



Information Sheet on Britain Yearly Meeting Contact Database

Introduction

This information sheet describes the structure and use of the Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) Contact Database.

It explains how personal information kept on the database is used and how that information is protected in keeping with the Data Protection Act 1998. It also explains some implications for Friends of declining their inclusion in it.

Main uses of the BYM Contact Database

The contact database held at Friends House is used to benefit both individuals in meetings and staff here at Friends House. Individuals in meetings benefit by having their information updated on a single system shared by all Friends House departments. It helps Friends House staff to complete administrative work more efficiently and effectively.

The database is used during many different functions in Friends House day-to-day tasks including contacts maintenance, gift aid and payments, nominations, committees, meeting administration and events.

1) List of all members and most attenders in BYM

The database now holds details provided by meetings of their members and most attenders. It is kept up to date by Membership Clerks informing us of any changes.

2) Donations record for all money given to BYM

The contact database is also the donations database which we use to record all donations received from individuals, meetings, Trusts, etc.

3) Generates Reports and Accounts

We record all donations electronically and are therefore able to give local treasurers more information about the totals of local donations. We use the database to process gift aid donations, standing orders and legacy pledges. We need to keep an audit trail of gift aid declarations to meet HM Revenue & Customs requirements.

The database is used to provide the gift aid tax reclaim every month for Finance department to send to HM Revenue & Customs. It is also used to produce summary fundraising reports for committees and senior members of staff.

4) Generates thank you letters and emails

We write and thank donors for their giving to Britain Yearly Meeting, unless requested specifically not to do this. We make a note on the database if donors do not want to receive communications from us. We offer further information on each particular piece of work they support.

5) Contains information on meetings and their officers

The database is used for the production of the *Book of Meetings* and it is used to generate the update cards we send to all meetings every autumn. The *Book of Meetings* is both a contact list for Quakers and a public document which confirms the status of meetings for official bodies such as HM Revenue & Customs, Criminal Records Bureau, etc.

6) Contains records of nominations and Quaker Life network

The database is also used for nominations purposes and holds details of Friends' Service Information Forms (previously known as 'Offer of Service Forms'). This information is then used by the central nominations committees. The Quaker Life network also uses the database to hold information.

7) Records of Friends' committee service

The database holds records of membership of committees and other groups. This helps staff to communicate with committee members by post, telephone and email, and prints labels for mailings to them.

8) Produces labels and emails for mailing lists

The area and local meeting mailings are simplified by the fact that every local clerk who receives them is currently on the database, as are most Friends who are active nationally.

We have incorporated most of the individual mailing databases that were previously held by different departments onto this database. This saves multiplication of administrative work required for updates and makes it less likely that mailings are sent to incorrect addresses.

8) Administers Quaker events

Details for running Quaker events are set up in the database and communications are produced from the information held. Booking records and information about volunteer helpers can also be maintained.

Data safety information

Personal 'data' that is held on computer or paper files is covered by the Data Protection Act 1998. The fundamental principle of the Act is that data can only be processed if the individual to whom the data relates is made aware of the purposes for which the data will be processed and (except in certain limited cases; such as to safeguard national security, for taxation purposes, in crime-related circumstances, etc) has consented to that use.

Your details are not passed onto third parties without your consent, and staff are not allowed to give out details from the contact database without your permission, unless they are published in the *Book of Meetings* which is a public

document. Staff responsibilities for protecting membership data are clearly laid out in the Yearly Meeting's Data Protection Policy.

In addition to this Information Sheet, Friends are advised to read *Data Safety & Information Security Guidance Notes for meetings* (edition 3, November 2008), downloadable from the BYM website, www.quaker.org.uk/clerks which also explains how personal information is used.

The database is **password protected** and staff only have access to the parts of the database they need for their work.

We update the database regularly to ensure Friends will not receive post from Friends House sent to old addresses. Similarly we work to ensure that the relatives of Friends who have died will also not receive post for them.

Implications of declining inclusion

Friends who hold office within their local or monthly meeting can decide what contact information is made available but they cannot request not to have their names included in the main database. This is because staff need to be able to contact them in the circumstances explained above.

Some of the Friends who have asked not to be included in the database might not realise that we use a single database for all the tasks described above, and that this means we could not contact them in connection with any of the BYM activities.

Other Friends who decline their inclusion might not realise that sometimes they may need us to contact or communicate with them by using the database. For example, they may need confirmation of conference attendance or have sent us an offer of service form which needs to be processed, analysed and acted upon.

While some departments currently hold their own databases for specific purposes, e.g. conferences or newsletters, Quaker Communications Department cannot guarantee that these are kept up to date and separate databases are being phased out.

Further information about data safety responsibilities in the Yearly Meeting is in *Data Safety & Information Security Guidance Notes for meetings* (edition 3, November 2008), downloadable from the BYM website, www.quaker.org.uk/clerks [PDF: 316k].

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