



MINUTES OF THE TELEPHONE CONFERENCE HELD ON MONDAY 22nd JUNE 2020 AT 6.00pm

PRESENT: Sue Brownlie, Faith Cartwright, Brian Collingridge, Kathy Gollin, Phil Parratt, Margaret Stenhouse, Margaret Stocks

PREVENTED: Charles Henderson

WELCOME AND OPENING WORSHIP

20.27 READING

Paragraph 23.05 of Quaker Faith and Practice (QF&P) has been read during our opening worship.

20.28 ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

The Agenda has been accepted.

20.29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FOR THIS AGENDA

There were no declarations of conflicts of interest.

20.30 MINUTE OF RECORD: ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CHARITY COMMISSION

The co-clerks to Trustees and the Area Meeting (AM) Treasurer have this in hand. Local Meeting clerks have each been asked to submit a paragraph to the co-clerks, noting their own particular Meeting's activities (for January to December) 2019, by the end of July. The Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts (TARA) is expected to be completed by September, when it will be sent to the Charity Commission (CC) and other relevant bodies.

The AM Treasurer will circulate the unexamined accounts shortly

20.31 MINUTE OF RECORD: DECISION REGARDING THE POSSIBLE FURLOUGHING OF THE WARDEN

On 6th April 2020 Trustees agreed not to recommend the furloughing of the Warden at Taunton Meeting House (TMH).

This decision was reviewed before the government's deadline of 10th June for placing staff on furlough. At that review Trustees saw no reason to change their decision as they had several reasons for keeping the situation under review until today's scheduled full Trustee meeting.

- (i) The AM Treasurer considered that there were sufficient funds available to maintain the Warden's employment until the end of July. At that time this was the date given by the government as the end point of the scheme.
- (ii) To maintain the Warden's employment status in order to ensure both her ability to continue working with recent and potential hirers and to oversee any work needed to maintain the integrity of the building.
- (iii) Trustees did not wish to claim financial support from the government when it was not essential.

20.32 OPENING WSAQM MEETING HOUSES FOR HIRERS AND QUAKER WORSHIP

We thank Charles Henderson for the link to the comprehensive document relating to guidance for the safe opening of communally used venues, Taunton Meeting House Management Committee (TMHMC) for their draft risk assessments, Wellington Meeting for their information and experience as they re-open their Meeting House to a single hirer and Minehead Meeting for their preliminary work on potential re-opening.

We have considered the need for the safe use of the same space by both Friends and hirers of Meeting Houses. The following reports come from the 4 Local Meetings (LMs) with Meeting Houses:

Wellington

Green Days, a group supporting vulnerable adults, will start using the Meeting House on the 4th or 5th of July. There has been evidence of the garden being used by other groups. Measures are being taken to make it more secure.

Taunton

Elders are informing members, attenders and enquirers of the situation regarding the opening of the Meeting House. A working group is currently looking at preparations for opening to hirers after the 4th of July. They will make recommendations to Taunton Friends and then to Trustees before doing so.

Minehead

Two Friends have done a risk assessment and will make recommendations for opening, first for hirers and then for Minehead Friends. There is no will from the latter as yet to start Meetings for Worship in the Meeting House.

Spiceland

The Central Group is considering preparations for re-opening, but not to hirers. They will keep us informed.

Trustees are not in a position to approve plans or give permission for Meeting Houses to re-open. We are satisfied that all necessary procedures are being followed and ask Local Meetings to keep us informed.

We hope to hear from Bridgwater, Burnham and Ilminster in due course.

At the moment none of the LMs is planning to open for Meeting for Worship.

20.33 REQUESTS FOR USE OF MEETING HOUSES FOR PRIVATE PRAYER

We have considered the possibility of such requests. We think this is unlikely to arise. LMs will make their own arrangements.

20.34 THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE RECENT CLOSURE AND POTENTIAL RE-OPENING OF OUR MEETING HOUSES (MHs) ON OUR INCOME AND OUR MEMBERSHIP

We recognise the need for Trustees to give clear advice to Local Meetings (LMs) in anticipation of the re-opening of our MHs after prolonged lack of use. We also recognise that this requires consideration of a wide range of needs and will vary according to local circumstances. There may be Friends who will still feel unable to come to a face-to-face Meeting for Worship for health reasons-even with careful safety measures in place. In consequence there may be a need to continue with 'blended' worship for the foreseeable future. Hirers may not feel able to return in the same numbers as before.

The impact on our finances is not clear. We are suffering financial loss but are covered in the short term by our reserves. We will review the situation nearer the end of the year.

20.35 DATE OF NEXT MEETING
Monday 7th September, 10.30am.

We assume at this time that we will once again meet by telephone.

Kathy Gollin and Margaret Stocks (co-clerks)
22nd June 2020

Circulation list for Trustees' Minutes

Trustees
WSAQM Business Team
LM Clerks
TMHMC
Website