

# THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS) IN BRITAIN

## SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

### GOVERNING DOCUMENT

Adopted on the 27 day of October 2007 by Minute 8/7 of South East Scotland Area Meeting and updated on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of September 2021 by Minute 2021/09/07.2 of South East Scotland Area Meeting.

#### Definitions

- i. The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain refers to the church in Britain, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, in its entirety, including all its local meetings for worship and its constituent meetings for church affairs, as well as their work [referred to below as the Religious Society].
- ii. Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) [Britain Yearly Meeting] refers to the centrally held and managed policy, property, employment and work of the Religious Society.
- iii. Meeting for Sufferings is the standing representative body entrusted with the general care of matters affecting the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain.
- iv. Area Meetings are the main local meetings for church affairs. They are the level of the Religious Society at which individual membership is held. Each Area Meeting is a separate charitable entity and may be registered as such with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.
- v. General Meeting for Scotland acts on behalf of Friends in Scotland in dealings with the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Government and matters relating to governance in Scotland. It acts on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting in relation to ACTS (Action of Churches Together in Scotland).
- vi. The charity constituted by this document is the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain: South East Scotland Area Meeting [referred to below as South East Scotland Area Meeting or the area meeting and formerly known as South East Scotland Monthly Meeting].
- vii. The current edition of the Book of Christian Discipline of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain is Quaker faith & practice (London, 2005) [referred to below as the Book of Christian Discipline] as revised from time to time by Britain Yearly Meeting in session.
- viii. The term Friend refers to a member of the Religious Society.
- ix. The term Attender refers to a person who is not a member of the Religious Society but who regularly attends its meetings for worship.

## **1. Governing Document**

South East Scotland Area Meeting and its resources shall be administered and managed in accordance with the provisions in this governing document. Further guidance is contained in the Book of Christian Discipline.

## **2. Name**

The name of the charitable body constituted by this document is the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain: South East Scotland Area Meeting.

## **3. Objects**

The objects of South East Scotland Area Meeting are the furtherance of the general religious and charitable purposes of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain in the area of South East Scotland Area Meeting and beyond, as laid down in the Book of Christian Discipline.

## **4. Administration**

Subject to the matters set out below the resources of the area meeting shall be administered in accordance with this governing document by the trustees constituted by Clause 13.

## **5. Application of Resources**

Within South East Scotland Area Meeting, resources are used to further the area meeting's objects by work such as:

- i) strengthening the life and witness of Quaker meetings, both in the area of South East Scotland Area Meeting and beyond;
- ii) spreading the message of Quakers and interpreting and developing the thought and practice of the Religious Society;
- iii) undertaking Quaker service for the relief of suffering at home and abroad;
- iv) funding the concerns that Quaker meetings in the area of South East Scotland Area Meeting or beyond have adopted or agreed to support;
- v) providing for the pastoral care of individual members and Attenders including assistance to those in need and for education;
- vi) maintaining and developing Quaker meeting houses as places for public worship and from which to carry our witness into the world;
- vii) administering and maintaining the organisation of South East Scotland Area Meeting and contributing to the support of General Meeting for Scotland and of Britain Yearly Meeting.

## **6. Dissolution**

If at a meeting of South East Scotland Area Meeting the members decide that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the area meeting or to amalgamate with another area meeting and this is agreed by Meeting for Sufferings, the trustees shall have the power to realise any assets held by or on behalf of the area meeting. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall, with the agreement of Meeting for Sufferings, be given or transferred to another area meeting, to General Meeting for Scotland, to Britain Yearly Meeting, or to some other charitable institution or institutions having objects similar to that of the area meeting, and failing these for such other charitable purpose as Britain Yearly Meeting shall direct.

## **7. Amendments**

- i) Amendments to this governing document shall be agreed by South East Scotland Area Meeting in session and recorded by minute of the area meeting.
- ii) No amendment may be made that affects the objects of the area meeting (Clause 3) or the benefits to trustees (Clause 16) without the prior written consent of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, nor may the charitable status of the area meeting be affected.

## **8. Membership**

- i) The membership of anyone in South East Scotland Area Meeting begins when a record to this effect is made in the minutes of South East Scotland Area Meeting.
- ii) South East Scotland Area Meeting shall maintain an official register of members, in accordance with the terms of the Data Protection Act, and shall appoint a member to have care of it. No alteration shall be made to the register save in accordance with decisions minuted by South East Scotland Area Meeting.

## **9. Termination of Membership**

- i) The membership of anyone shall cease when a record to this effect is made in the minutes of South East Scotland Area Meeting.
- ii) If a member is dissatisfied with a final decision of the area meeting affecting her or him, the member may appeal in writing to Meeting for Sufferings against the decision of the area meeting.

## **10. Meetings for Church Affairs**

Meetings for church affairs, in which the Religious Society conducts its business, are meetings for worship based on silence, carrying the expectation that God's guidance can be discerned if members are truly listening together and to each

other. The unity that is sought depends on the willingness of all to seek the truth in each other's utterances. There is no voting in the meetings, because the Religious Society believes that this would emphasise the divisions between differing views and inhibit the process of seeking to know the right way forward, the will of God as expressed in the sense of the meeting.

The clerk of the meeting bears the final responsibility for preparing the business, conducting the meeting and drafting the minutes of the meeting. Minutes are drafted by the clerk during the course of the meeting, but the final decision about whether the minute represents the sense of the meeting is the responsibility of the meeting itself, not of the clerk.

- i) South East Scotland Area meeting shall meet at such frequency, times and places as the meeting itself shall direct. The clerk may arrange for a special area meeting to be held if necessary. Meetings may be held online.
- ii) The sessions of the area meeting are open to all members of the area meeting.
- iii) The business and activities of the area meeting shall at all times be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the current edition of the Book of Christian Discipline.
- iv) It shall be the duty of the area meeting in session to appoint an auditor or independent examiner of the area meeting accounts.

## **11. Constituent Meetings**

- i) South East Scotland Area Meeting consists of all the local meetings contained within its area.
- ii) Arrangements for the establishment, running or dissolution of such constituent meetings shall be in accordance with the current Book of Christian Discipline.

## **12. Appointments of Officers of the Meeting**

- i) The area meeting shall appoint from its membership a clerk, assistant clerk, assistant clerk for membership, treasurer, registering officer and nominations committee.
- ii) The appointments shall be made for a fixed term, generally not more than three years. Only in exceptional circumstances shall an appointee remain continuously in post for more than six years.

## **13. Trustees**

- i) The area meeting shall appoint from its membership a body of trustees not ordinarily fewer than five or more than fifteen persons.

- ii) The trustees shall be accountable to the members of South East Scotland Area Meeting (and to the general public) for their decisions and for the work undertaken by the area meeting, reporting regularly to the area meeting in session about their work.
- iii) The trustees shall, as far as is practicable, include the area meeting treasurer and representatives of each meeting contained within the area meeting, but not the clerk of the area meeting, nor any employee of the area meeting. Nevertheless, the area meeting clerk, or the area meeting clerk's nominated non-trustee representative, has the right to attend and observe trustee meetings.
- iv) One trustee, but not the area meeting treasurer, shall be appointed by area meeting in session to act as clerk to the trustees.
- v) The appointments shall be reviewed at intervals not exceeding three years. A trustee can be reappointed on no more than two occasions to give an unbroken term of service as a trustee of the area meeting not exceeding nine years. That person cannot then be reappointed as a trustee of that area meeting until three years have elapsed after the end of the last period of service in that capacity.

#### **14. Eligibility, disqualification and removal of Trustees**

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

- i) notifies to the clerk of the area meeting a wish to be released from service as a trustee;
- ii) ceases to be a member of the Religious Society;
- iii) is determined by the area meeting no longer to be a fit or suitable person to carry out the duties of a trustee;
- iv) is believed by the area meeting to have become incapable by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury of managing and administering his or her own affairs;
- v) comes to the end of his or her term of service.

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

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

Release of a trustee from office shall be recorded by minute of the area meeting.

## **15. Powers of Trustees**

The trustees shall have the following powers, in exercise of which they shall at all times be guided by the current Book of Christian Discipline:

- i) To raise funds from contributions; from legacies; from grants and other sources outside the area meeting; from investments and the use of assets; and from the sale of goods or services provided in furtherance of the area meeting's objects;
- ii) To buy, lease or acquire property, and to sell, grant a lease or dispose of property, subject to the terms of Clause 17 (vii) below;
- iii) To borrow money and to give security for loans (but only in accordance with the restrictions imposed by the Charities Act 1993 as amended from time to time);
- iv) To set aside income as a reserve;
- v) To make investments in accordance with legal constraints and the ethical testimonies of the Religious Society;
- vi) To co-operate with other charities or to enter into partnerships;
- vii) To establish or support trusts or institutions formed for charitable purposes within South East Scotland Area Meeting's objects;
- viii) To employ staff;
- ix) To pay pensions;
- x) To obtain and pay for goods and services;
- xi) To reimburse reasonable expenses, including those of the trustees, incurred when acting on behalf of South East Scotland Area Meeting;
- xii) To open and operate bank accounts;
- xiii) To effect insurance;
- xiv) To delegate their powers or functions as set out in Clause 18, below;
- xv) To establish committees or working groups for carrying out agreed programmes of work;
- xvi) To authorise any of the area meeting's constituent meetings or committees to open a bank account and to appoint signatories; such action to be recorded by minute of the constituent meeting or committee and reported without delay to the trustees;

- xvii) To do any other lawful thing that is necessary or desirable for the achievement of the objects of the area meeting.

## **16. Trustees not to be personally interested**

No trustee shall acquire any interest in property belonging to the area meeting (otherwise than as a trustee) or receive remuneration or be interested (otherwise than as a trustee) in any contract entered into by the trustees. Trustees shall declare relevant interests and a record of these shall be maintained by the clerk to the trustees.

## **17. Meetings and proceedings of the trustees**

- i) Trustees shall conduct their meetings according to the Quaker business method as described in the current Book of Christian Discipline.
- ii) The trustees shall hold at least two meetings each year. A special meeting of the trustees may be called at any time by the clerk to the trustees or by any two trustees upon not less than four days' notice being given to the other trustees of the matters to be discussed. This period of notice may be waived with the consent of a majority of the trustees. Meetings of trustees may be held online.
- iii) If the clerk to the trustees is absent from any meeting, the trustees present shall choose one of their number to be clerk at that meeting before any business is transacted. The temporary clerk shall never be the area meeting treasurer.
- iv) An effective working strength of the trustee body, normally represented by at least half of the trustees for the time being, shall be present for decisions to be made in right ordering.
- v) Minutes are to be made in the meeting and accepted and signed in accordance with Quaker business method as set out in the current Book of Christian Discipline. The trustees shall keep minutes of the proceedings at meetings of the trustees and of any sub-committee.
- vi) The trustees may from time to time make and alter arrangements for the conduct of their business, the summoning and conduct of their meetings and the custody of documents. No rule may be made which is inconsistent with this governing document.
- vii) The trustees shall report to South East Scotland Area Meeting at least once a year. They shall also seek guidance from the area meeting in session about any major decisions such as those involving the acquisition, disposal or major alteration of land or buildings.

## **18. Powers of Trustees to delegate**

- i) The trustees may delegate any of their powers or functions to a committee including two or more trustees but the terms of any such delegation must be recorded by minute.
- ii) The trustees may impose conditions when delegating, including the conditions that:
  - a) the relevant powers are to be exercised exclusively by the committee to which they are delegated;
  - b) no expenditure may be incurred except in accordance with a budget previously agreed with the trustees.
- iii) The trustees may revoke or alter a delegation.
- iv) All acts and proceedings of any such committee must be fully and promptly reported to the trustees.

## **19. Annual Report and Accounts**

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

## **20. Income and Expenditure**

- i) The funds of South East Scotland Area Meeting shall be safeguarded by depositing in a bank account or accounts. The bank accounts shall be held in the name of South East Scotland Area Meeting or in the name of any of the meetings or committees contained within the area meeting and not in the name of any individual.
- ii) The funds belonging to South East Scotland Area Meeting shall be applied only in furthering the objects of South East Scotland Area meeting as defined in Clause 3 above.

## **21. Property and Investments**

- i) Ordinarily the trustees shall cause the title of all real property and investments held by or in trust for South East Scotland Area Meeting to be held in the name of the trustees for the area meeting. However, nothing shall

prevent the continuing holding of property of the area meeting in the name of the office bearers. When property is held in the name of the trustees a majority of the trustees shall sign any documentation relating to disposal or purchase of the property.

- ii) It is the responsibility of trustees to insure all property, including buildings and contents, for replacement values which shall be reviewed regularly. It is also the trustees' responsibility to maintain in force all appropriate liability insurances, including employer's, occupier's and public liability.

**22. Registered particulars**

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

Signed: .....

Clerk of South East Scotland  
Area Meeting

and one of the following:

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Assistant Clerk of South East  
Scotland Area Meeting

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Clerk of Trustees of South East  
Scotland Area Meeting

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Treasurer of South East Scotland  
Area Meeting

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021