from hiring a room is not outstripped by the cost of opening the building.
- What analysis can you do of the cost of opening the building?
  - Energy costs (heat and light at key times of the year)
  - Wages (is an employee is required to be on site)
- What are other equivalent venues in the locality charging?
- What do you offer that other providers don't?
- Should we discount the cost of a room? Only within pre-agreed limits. In an ideal world any charges and discounts should be agreed at area meeting level (by trustees). It can be devolved to LM but in the interest of equality discounts should be the same across the charity. See the notes from **17 May meeting** (below in the pdf document) about different ways charges and discounts can be arranged.
- Do you include or charge extra for the use of tech equipment. Make sure that the charges cover any costs to the meeting.
- Annual price increases are to be expected and hirers will become used to a pattern if you make that the norm. Some meeting houses announce the increases to regular hirers in March / April that will be brought in the following January.



- It may feel uncomfortable to ask for the hire value that some venues demand. City centre meeting houses will usually be more costly to hire than rural ones. Hirers are used to paying the value of a venue based upon its location. Familiarise yourself with what equivalent venues charge so that it doesn't feel so that you know that you are not over or under charging.

### **Cost of living increase**

With the current cost of living crisis what do we need to think about to ensure that those who rely on income from Quaker work is adequate?

The first point in this conversation was about the cost of everything rising. It appears that some suppliers are raising their costs disproportionately and it is good to question a hike in prices if you feel it is unreasonable. Our Quaker testimony to equality is that we pay a fair price for things we buy and demand a fair price for the services we provide. We need to bear in mind good stewardship of our resources when thinking about both.

*Notes for employers (or those engaging volunteers)*

- Has your meeting considered that the cost of living has risen for your employees?
- Are you looking at how you can support them through this difficult time?
- Does your area meeting have an agreed annual cost of living increase to employee salaries?
- Is this a year that you need to review this and help out a bit more than usual?
- Does your meeting rely on increases that are updated each year to the Real Living Wage or the National Living Wage?
- Are there costs to running tied accommodation that are going to outprice a resident volunteer? Can your meeting help?
- Who is taking responsibility for having these conversations with employees and workers? Line-managers and volunteer managers should be aware that there are significant concerns about the cost of living. They should find out (from premises committee or trustees) so that they can arrange a conversation or be prepared should a worker ask.

### **Asset Register**

- Do trustees know what property and assets are held across the AM?
- What is available to be used by other meetings?
- Is there a system in place that could be shared with others via the wardenship / property-advice e-group?
- For libraries, [www.librarything.com](http://www.librarything.com) is a good online resource.
- A useful addition to the [Meeting House Handbook template?](#)
- London Quaker Property Trust has a good one which we will ask if can be shared.
- Is your AM required to produce one for insurance purposes?

### **Accommodation swap (Bus-persons holiday)**

*A message from John Lawson*

As I suggested a year ago, Alison and I would like to offer our accommodation to any other wardens or others who would like a small holiday in North Yorkshire. Our cottage will be available Wed 24 / Thurs 25 August until Tuesday 30 August if anyone would like to use it in return for opening up and locking up the Meeting House and feeding an elderly cat. Direct bus available from York. Contact John and Alison on 01751 472827

## 17 May 2022

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Tuesday, 17 May 2022**. My tardiness in not sending a reminder until the morning of the meeting meant just 8 people were present during the meeting. This did not affect the quality of the conversations and much was discussed as you will see from the notes. There is a new set of notes beginning in 2022 attached to this message.

The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday, 8 June at 2.30pm**. The joining details for the meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly
- Time: 8 June 2022 2.30PM
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: WTONline

### Links or attachments

- [www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus) (updated on 4 May 2022)

### Topics

#### Heating systems

Following the discussions that have been taking place on the wardenship e-group we have a really useful discussion about heating systems. The questions was in all our minds:

*How we can prepare Quaker premises for energy efficiency and renewables?*

We don't yet have all the answers and were talking a lot about newer systems that in many cases are not fully tried and tested yet.

One thing that emerged is that when looking for a new system it is really helpful to have someone who has experienced of using a similar system in their building. Not all systems will work well in all buildings so we must be open to using what will work for our individual premises!

I am going to look into having a themed session on heating systems and invite someone to talk professionally. And see if there is someone who can also bring the experience of using newer systems.

#### Polling day

One meeting was fortunate to have a council use the building as a polling station. Do you have links with the council and could your meeting house be used for this. Having the meeting house used as a Polling station can be a good way to generate income, is a great way to get people into the building and can also open the door to other lettings opportunities.

#### Covid

Has covid gone away in your meeting? It was interesting to hear the variety of practice in meetings across Britain. There is still a lot of variation with some meetings still being very

cautious; requiring face-coverings, hand-sanitizer and even LFT testing before worship. To others where there are really no restrictions left in place at all.

What is right for your community at the moment?

### **Should certain groups pay to hire the meeting house?**

This stemmed from a conversation about the giving away of rooms to organisations that are not 'Quaker' and only have a tentative link to a meeting. Here are a few thoughts.

- It is good to be very transparent about discounts that are offered to hire groups.
- It is reasonable to have different rates for:
  - Companies
  - Charities
  - Quaker groups
- You can also have different rates at different times of the day (peak and off-peak) so that hirers have a choice of a cheaper room at certain times. This can allow you to always charge the full price of a room at all times.
- If your LM would like to give an additional discount to a group it is often more transparent for you to charge the full or 'usual' discounted rate and then make a donation to the charity which can be agreed by minute at a Meeting for Worship for Church Affairs.
- Any decisions about discounts must be agreed and minuted by LM/AM and not just because, for example, that the hirer has a Quaker on the board.
- Discounts on room hire (outside of formally agreed parameters) should be considered charitable donations and accounted for accordingly.

*An example of one AM's charging policy is as follows:*

- Base rates which match similar venues in the locality should be established for each MH;
- Discounts may be negotiated where:
  - Hirers are prepared to commit to hiring for at least three sessions per week for a minimum duration of three months, or a school term as appropriate; or
  - New ventures are wishing to establish themselves;
- Commercial hirers are not entitled to any discount, except as above;
- Community groups (eg twelve steps, peer support etc) should receive a discount of 20%;
- Charities should receive a discount of up to 30%;
- Quaker ~~listed informal groups~~ ~~recognised bodies~~ should receive a discount of 50%;
- Quaker Meetings, whether local or national (eg YFGM, QPSW), are free of charge;
- Any discretion permitted by these principles should be discerned by LM in consultation with AM Treasurer;
- AM may discern that it wishes to provide greater discounts to certain hirers or classes of hirers; and
- Any LM may discern that it wishes to provide greater discounts to certain hirers, in which case it will need to use its designated funds to make up the difference.

## 28 April 2022 – Sanctuary Meetings

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Thursday, 28 April 2022**. There were 17 people present during the meeting. There is a new set of notes beginning in 2022 attached to this message.

The next meeting will take place on **Tuesday, 17 May at 10.00am**. The joining details for the meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly
- Time: 17 May 2022 10.00PM
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: WToonline

### Links or attachments

- [www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus) (updated on 4 May 2022)

### Topics

#### Sanctuary and support for refugees

Lyndsay Burtonshaw joined the meeting and spoke about the work of the Sanctuary project that she is now working on. She works 4 days per week and has a day a week for this work. Lyndsay talked how meetings and individuals can help refugees who are displaced from all parts of the world. See the notes below from the session.

There are quite a lot of links to share:

- [Lyndsayb@quaker.org.uk](mailto:Lyndsayb@quaker.org.uk) / [Sanctuary@quaker.org](mailto:Sanctuary@quaker.org)
- For meetings wishing to share their story and link up with other sanctuary meetings [www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/social-justice/migration/sanctuary-meetings](http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/social-justice/migration/sanctuary-meetings).
- Housing event [www.quaker.org.uk/events/sanctuary-network-event-housing](http://www.quaker.org.uk/events/sanctuary-network-event-housing) Thursday, 23 June 7.30pm on Zoom
- Peace education resources <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/-12653357>
- Help with the difficulty of wading through the Government information. Refugees at home: [www.refugeesathome.org/](http://www.refugeesathome.org/)
- Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network (QARN) has done some thinking around the sponsorship and the equality of who gets sponsored. <https://qarn.org.uk/qarn-members-thoughts-on-community-sponsorship/>

#### *Ideas or things to think about*

- Linking up work between meetings is really fantastic if meetings are small, rural or have not got themselves organised yet.
- Can we help people think about other people who have been forced to migrate.
- Different locales have different contexts for this work in terms of accommodating people.
- Lyndsay would like to help support the Quaker support networks.
- Building compassion with Russians who are perhaps being forced to take place.

- Welsh people can offer their home directly to the Government and they will allocate a suitable match.
- What does being a sanctuary meeting mean?
- Geography can affect how you do the work
  - Urban might do direct hosting
  - Rural meetings might arrange retreats
- Work with direct asylum seeker support groups.
- Linking with in interfaith space for services, hairdressing, creche, barber, social spaces.
- If your meeting does not have capacity to run things there may be coalitions that can help make things work better.
- Are you in the right locale to buy a property? Places with bad connections to services or other parts of the community may not be viable homes for refugees.
- Could you donate rental money for a fixed number of refugees for a set time rather than buy or provide property?
- Successful support has often been when people have listened to the need rather than being fixed on the ideas they want to put in place.
- What is the most effective use for money or energy for this purpose?

#### *Events*

#### **QARN event Changing the Conversation on Asylum in the UK**

**16 June 2022 19:00 - 20:30**

This evening event, coming just before Refugee Week, offers a chance to hear from those in the asylum system working to change the conversation on asylum through art, poetry and activism.

The session will be facilitated by members of Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network (QARN) <https://qarn.org.uk/>

[www.woodbrooke.org.uk/product/changing-the-conversation/](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/product/changing-the-conversation/)

#### **Young Adult Climate Crisis Retreat**

**30 September 2022 to 2 October 2022**

Taking action on the climate crisis can be exhausting. Are you feeling burnt out, anxious or spiritually depleted? This retreat in the tranquil setting at Woodbrooke will bring like-minded young people together to reflect, relax and recharge our spiritual and mental batteries.

Young adults can request funding support from their local meeting to attend.

[www.woodbrooke.org.uk/product/young-adult-climate-crisis-retreat/](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/product/young-adult-climate-crisis-retreat/)

#### **Storage for hirers**

- Do you have space? Is there a criteria for storing? How is it managed or maintained?
- Is there a charge to the hirer?
- Can the warden or worker make a judgement on a case-by-case basis?
- Can you set up a regular clear out so that it is the hirers responsibility to go through what they are keeping and clear what is not needed?

- Make sure things are labelled so that it is clear which hirer owns what is being stored.
- Do you have a policy about what happens to any materials that are left when a hirer leaves? This can go into a lettings policy.
- Nothing locked, or ensure that the meeting (warden or worker) has access to any space in case the hirer leaves and takes the key.

### **Covid procedures**

#### *What is still happening in meetings? General feeling*

- Many meetings are still encouraging face-coverings during worship and for hirers.
- Sanitizer is still being provided in most places.
- Hand washing is being encouraged more than it was before the pandemic.
- There is still some additional cleaning procedures in place in many meeting houses.
- Hirers can use their space as they see fit but are asked if they will keep rooms ventilated and use cleaning products that are provided as they feel necessary.

The [Quaker coronavirus webpage](#) is still being updated although there are few changes to legal compliance that need to be made available now.

## 6 April 2022

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Wednesday, 6 April 2022**. There were 17 people present during the meeting. There is a new set of notes beginning in 2022 attached to this message.

The next meeting will take place on **Thursday, 28 April at 10.30am**. This session will be a themed session. Lindsay Burtonshaw will join the session to talk about BYM's Sanctuary work and how Friends can be supportive of refugees whether they are coming from Ukraine or anywhere else where there is conflict. The joining details for the meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly
- Time: 28 April 2022 10.30PM
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: WToonline

### Links or attachments

- [www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus) (updated on 4 April 2022)
- Meeting House Grant Fund: [www.quaker.org.uk/mhfunds](http://www.quaker.org.uk/mhfunds)

### Topics

#### **The rising cost of energy (can we afford to heat buildings during the week?)**

What are the measures that meeting houses have taken to help make them as energy efficient as they can be. Is there help available to make improve Quaker premises?

- Is there any way that secondary glazing or other insulation can be installed or improved? [The Meeting House Fund](#) is a grant scheme offered via BYM to help improve buildings.
- Are there heating control systems that could be installed that mean that it is easier to control heating and only heat the building at the time it is needed?
  - Newer boilers may have an App control
  - Some systems may allow heating zones
  - Some may allow different settings at weekends or weekdays
  - Building users may not be able to change the controls to easily meaning and less energy lost.
- Are there things that can be put in place manually to try to avoid wasting energy? Can someone manually set and re-set heating controls regularly?
- Do meeting houses have the opportunity to transition from gas to other means of heating?
  - What might the steps be to transition?
  - Are the grants available for businesses?
- What are the costs of running your meeting house? Have you undertaken an energy audit? Do you know where energy saving can be made whether they are through avoiding loss or not using in the first place?
- Can the charges to hirers reflect the cost of running the building at different times of the year? Could a 'winter hire charge' be introduced in certain months?

- Is this an opportunity to look at hire charges more generally? Do we need some re-setting after the flexibility that may have been introduced during the pandemic?

### **Car parking**

Are there things that can be done to stop meeting house car parking spaces from being used by anyone who wishes?

- Signage does not often help deter people from parking. But a sign saying that the car-park might be locked at any time can be a deterrent.
- Gates and locks are the simplest form of security, best to get a lock with a combination so that the code can be changed quickly and easily.
- One car-park was resurfaced but didn't have new lines painted for the spaces, this has deterred people from parking as they don't know it is still a carpark.
- Best things seems to be interacting in-person with people who try to park illegally.
- Trying to avoid using draconian measures.
- Some people just pay no attention and park where they want.
- Car-park entrances have sometimes been blocked by people parking. Double yellow lines can help (the local Council can be engaged to put them in) to help manage access.



## 15 March 2022

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Tuesday, 15 March 2022**. There were 17 people present during the meeting. There is a new set of notes beginning in 2022 attached to this message.

The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday, 6 April at 2pm** (note this is different to what I said at the meeting this week). The joining details for the meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly
- Time: 6 April 2022 2.00PM
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: WToonline

### Links or attachments

- [www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus) (updated on 25 February 2022)
- [Quaker Meeting House Handbook template \(Word\)](#)
- [Of&p 14.27: use of premises](#)

### Topics

#### Pay and conditions

How can Quakers be the best employers and managers they can be? What helps employees and volunteers to feel they are being cared for as well as adequately remunerated?

- Equal conditions and pay for equivalent roles across area meetings.
- It is a good idea to have a pay-scale which has been thought about in advance and shows what level of responsibility is required at each level and how a worker can progress.
- It can be easy to add responsibility to a role without reflecting that by offering additional salary. Think about what is reasonable to ask your employee to do for the wage they will receive.
- When looking at salary, check whether there are comparable roles locally that you can measure against.
- Part time work:
  - Does the flexibility that might be needed in the role allow a worker to do another job if they need it?
  - Is accommodation or another benefit included to help add to a part time salary?
  - Can what you are asking for be done in the hours you are offering?
- Conditions:
  - How do you ensure that there is adequate time off for your worker?
  - Is there adequate cover when your worker is sick / on leave / having days off or time owed in lieu (TOIL)?
  - Do you take responsibility for arranging cover when your worker is absent from work for any reason?

- Does 'being a flexible worker' mean there is no flexibility around the needs of the employee?

## Induction for new workers

### *Tips and ideas for inducting new workers*

- Try not to overload them with everything all at once, have a plan for induction and take it at a manageable pace.
- Use the [Meeting House Handbook](#) (or similar document) as a way to structure induction and ensure that information is available and passed to new workers.
- Set up an induction task-list: what needs to be done:
  - on the first day?
  - in the first week?
  - in the first month?
  - in the first 3 months?
- Induction needs to include people, which Quaker role-holders or other workers will the worker need to meet?
- Try to write induction materials to try to help someone come into the role and pick up the work without having done it before.
- Are there any continuation issues? If there is a gap between workers how will this be covered and how will the new person be inducted into their role?
- Is it possible to have a handover period?
- There needs to be careful thought about induction before a worker leaves their post and before a new worker begins their work.

### *What would be one of the first things you would tell a new worker?*

- How to turn off and reset the fire alarm.
- Who is responsible for the building and who are the key-holders?

## Hire policy

Can we produce a hire policy? Good things to know and tips to remember.

- Check that there isn't a policy in place for use across your area meeting already. Trustees will likely know and may be able to provide a template.
- Many local and area meetings will have a copy publicly available online. If you are starting from scratch this is a good starting point.
- A few things that you will need to include in a policy:
  - Expectations about hirer values based upon Quaker values, see [Quaker faith and practice 14.27, use of premises](#).
  - Safeguarding, use this or similar text: *Each of our local meeting room's hire agreements will require that organisations and individuals hiring rooms on our premises take responsibility for safeguarding for all their activities. It will require that any organisation using our premises has their own safeguarding policy which follows national good practice, and has their own insurance in place.*
  - It is worth thinking about a policy on dogs
  - Does AM have a policy on alcohol use?
- How will you go about due diligence to ensure that potential new hirers are who they say they are and uphold Quaker values? Check with premises cttee/trustees.

## 23 February 2022

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Wednesday, 23 February 2022**. There were 21 people present during the meeting. There is a new set of notes beginning in 2022 attached to this message.

The next meeting will take place on **Tuesday, 15 March, 10.30am**. The joining details for the meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly
- Time: 15 March 2022 10.30AM
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: WTonline

### Links or attachments

- [www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus) (updated on 25 February 2022)

### Topics

#### Coronavirus

The [Quaker coronavirus webpage](#) has been updated to reflect changes across Britain. BYM is encouraging Quaker communities to continue to think carefully about which mitigations to keep while we live with the virus. All the UK governments are suggesting caution even though legislations is being reduced or removed completely (England).

BYM is suggesting that meetings continue to carry out risk assessments when gathering in person. And to continue to think carefully about managing all building users.

#### *QR codes and Covid-19 app (England and Wales)*

The QR codes on the Covid-19 app for England and Wales are no longer operational as a means of recording attendance. If you have registered your building on the app, you should have received an email about this from the UK Government.

The Welsh and English language texts (sent to venues in Wales) of the email do not correspond. It is the Welsh language text that is correct. The correct information is that the QR codes are no longer operational, however the instruction in the English language email that you must stop collecting attendance details is incorrect. Instead, if your risk assessment includes keeping a record of attendance at any activity, you will need to continue doing so manually.

#### **Being a welcoming venue for faith groups whose members wish to carry out ablutions**

Here are a few tips on things that are helpful to ask other faith groups who use Quaker venues. If their members wish to carry out ablutions it is good to have thought about how the building will be used in advance.

- Are the sinks in your washrooms mounted on pedestals? If they are not they may not be suitable as they might be damaged or could be pulled away from the wall.
- Make sure to have lots of paper towels, extra if there are going to be ablutions.
- Find out how many people there will be and if they will all wish participate in ablutions.

- Make sure that the booking is for all the time that will be required. The time of prayer is dependent upon sunrise and sunset and will change with the season.

### **Dominant hirers**

Some themes that arose when discussing the merits and challenges of having a large-scale hirer that uses large parts of the venue permanently.

#### *Pros*

- Makes the job of the warden or lettings clerk very simple, single booker, single contact, often few financial transactions and invoices etc.
- Temporary hires can be good. They use the space, often pay very well, leave the space clean and disappear after leaving the rooms available again.
- With a big enough venue it can work well as there might be the flexibility to have enough rooms for all of the requirements.
- Sometimes a dominant hirer can do work that shares Quaker values such as: 12 Steps groups, Foodbanks.

#### *Cons*

- Could leave the venue financially vulnerable if they pull out for any reason.
- Can mean turning away other groups that would like a room occasionally or that clashes regularly.
- Can start to feel as though the hirer owns the building.
- If the cost of the room is too cheap is the hirer sitting on the room instead of using it at the times they really need it? Review hire costs if this is the case.
- Less likely to have a diverse community using the building.
- Can mean that outreach or community activities don't or can't take place in the building.

#### *Suggestions*

- Must make sure there is always space for the Quaker activities.
- If the hirer has use of storage, have an agreement that you as hirer retain access to the space/cupboard.
- Do you need slightly different T&C for long-term hirers?
- Always have a set time (max 1 year) when the agreement is reviewed and renewed.
- Would a long-term hirer receive the room at a discounted rate?
- Think about time and space. What are the patterns of use? Can things be juggled to make them work better or more efficiently?

### **Use of personal credit cards or cash**

Are things such as: IT licenses, materials, stationery and other things that workers purchase with their personal credit card or using cash that they are then reimbursed for?

- Can your meeting set up a debit card or charge card that can be used?
- Local suppliers can set up accounts that are billed to the treasurer.
- AllStar or similar charge card can be set up for use across an AM for workers, role-holders etc.
- The onus should be on the organisation, reimbursing is not a good option as that puts the onus is on the worker.

## 1 February 2022

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Tuesday, 1 February 2022**. There were 18 people present during the meeting. There is a new set of notes beginning in 2022 attached to this message.

The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday, 23 February, 2.30pm**. The joining details for the meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly
- Time: 23 February 2022 2.30PM
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: WTonline

### Links or attachments

- [www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus) (updated on 4 February 2022)
- Quaker Meeting Network: <https://quaker.app/about/>
- Food Standards Agency: [www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/managing-food-safety](http://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/managing-food-safety)

### Topics

#### Coronavirus

All parts of the UK have had legal restrictions reduced or removed altogether. There are full details on the [Quaker coronavirus webpage](#). BYM is still suggesting that Quaker communities take care and consider the most vulnerable. We still have the option to use mitigations such as distancing, face-coverings, ventilation and should be encouraging regular handwashing. We should still have a risk assessment.

If your meeting is also a venue there are things that you can ask of hirers. In most cases once hirers are in their own space they can carry out the activities as they choose. Certain behaviours can be stipulated, such as the wearing of face-coverings, in communal areas.

Should Quakers also be able to behave as they wish once they are in their own space? Yes, so long as they continue to follow any guidelines that have been agreed with AM Trustees to keep the community as safe as possible.

#### HEPA filters and air circulation

High Efficiency Particulate Air filters may be an option for some Quaker venues. They help to clean the air in spaces that are more difficult to ventilate. It is possible to hire a HEPA filter to check on its effectiveness before committing to purchase one.

In tall buildings it might be possible to install a ceiling fan. This helps to re-circulate air and also has the benefit of pushing the warm air downwards which can help with the efficiency of the heating system. These are also good for older buildings as they keep air moving in spaces that can be hard to ventilate.

## **Simplifying lettings and property processes**

### *Coordination across AM*

- Centralised bookkeeping – LM treasurers report to a paid bookkeeper who is employed at AM level.
- Reduction in the number of bank accounts, fewer than one account per LM.
- Line manager staff at AM level and have a professional line management structure for all other employees.
- Some joint supervision meetings.
- Uniform room hire policy across the AM could be an advantage.
- AM website as a bookings system for all meeting houses in the AM.
- [Quaker meeting network](#) can provide a website template and support.

### *Some challenges*

- LMs don't always understand that they are part of a bigger community (AM).
- One meeting does things (such as prepare its accounts) in a different way to all others in the AM.
- Office365 – often hard to get Friends to use a AM email address instead of a personal one.

## **What steps do meetings take to inform Friends and hirers about ingredients in any food served on the premises?**

- What are our responsibilities around labelling ingredients when we are serving food when it is free, for sale?
- The [Food Standards Agency](#) works with Local Authorities to assess businesses and enforce standards.
- There is not legal guidance for providing refreshments or holding a shared meal. But it is good to be sure that:
  - any allergens are labelled
  - kitchens and utensils are cleaned regularly
  - Be careful about preparing food and keeping cooked and raw food separate, especially if meat is being prepared
- Soup kitchen, lunches, etc may need hygiene levels. It will be the responsibility of the organisation (hirer) running the service. If kitchens in our premises are used they will need to comply with legislation and may not be able to be used for any other activities to avoid cross-contamination.

### **Wifi speed**

- Use a wired Ethernet cable connection if possible as wifi can be temperamental.
- Lots of devices connected to the same wifi, even if they are idle, can affect the quality. As everyone to disconnect if it is slow.
- Using a 'guest' wifi can allow a limit to the free wifi keeping bandwidth for services that need to use a lot (paying customers or for Blended MfWfB etc).
- Ask the local Council if there are plans to upgrade the local infrastructure to 'superfast' fibre. They may be able to give a timescale.

## 11 January 2022

Happy New Year Friends!

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Tuesday, 11 January 2022**. There were 18 people present during the meeting. There is a new set of notes beginning in 2022 attached to this message.

The next meeting will take place on **Tuesday, 1 February, 2.00pm**. The joining details for the meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly
- Time: 1 February 2022 2.00PM
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: WToonline

### Links or attachments

- [www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus) (updated on 20 December 2021)
- BYM Meeting Houses grant fund: [www.quaker.org.uk/mhfunds](http://www.quaker.org.uk/mhfunds)
- National Church Trust Grants: [www.nationalchurchestrust.org/building-advice](http://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/building-advice)
- [Quaker Meeting House Handbook template](#)
- Quaker property: [www.quaker.org.uk/property](http://www.quaker.org.uk/property)
- Quaker employers' resources: [www.quaker.org.uk/employers](http://www.quaker.org.uk/employers)

### Topics

#### Workers involvement in AM policy writing and setting

There was a helpful conversation about how workers might be involved in developing AM policy. An example was given of an AM setting policy that may not be appropriate or sensible for the worker to carry out.

- To hire a room to a non-Quaker organisation we are not required to agree their policies, we only need to know that they have them and are working to them. An example of this is where a non-Quaker organisation works with children or vulnerable adults.
- We need to know who the responsible person from the hirer is so that if there is a problem with their activity we have someone to refer to.
- A hirer might be required to sign to say they have certain policies in place as part of the room hire agreement.
- Would a Quaker worker be qualified to check a safeguarding or insurance policy?
- Is this in the workers job description and is it a good use of their time?

#### Maintaining or replacing heating systems

This thread began by talking about replacing an old heating system.

##### *Replacement*

- Look at whether there are [grants available from Friends House](#) or from the [National Church Trust](#).
- If the building is listed you should be able to get the VAT refunded.

- If you have not had work done for a long time you should get a survey to check if you have adequate fire breaks and other safety features.
- Be cautious of companies that are trying to sell you a product offering a survey. They may look at what is easiest to get a sale instead of the most appropriate option for your building.
- Some meetings are exploring the use of Heat Pumps. Experience varies and their effectiveness can depend on the space they need to heat. Ask on the e-groups if you would like advice or help.

### *Maintenance*

- Ensure that GAS safety certificates for each appliance is checked as part of annual checks.
- If you have residential or permanent tenants the legal responsibilities are different for gas appliances. Check you know what your obligations are.
- Avoid only one person having too much knowledge about how systems operate or are maintained. Put details in your [Meeting House Handbook](#).

### **Amateur management of staff**

- Line management: who is responsible and how is it carried out? Is there a clear line of accountability? How regularly do meetings take place? Can you help avoid staff being at the beck and call of everyone in the meeting?
- Trustees are responsible for employment and management of employees but can delegate tasks to local meetings.
- Line management can come from trustees. If it is possible to set it up a professional line-management structure is a good way to ensure continuity across the AM.
- Good to have role descriptions (RD) and terms of reference (ToR) for Quaker committee structure and roles. Help keep lines of accountability clear and understood by everyone.
- Some workers have a 'Friend' role or 'wardenship support group'. More of a pastoral support and a way to help understanding of Quakers if the worker is not a Quaker.
- How to we induct new workers?
  - To the role?
  - To Quakers?
- Woodbrooke has in the past offered a 'Working for Friends' course for new workers. OW will find out if it will be offered again.
- Volunteers need management as well but in a less formal sense. Their work will be linked to 'hopes' rather than 'expectations'.
- See the [Quaker employers' resources and template documents](#) for useful advice and guidance.
- Does AM have an employment and wellbeing committee to help support employment across the whole charity?