

GLOUCESTERSHIRE AREA QUAKER MEETING JOB DESCRIPTION

Title: Area Meeting Clerk.

General Content of the Role(s): (see QF&P chapter 4)

Area Meeting (AM) is the primary meeting for church affairs. The way we 'do it' has to be worshipful and efficient and we have all of us always to remember that we are stewards of all the resources we deploy and channels for the decisions we arrive at. AM in session is the worshipping community in our area trying to manage its affairs properly and it has, as an institution, many duties.

These cover financial, spiritual, personal and pastoral matters on which regular but unrushed prayer and decisions are needed. Numerous other non-routine matters (political, economic, ecological...) are also brought to AM or are generated by it: and it can and does communicate on these to its constituent or superordinate bodies as well as to others.

The AM Clerk serves the AM community by planning for the sessions of AM, by guiding and helping Friends to arrive at decisions during the sessions, and by seeing to all the needful follow up from the sessions. She or he has to be a humble leader, a good listener and able to write.

Experience and qualifications: (see QF&P 3.12 onwards)

There are no formal qualifications. Nominations Committee would seek a Friend with experience of Quakerism, its beliefs and practices, preferably one who has already served 'at the table' in one or more other ways. A nominee should have an organised mind but be free of 'axes to grind' and be able to come to an AM session ready to listen and learn. It is very helpful if a Clerk brings some skill in summarising issues or arguments and in drafting notes or paragraphs that can become elements in the Minutes the AM will agree. In the time-limited situations in which we often find ourselves, a good sense of when to press on and when to rest and wait is invaluable. So are good humour and a sense of humour.

Main Responsibilities

1. Assemble, plan and circulate circa ten AM agenda each year.
2. Plan, in some detail, the processes and sequence of events to take place in the ten AM sessions.
3. With the accord of the AM, lead and pace the business of the session and help the AM to frame and record its decisions in the form of coherent and economical minutes.
4. Following the AM session, perform or delegate all the necessary work, circulating and explaining Minutes, acting on decisions, writing letters etc..
5. Consulting, delegating or coordinating, as appropriate with other officers of AM, especially Assistant Clerks.

In practice this means...

- Spending time preparing, running and following through the AM business (before and afterwards).
- Having to manage a small office or system in your home that is the AM filing, store/archive and database.
- Becoming a central part of much of the business in the AM area and being consulted about things.
- Supporting and advising other AM officers when they aren't sure what to do; this can be a two way process.
- Making decisions on what NOT to bring to AM in session. You have a vital 'gate-keeping' role.
- Learning to sense what's an important issue and how it might best be set before AM.
- Being ready to 'perform in public' at the sessions, to speak clearly and to listen carefully.
- Being prepared to learn how to sense the 'feeling of the Meeting' and how to capture it in suitable phrases and paragraphs.
- Accepting that you are the servant of the Meeting but may have to suggest to it what it should do when, for example, it's stuck or tired or cross.

The Clerk should therefore be reasonably fit and fairly quick on the uptake - but not slick or bullying. He or she need not understand all the complexities of every issue that comes before AM but should ensure that some Friend in the Meeting does in order to preclude jumbles, meandering and frustration.

The Clerk should be interested in 'learning on the job', through Woodbrooke, or other courses for Clerks and, where possible, doing such learning (or teaching) ideally with other Clerks.

The Rewards:

"Job well done. Meeting well run, sense of fun, being at one"

A chance to see how guidance from above works on those 'at the table'.

An enhanced sense of membership of a caring community.

03.04.2001 Nicholas Evens

22.09.2010 Updated MM to AM