

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

**Title: AM representative to Quaker Life representative council**

### **General Context of the Role:**

Quaker Life and Quaker Peace & Social Witness both have a representative council. Each council “provides the departments with a two-way channel of communication with Friends in their meetings, the main purposes being educational, inspirational and consultative. The role of the representative council member is also one of co-ordination and communication, in order to enhance links between local meetings, monthly meetings and the particular department” (*QF&P* 8.12).

Representatives should attend (or arrange for their deputy to attend) each meeting of the representative council; bring to it news of activities or needs at the local level in order to keep the central work relevant and appropriate; contribute to the discernment of priorities; keep their local meetings informed about the breadth and depth of work undertaken centrally (and support fundraising for this); encourage and support the appointment of correspondents in local meetings; be in touch with any local members of the relevant central committee and include them in consultation with local correspondents; make regular reports to monthly meetings (summary of *QF&P* 8.12 a-f).

### **Experience and qualifications sought:**

The purpose of Quaker Life is to work with Friends “to help deepen experience of God’s grace and its consequent expression in all our lives and meetings. It seeks to nurture the worshipping community of Britain Yearly Meeting, developing it into an inclusive community” (*QF & P* 8.08). With responsibility for spiritual development, religious learning and pastoral care, support for the right holding of meetings for worship and membership matters and outreach, Quaker Life works through functional committees — for Eldership & Oversight, Children & Young People, Outreach, Charney Manor, Swarthmoor Hall, Literature, and the Quaker Bookshop. Representatives need to have an understanding of (and, hopefully, a passionate interest in) these areas of our central work. Ideally, the representative would be a seasoned Friend with experience of our business method and with the ability to give reports that do not attempt to summarise each council but place before us precise questions or issues and in doing so bring alive the interconnection between monthly meeting and the central department.

### **Main Responsibilities:**

- 1 Attendance two weekends a year at representative council
- 2 Practical preparation for these weekends
- 3 Writing and delivering a stimulating report to area meeting after each weekend

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

Quaker Life representative councils are held at present in March and October — currently at Woodbrooke and Swanwick, Derbyshire, respectively. Area meeting pays participation

fees and reasonable travel expenses. The weekends always have a particular theme and begin with an introductory session on the Friday evening (so, realistically, Friday is a travel day when it's in Derbyshire) and end after lunch on Sunday. Much of the networking and value of the Council come from this being a residential event — with interesting conversations and connections being made over breakfast or cocoa! The sessions are, understandably, extremely varied — from the prophetic and inspirational to the routine and informational. The periods of worship are often deeply gathered and profoundly nourishing (as are individual ministries and the accounts of what other meetings are doing). The appointed representative needs to be able to commit to the two weekends (or arrange for the deputy to attend) and to the preparation for the weekends. This preparation, rather than being a lot of reading, tends to be about “taking the temperature” of our local meetings about some aspect of our spiritual lives or some proposed development in the work of Quaker Life.

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

Nourishing worship; meeting committed Friends from around the country with a real interest in the spiritual life of our meetings; hearing how other meetings deal with problems and difficulties; meeting face-to-face with Friends serving on central committees and with staff from Friends House (and so breaking down any lingering sense of “them” and “us”); being involved in discernment and implementation of policy in the areas of responsibility undertaken by Quaker Life.

Alex Wildwood

Approved by MM nominations committee, 04.09.2001

Updated 'monthly' to 'area' 02.11.2010 EMW