

## **GLOUCESTERSHIRE AREA QUAKER MEETING JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Title: Friends responsible for Funerals**

**General Context of the Role (Quaker Faith and Practice: 17.01 - 17.16):**

See also QF&P 15.17 - 15.20  
Burial Grounds 21.49 - 21.58  
Death and bereavement 22.8. - 29.95

Quaker funeral arrangements are the responsibility of the Area Meeting and members should be notified at regular intervals of the names of those Friends currently appointed to arrange or to help people with funerals on its behalf. Area Meeting has a duty to appoint members to oversee and co-ordinate appropriate funeral arrangements for members and some attenders, always bearing in mind the priorities, rights and desires of relatives.

**Experience and qualifications sought:**

No formal qualifications are required. Former as well as serving Elders and Overseers may be appointed and one of each is a good combination. Other possibilities are Area Meeting Elders as a group, a sub-committee of Elders or a funeral arrangements committee. Sensitivity and consideration for the needs and requirements of the bereaved are essential. It is helpful to be familiar with the preferred procedures for arranging funerals within the particular Area Meeting. These procedures should be clearly understood and followed.

**Main Responsibilities:**

To ensure that these are carried out:

- 1 To ensure that funeral arrangements are made in accordance with the stated wishes of the deceased and of their family whenever possible.
- 2 To inform Local Meetings and Area Meetings of the time, location and date of the funeral and to insert an announcement in "The Friend" if required.
- 3 To liaise with the undertaker and crematorium staff where appropriate.
- 4 To arrange a service for the interment or scattering of the ashes when appropriate, bearing the legal requirements in mind.
- 5 To introduce the Quaker form of worship to family, relatives and friends, who may not be familiar with Quaker ways.
- 6 To arrange a Memorial Meeting when this is requested as necessary.
- 7 To attend the funeral and make sure that other experienced Friends do likewise. It is important to have a strong Quaker presence to "hold the meeting", particularly if many non-Friends attend.

- 8 To arrange for a Friend, Elder or the Friend responsible for funerals to speak, or to arrange for any other person to speak at the opening and closing of the funeral service or Memorial Meeting, so that non-Friends are enabled to understand the form, procedures and length of the meeting and to recognise the signal, the shaking of hands, by which it is concluded.
- 9 After the conclusion of the meeting, to give the necessary practical information with regard to toilet facilities, refreshments, etc.
- 10 To Care for the bereaved with consideration and sympathy.

### **In practice this means...**

Paying attention to practicalities, to the right holding of the meeting, to the legal aspects, timing and detail and of course to the wishes of the deceased if known.

It is essential to offer loving and prayerful sympathy and both practical and spiritual help to the bereaved in all the aspects of death. Sensitivity and flexibility must be the key words here.

Anyone new to this responsibility should consult those already familiar with it to learn from them how funeral Meetings and memorial Meetings are planned and to see "orders of service" that have been used. Help will readily be given to those who ask!

### **Burial Grounds:**

See Gloucestershire Area Meeting: Burials, Interment of Ashes, Scattering of Ashes Policy and Guidance and Gloucestershire Area Meeting: Advice Gravestones, Scattering and Burial of Ashes

This Area Meeting possesses burial grounds and the Area Meeting Clerk of Trustee is authorised to issue on behalf of the Area Meeting an order for burial or interment or scattering of ashes. Books of blank forms and counterfoils may be obtained from the Recording Clerk. No action should be taken without such an order. Immediately after the burial, interment or scattering of ashes, the order is to be countersigned by a different Friend witnessing that this has taken place. The countersigned order shall be presented at the next Area Meeting and a minute made. The order bearing all the signatures required, should be returned to the Area Meeting Clerk of Trustees and reattached to its counterfoil. These completed orders and counterfoils constitute the register of burials, interment and scattering of ashes and must be presented with the records of the Area Meeting (see QF&P 4.40). The proper maintenance and preservation of a register of burials is a legal requirement, Section 1 of the Registration of Burials Act 1864. Interment or scattering of ashes is not a legal requirement, but is in accord with Quaker practice (see 17.2 -17.13).

### **Rewards and satisfactions of the job:**

Caroline Fox heard the words "Live up to the light thou hast and more will be granted thee" (26.04 QF & P). This must be the reward of a service performed to the best of one's ability, to the bereaved, to the family and to Friends.

Pam Ambrose  
May 26th 2001

Updated by Wendy Gerard

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