

Advice on the stewardship of meeting houses & other properties



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Advice on the stewardship of meeting houses & other properties



2. Introduction

This suite of documents has been assembled from various sources, and is designed to provide a resource in which Friends can search for advice on the myriad issues which arise for those who are involved in property matters.

It was put together by Quaker Stewardship Committee as a contribution to its responsibility for property matters in the Yearly Meeting, and as an alternative to a potentially expensive project to update and reissue the good old '1992 Black Book' – 'The Handbook on the Care of Quaker Meeting Houses', and the associated 'Meeting House Bulletins'.

We do not claim that the document is exhaustive; it may not address your problem, and it may not remain entirely accurate! Quaker Stewardship Committee would be pleased to receive further contributions, amendments, and updates via the Recording Clerk's office, addressed to heleng@quaker.org.uk.

Helen is also your link to the Quaker Life Network Property Advice Cluster, where Friends with skills and experience in property matters offer advice and comment on the questions she forwards to them.

Finally, a word of thanks to all those who have contributed to the document.

July 2015

Advice on the stewardship of meeting houses & other properties



3. Record sheet of basic information

To be held by area meeting trustees and by the local meeting.

Keep in a safe file containing copies of the site plan and building plans.

Check every 3 to 5 years and update as necessary.

Property / meeting house at:

.....
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Date information entered or revised:

.....

Date of erection/purchase of property :

.....

Is it listed? Yes No

If listed, what grade?

.....

Is it in a conservation area? Yes No

If yes, see also Advice sheet 7, Historic meeting houses, other buildings, and conservation areas

Are there any trees with preservation orders? Yes No

Are there any rights over the site?

right of way ancient lights

easements overhead or buried cables, pipes and sewers

other

.....

Are there restrictive covenants on the use of the property or its development?

.....

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What is the ownership of site boundaries?

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3. Record sheet of basic information

Systems and appliances installation data

	type	installer	date
Central heating system:			
boiler			
fuel			
Individual gas appliances			
Electric rewiring:			
lighting			
power			
Hearing loop			
Lift			
Photo voltaic systems			



4. Property websites

The following websites are updated as regulation and the law changes:

Congregational insurance

www.congregationalinsurance.com

Safer places of worship

www.spow.co.uk

The latter includes up-to-date information on the following:

Health and safety

- Getting started
- Risk assessments
- First aid

Wellbeing

- Safeguarding vulnerable persons
- Equalities and discrimination
- Youth clubs

Fire safety

- Fire safety guidance
- Arson prevention
- Bonfires and fireworks

Activities guidance

- Church activities and outreach
- Hiring out your premises
- Kitchens and food

4. Property websites

Ecclesiastical Insurance

www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmatters/churchguidance/index.aspx

Methodist Insurance

www.methodistinsurance.co.uk

Church safety

www.churchsafety.org.uk

Health and Safety Executive website

www.hse.gov.uk

VAT reclaim scheme

For meeting houses that are listed only.

Not applicable to non-listed meeting houses or residential property such as a warden's house.

Historic meeting houses and other properties

Website information for the maintenance of historic meeting houses and other properties, including those that are listed or in conservation areas:

England

www.english-heritage.org.uk

Scotland

www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

Wales

www.cadw.wales.gov.uk

Northern Ireland

www.doeni.gov.uk/niea

The Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme: www.lpwscheme.org.uk

Advice on the stewardship of meeting houses & other properties



5. Check list & annual report of premises safety

Local meeting: **For year:**

Compiled by: **Date:**

Part 1: Outside maintenance		yes	n/a	no	comments
1	Are the gutters and down pipes cleaned out regularly?				
2	Are any drains/valleys kept free of leaves/debris?				
3	Are any manhole covers lifted regularly to make sure drains are working satisfactorily?				
4	Are there any overflowing waste pipes/drains during heavy rain?				
5	Can you see any loose/missing tiles or slates?				
6	Is the roof free of leaks?				
7	Is the outside of the building clear of waste/rubbish?				
8	Are the ventilation bricks/grids clear/unblocked?				
9	Is the external painting sound/okay for the next year?				
10	Is all the woodwork sound/free of rot/decay?				
11	Are all locks/bolts in good working order?				
12	Is there any cracked or broken glass?				
13	Has the lightning conductor been checked this year?				
14	Are all pathways/paved areas/ramps/handrails in good order?				
15	Are any trees nearby causing/likely to cause problems?				

5. Check list & annual report of premises safety

Part 1: Outside maintenance		yes	n/a	no	comments
16	Are any walls/fences/gates in good condition?				
17	Is the masonry free of significant cracks/crumbling of brick/stonework?				
18	Do the chimneys/other roof features seem sound and in no need of work?				
19	Do all the external lights work properly?				
20	Are any aerials/other exterior features safe?				
21	Is any external notice board safe and legible?				

Part 2: Inside maintenance		yes	n/a	no	comments
1	Do all windows/locks/latches work properly?				
2	Are all doors in good working order?				
3	Is the inside free of any significant cracks?				
4	Are the inside walls free of damp?				
5	Is there any mould on the walls (especially in the kitchen/WCs)?				
6	Is any wood (floors/panelling) showing signs of rot or infestation?				

Water		yes	n/a	no	comments
7	Can the stopcock be turned off easily?				
8	Do all plumbing devices work satisfactorily?				
9	Are there any signs of leaks?				

Electrical		yes	n/a	no	comments
10	Do you have an RCB (circuit breaker) at the electricity meter/box?				
11	Are all the circuits clearly labelled?				
12	Do all windows/locks/latches work properly?				

5. Check list & annual report of premises safety

13	Has a check been made to ensure no electrical equipment gets unduly warm?				
14	Is any emergency lighting tested, at least once a year?				
15	Has any living accommodation (full inspection normally five-yearly; visual inspection annually) had the required electrical inspection during the year and been given a certificate?				Please give date
16	Has the meeting house (full inspection five-yearly; visual inspection annually) had the required electrical inspection during the year and been given a certificate?				Please give date
17	Has the meeting house had the required PAT testing during the year and been given a certificate?				Please give date
Heating		yes	n/a	no	comments
18	Does the heating system work satisfactorily?				
19	Are the boiler and radiators free of any visible leaks?				
20	Are safety controls on the boiler working satisfactorily?				
21	Are all gas flues/vents unobstructed?				
22	Are any fuel supplies safely stored?				
23	Are all hot surfaces kept clear of combustibles?				
24	When was the boiler last serviced and flues cleaned?				Please give date
25	Has the heating system been tested during the year?				
26	Has the gas system had the required inspection during the year and been given a Landlord Gas Safety Certificate?				Please give date
27	If there is a lift, has it had an annual safety check?				Please give date

5. Check list & annual report of premises safety

Evacuation and fire escape		yes	n/a	no	comments
28	Are all emergency exits clearly marked?				
29	Are any fire alarms tested checked regularly?				
30	Are all smoke alarms tested, at least once a year?				
31	Are all fire extinguishers in place?				
32	Are all fire extinguishers of the appropriate type?				
33	Have the fire extinguishers had the required inspection during the year and been given a certificate?				Please give date
34	Are any fire blankets in place?				
35	Have you carried out an annual fire safety risk assessment?				
36	When did you last have a fire drill?				Please give date
37	Have you recommended actions where the risk level is considered unacceptable for all who might use your premises, not forgetting children and disabled people?				
Kitchen		yes	n/a	no	comments
38	Is all kitchen equipment working satisfactorily?				
39	Is food suitably stored?				
40	Is the kitchen free of cracked tiles and other potential food hygiene hazards?				
41	Does the kitchen floor have a suitable anti-spill/anti-slip covering?				

5. Check list & annual report of premises safety

Part 3: Other health and safety items		yes	n/a	no	comments
Who is the Friend responsible for health and safety matters?					Name:
1	Are all general floor surfaces free of hazards?				
2	Is there a first aid cabinet and is it regularly checked?				
3	Does the meeting display the health and safety poster?				
4	Is there any asbestos in your premises?				
5	Is the premises committee familiar with the AM health and safety policy?				
6	Has there been a health and safety survey in the last year?				

Part 4: Miscellaneous		yes	n/a	no	comments
1	Is the meeting house fully usable by disabled people?				
2	Are you aware of the AM policies on safeguarding children and vulnerable persons?				
3	What steps are you taking to ensure the legal requirements to protect children and vulnerable persons is complied with?				
4	Have you had any data protection enquiries in the last 12 months?				
5	Are you complying fully with the Data Protection Act?				
6	What action are you taking to reduce the environmental footprint of your meeting house and meeting? Please give details on a separate sheet. (See 'The Witness of our Buildings' on www.livingwitness.org.uk)				
7	Please make any suggestions for improving this questionnaire.				

5. Check list & annual report of premises safety

Property management		yes	n/a	no	comments
1	Who is clerk to your premises committee?				
2	Please give estimated expenditure on repairs and maintenance for the coming year. It would be helpful if high priority work (including health and safety) could be estimated separately from planned maintenance.				
3	Please give information on any major repairs or alterations that you are considering for the next four years.				

Further comment:

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6. Quinquennial survey

1. The need

A distinction is to be made between observing and surveying. It is now considered essential in church management to commission a professional survey of the premises every five years: a quinquennial survey. This is intended to identify incipient problems before the evidence appears obvious, and while they are relatively cheap to cure. It will involve inspection behind the normally visible surfaces, for example under floor boards, in roof voids, behind chimney stacks and panelling; it will include recording the inevitable decline of the heating and electrical installations. It is a job for specialists.

Expression must be given to the principal objective of the survey, which is to safeguard the long-term future of the premises by anticipating potential problems and allowing for planned maintenance, and to its scope, which should include the entire premises.

A joiner may be needed to provide ladders and to open up inaccessible spaces by installing a permanent trap door, under the guidance of the surveyor.

2. The surveyor

A professional surveyor will be needed for the building itself, either a registered architect or a surveyor with RICS qualifications in buildings. When considering the choice of one (if the meeting has none within its membership qualified and equipped and willing to act) it may be right to keep to one with whom the meeting has already worked. Failing such, relevant factors will include personal recommendation and experience with historic buildings (though not necessarily with churches). Other specialists will be needed for the heating and electrical installations.

3. The report

The report will indicate for each defect the probable cause, suggested remedy, its urgency and the estimated cost. It should be accompanied by dated photographs. It must indicate areas not inspected, though with today's equipment these should be few.

The report will not necessarily be an adequate basis on which the committee may order remedial work: a more detailed investigation of possible remedies may be needed, as well as a more detailed specification, in order to do the job satisfactorily.

6. Quinquennial survey

4. The cost

The fee should be negotiated in advance, where appropriate, for all the properties in the area meeting, and a programme agreed to cover them all in due order. The initial survey may well take longer and thus cost more than subsequent visits. It is the duty of the meeting as client to instruct the surveyor every five years. It should be agreed who, each time, is to order and pay the joiner, electrician, etc., should they be necessary.



7. Historic meeting houses, other buildings and conservation areas, including those that are listed or in a conservation area

This Advice sheet concentrates on historic meeting houses, many of which are on the national list of buildings of architectural and historic importance. The advice in this section applies as much to historic unlisted meeting houses as to those specifically listed. It is also applicable to other historic buildings that are the responsibility of the area meeting. The best general advice on dealing with historic meeting houses is on the following national agencies' websites: English Heritage, Historic Scotland, Welsh Heritage (CADW) and Northern Ireland Environment Agency. There are special sections on historic churches, but those sections dealing with smaller properties, such as domestic buildings, are also very informative.

What is a listed building?

A building is listed when it is of special architectural or historic interest considered to be of national importance and therefore worth protecting.

As the term implies, a listed building is actually added to a list held by the national agencies listed above. Their websites are noted at the end of this Advice sheet. This is published online and you can use it to discover what grade it is. You may also be able to find out what is particularly significant about the building. Some listing records are more detailed than others. Listed buildings come in three categories of 'significance':

- Grade I for buildings of the highest significance
- Grade II*, and
- Grade II.

Most listed building owners are likely to live in a Grade II building as these make up 92 per cent of all listed buildings.

How does listing affect owners?

Listing means there will be extra control over what changes can be made to a building's interior and exterior. Owners will need to apply for Listed Building Consent for most types of work that affect the 'special architectural or historic interest' of their meeting house.

Listing covers a whole building, including the interior, unless parts of it are specifically excluded in the list description.

7. Historic meeting houses...

It can also cover:

- other attached structures and fixtures
- later extensions or additions
- pre-1948 buildings on land attached to the building (in the planning system, the term 'curtilage' is used to describe this attached land).

Because all listed buildings are different and unique, what is actually covered by a listing can vary quite widely. It is best, therefore, to check this with your local planning authority.

Effective maintenance

To look after your meeting house properly you need to carry out regular maintenance checks and fix any problems you find straight away. All buildings deteriorate with age, but good maintenance will slow that process and keep your meeting house a safe and pleasant place to be. Maintenance is also cost-effective. Tiny problems can soon escalate and even risk permanently damaging your meeting house if they're not tackled when they're first spotted. Ignoring them can prove costly at a later date. The most important thing is to stop damp from getting into your meeting house. You need to check roof coverings, gutters, downpipes and drains regularly to make sure they're working properly. A leaky roof is the most obvious issue, but damp from overflowing gutters or badly ventilated spaces can also cause timbers to rot, plaster to flake off, and bricks to crumble. It can eventually lead to major structural problems.

Drawing up a maintenance plan

This can be done as part of your meeting house's quinquennial review. It would identify specific items needing attention in the next five years. It would identify weak points and anticipate where problems might occur. For example, hard-to-access gutters, particularly if they're hidden from view, can get forgotten. It would consider the building as a whole, including its interior and the surrounding site, and assess such issues as surface water drainage or the proximity of trees. It would include services, especially electrical and plumbing systems. Fire and flooding pose particular threats to historic fabric.

A maintenance plan would include inspection after severe weather or unforeseen events. In this way damage to the building can be spotted quickly.

Simple maintenance work, defined as routine regular tasks to keep your home in good order, should not need any form of consent. A good example would be refixing a loose roof flashing.

If you want to make repairs to your meeting house, as opposed to maintenance work, you may need permission and should seek advice from the local authority. Unlike maintenance, repair involves specific major work to remedy defects caused by decay, damage or use (for example, retiling a roof).

7. Historic meeting houses...

Repair

A thorough maintenance regime will help keep repairs to a minimum. But there are many different reasons why work might still be necessary. You may need to make repairs because a building has been neglected or previous repairs have failed. Inappropriate repairs could create new problems, as could badly thought-out alterations. The use of unsuitable materials in the past for repairs could interfere with the building's ability to 'breathe' – for example, use of modern mortars instead of lime mortar.

Repair is preferable to replacement. Many people think repair is short-lived and inferior to rebuilding part of a building. But you can damage the building's character and significance if you remove too much of what makes it special. A worn and carefully patched old door will look better than a modern replica, however faithfully copied.

A conservative approach to repair is the best way to conserve the appearance and character of an older meeting house. Retaining as much of the original fabric as possible, and keeping changes to a minimum, are key.

Finding professional help

There are a number of professions – from architects and building surveyors to structural engineers and quantity surveyors – that can help you plan and carry out work to an old building. Going it alone, without the help of a professional to save money, often proves to be a false economy.

There are more than 30,000 architects registered in the UK but only a small proportion specialise in the repair of old buildings. Those who do may apply for conservation accreditation through the Register of Architects Accredited in Building Conservation (AABC) (www.aabc-register.co.uk).

A properly accredited architect can give advice on which other professionals you need to employ.

Your meeting house's history

To help in looking after your meeting house it is a good idea to prepare a special report both on its architectural significance and its historic importance. For old meeting houses, establishing the contribution that a particular building has made to the Quaker movement as a whole is particularly significant. Some meetings have employed a specialist in historic buildings to undertake this work. Many Friends have a special affection for their meeting house and can help collectively in compiling such a report, thus directing attention to points of value in a particular building and so informing maintenance and repair work.

If a listed building application needs to be made this document is a vital contribution to help the local authority understand the application. It will also contribute to the statement of need for the alteration that will form part of the application.

7. Historic meeting houses...

How to find out

The primary source of information about a listed meeting house is the National Heritage list for England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland. They exist online. There are many other sources of information including those held by the local authority and the county record office for the area. The National Heritage websites have large archives available online and the websites are very useful in detailing the wide variety of information available.

Alterations to your historic meeting house

This is not the place to give a detailed description of what needs to be taken into account in making alterations. Some general principles can, however, be set out:

- You will need planning permission from the local authority if your alteration materially changes the outside of the meeting house. If your meeting house is listed, you will also need listed building consent.
- Doing some research on the history and architecture of your meeting house will enable you to understand its importance.
- The heritage agencies recommend that alterations, additions and repairs are able to be reversed. This will minimise the impact of the work and ensure that the original form and appearance is not lost forever.
- You will learn a good deal about your historic meeting house during the work. A full record of the work and what is revealed should be made. This may well be of interest to your local or county record office.
- Use traditional materials where possible, such as oak or pine. Avoid unsympathetic modern materials, for example uPVC windows. If at all possible, repair original features rather than replace them.
- The heritage agencies' websites contain much useful advice about dealing with specific problems such as windows, doors, re-roofing, etc.

Saving energy

Useful advice on the details of saving energy in historic meeting houses is contained in the domestic parts of the heritage agencies' websites. However, here are some general principles:

- Draughts can be a major source of discomfort in older buildings, and eliminating them could make a major difference to your energy costs. Although ventilation helps to prevent dampness and decay in older buildings, too much of it can lead to uncomfortable draughts. You therefore need to strike a careful balance. Older buildings can lose around 15–20 per cent of their heat via draughts, but there are many ways to tackle this without damaging the historic character of your building. Original windows and doors are a key part of the character and interest of older buildings and should be retained where possible. Draught-proofing is one of the cheapest and least intrusive methods of cutting down on heat lost through windows and doors, and the costs can be quickly recovered by the energy savings.

7. Historic meeting houses...

- Secondary glazing can provide very effective draught-proofing. This lets you keep your historic windows in place while improving their overall efficiency. If well designed, secondary glazing can be discreet and reversible.
- As unwanted draughts are prevented it is essential to ensure controlled ventilation in order to prevent damp and mould.
- It is advisable to avoid placing furniture against cold exterior walls as mould can appear where there is a lack of air circulation where surfaces are cold.
- Installing double-glazing rather than draught-proofing invariably results in the historic windows and glass being lost, and there is usually a poor visual match between the original windows and those that replace them.
- Gaps in timber-suspended floors can also let draughts in. A quick way to reduce them is to put down a heavy rug or carpet. You could also fill in the gaps, for example by using narrow strips of timber or a clear sealant.
- Insulation is a very effective way of saving energy, but you need to make sure it is properly installed so it doesn't cause other problems. Some types of work may need permission and you should seek advice.
- Adding insulation to your loft or attic is one of the easiest and cheapest ways of improving a building's energy efficiency. Relatively thick layers of insulation (300mm) will not cause problems if installed carefully.
- Ensure that the area above the insulation remains adequately ventilated.
- Many meeting houses have wooden floors, but if the void below is confined, this may mean that all the old floorboards have to be raised to provide insulation. This may damage them, unless done very carefully. Providing under-floor insulation if there is a cellar with access is much easier.
- A large proportion of traditionally constructed buildings were built using solid masonry walls, either of brick or stone, or sometimes a combination of the two. Although these materials look very different their thermal properties are quite similar. Masonry walls are not good insulators and often feel cold.
- Solid walls can be difficult to insulate for a number of reasons. There is a danger of trapping moisture. Skirting boards, architraves and services will need to be removed and refixed. Adding insulation can reduce the floor area which, if the room is already small, could be a significant issue. Existing timber panelling provides reasonable insulation and should not be removed. Adding insulation to the outside of solid walls will in most cases radically alter a building's appearance and character.
- Solid walls should not get cold in winter. A low source of heat will benefit both the building and the users' comfort.

7. Historic meeting houses...

Grants

The heritage agencies do offer repair grants for listed buildings, but there is a high demand for this funding and they insist that other sources of grant aid are exhausted before they will assist. They are a source of last resort.

Repair grants can be given by Britain Yearly Meeting if the area meeting is unable to help.

VAT

The Department for Culture, Media & Sport offers Listed Places of Worship grants towards the VAT incurred in making repairs to listed buildings used for public worship (see www.lpwscheme.org.uk). See also the Association of Church Accountants and Treasurers (ACAT) Handbook. Your AM treasurer has a copy.

Conservation areas

Find out if your meeting house, other properties or burial ground is in a conservation area by contacting your local planning authority (LPA). They will be able to tell you when it was created, how far it extends and the reason for its creation, and the level of legal protection it has in place. They will also tell you what permissions are required before any alterations are made to a property, or trees and shrubs are pruned or felled.

Website information

England: www.english-heritage.org.uk

Scotland: www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

Wales: www.cadw.wales.gov.uk

Northern Ireland: www.doeni.gov.uk/niea

Association of Church Accountants and Treasurers: www.acat.uk.com

Listed Places of Worship grants: www.lpwscheme.org.uk



8. Building maintenance

Annual check

All meeting houses should be professionally inspected at least once every five years – a quinquennial survey.

In addition, inspections should take place at least once a year using the checklist given in section 5. See also **Section 6: Quinquennial survey**

It is important to watch for any tell-tale signs that may mean trouble. Expert advice may be necessary if any of the following symptoms become apparent:

- fresh cracks in plaster (possible structural movement)
- damp patches (leaking roof or pipes, or rising damp?)
- musty smells (possible damp or rot)
- small holes in woodwork or unaccountable wood dust (possible beetle infestation)
- white root-like threads or leathery fungus on woodwork or spores like ground coffee (possible dry rot).

These symptoms require urgent attention. Premises committees should try to keep their buildings in good condition and save long-term expense.

External maintenance

Listed buildings

*First refer to **Section 7: Historic meeting houses, other buildings and conservation areas, including those that are listed or in a conservation area***

Roofs: If there is no access to the roof space, have one made. It is essential to be able to inspect all wood structures regularly in order to catch fungus and woodworm attack at an early stage and thus avoid crippling costs. Check especially the bottoms of the rafters where visible and the wall plate on which they rest, as this part is particularly vulnerable to rot.

Make sure that the roof is sufficiently ventilated to carry away the humidity from below, which can otherwise condense and cause rot. Where there are ventilators or air bricks, make sure that there is fine gauze across them to prevent entry of insects such as bees and wasps.

Ensure that loft insulation does not block the ventilation. Ensure that there is adequate insulation to the ceilings of rooms below the roof, and check that it has been properly replaced after work in the roof space. Leaks in the roof should be repaired as soon as they are noticed. Remember that the damp patch on the ceiling is rarely directly below the leak.

8. Building maintenance

So-called 'waterproof' finishes applied to slates or tiles are a short-term expedient and should be avoided. Apart from encouraging internal condensation – causing battens and even rafters to rot – the roofing materials are ruined for reuse.

Walls: Materials such as brick or stone usually look best to start with, weather best with the passage of time, and need less maintenance. If the initial mortar was appropriate, repointing should only be necessary at very infrequent intervals, but when it has to be done the raking out should be thorough and advice should be taken as to the composition of the mix. Generally speaking, the mortar should not be harder than the materials it joins; a mortar too rich in cement can cause the brick or stone to spall and may well fall out in chunks due to the effects of frost; on the other hand, too weak a mix will not last. Lime mortar was frequently used on our older buildings and should be used when repairing or maintaining. Many fine walls have been ruined by the wrong mix and form of pointing.

There is no cure for spalling bricks or stone except replacement. Most 'cure-all' surface treatments result in the formation of a hard skin, which itself flakes off in time and extends the area of damage.

External rendered finishes, smooth or pebble-dash, are on the whole to be avoided, especially as a means of protecting failing brickwork. The danger is that the surface finish will shrink and the many small cracks that result will let water in, the water will freeze and the rendering will come off, bringing the face of the bricks with it. If you have inherited rendered walls you must try to keep the water out by applications at roughly five-year intervals of an external treatment, which will keep the haircracks filled. Remember that if you start to use paint on external render you are committing future generations to do the same.

Woodwork and painting: Some of the materials now being used for windows and doors need little maintenance other than routine cleaning. Painted joinery, soffits, fascias, bargeboards and the like need regular redecoration. The painting of external woodwork is perhaps the most onerous of the regularly recurring expenses a meeting has to face.

There is a tendency for the paintwork in some parts of a building to deteriorate faster than the rest, such as horizontal ledges and window sills. In such cases it can be beneficial to have them touched up after about three years. In addition to being better protected in the meantime, these parts will then provide a better base when the main five-year painting comes to be done.

Varnished woodwork can look attractive, but if it is to remain so, the finish will have to be renewed every two years, particularly where it is exposed to the sun and the rain. Solvent-based preservative stains are less liable to damage than paint or varnish, and are easier to re-coat, but note carefully the manufacturers' instructions and keep a record for next time.

When repainting, make sure the old work is cleaned down to a firm base and use a good quality paint system; that is, primer if needed, one or more undercoats and finish, all from the same manufacturer, and all carefully applied. It is easy for a painter to do a 'cheap' job that does not look too bad initially but does not last.

In new buildings painted ironwork is best avoided for gutters, downpipes, etc.; non-ferrous materials such as coated aluminium are advised instead. PVC is relatively cheap but seems

8. Building maintenance

to be of limited durability and can be damaged by ladders and vandals. If you have cast iron gutters, make sure the insides are painted as well as the outsides and that as far as possible the backs of both gutters and pipes are properly painted – those are the first parts to rust away. Bituminous paint will do very well for old gutters that have been poorly maintained in the past.

Internal maintenance

Walls: Check regularly for cracks. If careful records over a period of time show that they are getting worse, take action under expert guidance. Cracks can be caused by:

- an unusually dry spell of weather
- shrinkable clay subsoil that expands and contracts seasonally
- thermal movements, more common in modern rigid construction. These do not normally cause serious trouble, but cracks from other causes, such as a leaking drain near the foundations, can cause more serious damage, which is why expert advice is needed. Note any sign of dampness and try to ascertain the cause
- damp that is due to condensation, the symptoms of which will show on cold surfaces and high up in a room. Black or green mould on walls or ceilings is usually caused by condensation. Try to remove this with water and household bleach, and then get advice about stopping the condensation, which normally entails getting rid of the moist air and sometimes adding insulation. **Section 12: Condensation in buildings.**
- damp that can be traced to an overflowing gutter, a damaged rainwater pipe or a leaking water pipe, in which case a plumber should be asked to effect an urgent repair.
- rising damp, which may be the case if walls are damp low down and the trouble is not attributable to either of the above causes. If irregular patches of damp occur on the walls this may be due to poor construction or materials. In both cases professional advice is required and the cure may not be easy.

Floors: Avoid slippery materials, finishes and polishes for floors. Ensure that only appropriate sealing and cleaning preparations are used. Impervious sheet materials such as linoleum or plastic sheet or foam-backed carpet on wooden floors tend to trap condensation and water from washing, producing ideal conditions for rot. A particular danger occurs in kitchens and toilets where a lot of water may be present.

Inspection traps in all timber ground floors enable the underside of the floor to be inspected for rot or insect attack. Get expert advice on where to place the traps and use them regularly. Any sign of rot or insect damage should be dealt with immediately. Ensure that the space under ground floors is well ventilated.

If wood floors are badly worn, they may be smoothed with a sander. Do not use hard varnishes like polyurethane, which chips; it is better to research a sealant or oil seal and then lightly wax occasionally. Similar treatment is applicable to cork. Vinyl tiles may be rubbed over with fine steel wool to brighten them considerably, but be careful to treat them with the polishes recommended for plastic flooring; do not use wax polish. Carpets are best cleaned by a reputable firm, rather than attempting to do it yourself.

8. Building maintenance

If you decide to fit carpet over an existing floor, remember that the floor must be completely smooth and level or the carpet will rapidly show wear. Make sure that the underfelt is self-ventilating. Remember that dark carpets show marks as readily as light ones. Carpet or carpet tiles in modern materials will give you a quieter and more comfortable room and prove a good investment.

Decorating: Walls and ceilings should be redecorated every 5–10 years depending on the use the building receives.

Make sure that the old work is thoroughly washed down and dry before redecoration starts. Rake out cracks in plaster before attempting to fill them. Remove all rust from metal work and treat with a good rust inhibitor before painting.

Do not use shiny finishes on uneven surfaces; use matt. Do not think that strong colours will 'brighten the place up': they may be exciting but they will not reflect as much light as paler colours. The brightest colour is white. See **Section 9: Specification for painting**

Carrying out work

A distinction needs to be made between items of work that may reasonably be arranged by members of the meeting, and larger or more specialist work that should be undertaken through professional advisers. This is because of the very real problems that can arise, for example, over specification of the work and materials, compliance with regulations, financial control, and legal and insurance considerations. We therefore limit our advice to work such as repainting and small repairs. If the meeting has a member equipped to control larger works, well and good; if not, such control should be bought.

Quotations for work may be obtained either by invitation or by competitive tendering.

Over the years any building will need the services of several tradesmen, often urgently, for example for reglazing or leaking pipes. It may be provident of the meeting to establish a working relationship with such firms, who will thus know their way around and therefore respond more effectively and quickly than strangers. Such a long-term relationship is worth a lot to the meeting.

It follows that firms giving such service should not be excluded from larger jobs about the property. Therefore, think twice before embarking on competitive tendering. If mutual confidence exists, prices and standards should be reasonable. Estimating cannot be an exact science. A lesser price might well be obtained from a firm expecting to use cheaper materials or less preparation: the meeting will not be equipped to supervise the work at this level, nor to seek a remedy if the work fails prematurely.

When carrying out work to a listed building, note the need for a responsible attitude, the possible need for planning and other consents.

Finally: In all these endeavours, always remember that everything you do to your meeting house should be an improvement. Whether it be adding a new room or only adding a light switch, nothing should be regarded as of no importance. Do not leave the odd-job man to make

8. Building maintenance

your decisions for you. Anything you replace or add should leave your meeting house better than before, in both function and appearance.

See also the following Advice sheets

10. Obtaining tenders

12. Condensation in buildings

9. Specification for painting

13. Doing it ourselves

11. Contracts for small works and painting

18. Electricity and electrical appliances, and 19. Gas installations and appliances

4. Property websites and 5. Check list & annual report of premises safety



9. Specification for painting

This specification should be used in conjunction with the general clause on Advice sheet 11: 'Contracts for small works and painting'.

1. Preparation

New work or previously painted surfaces shall be thoroughly prepared including rubbing down, cleaning, washing, sanding, knotting, priming, stopping, sealing as appropriate for the material and surface and as recommended by the manufacturer. Where instructed the paintwork should be completely stripped off: rub down with glass paper or pumice, stop all cracks, holes, etc., apply one coat of aluminium sealer and wood primer and allow to dry. Inform the employer at once if any timber is found to be too defective to paint effectively.

2. Paint

Paints shall be delivered to the site in the manufacturer's sealed containers and used according to their instructions; the use of thinners, driers or other materials will not be permitted except where in accordance with said instructions.

Paints, varnishes and protective stains shall be applied with the number of undercoats and finishing coats as appropriate to and in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications for the surface and material to which the paint is to be applied; and in accordance with the particular specification, which will generally call for two-coat work on external new work or previously painted surfaces. No material is to be applied on external work during inclement weather or to any surface upon which there is moisture.

3. Metal work

Clean and remove all dirt from eaves, gutters (inside and out), brackets, downpipes, vent shafts, water pipes, air gratings, gate fittings, railings, metal flashings, etc., and proceed with three-coat work. Where existing downpipes, etc., are vitreous enamel, PVC or asbestos, these shall not be painted. Metal work previously coated with bitumen shall be re-finished with a similar material. Leaking metal gutters are to be repaired first using a suitable sealant. In appropriate situations a proprietary finish may be approved.

4. Mastic pointing

All window and door reveals shall be sealed with a suitable sealant.

9. Specification for painting

5. Glazing

Replace any broken panes when decorating windows. Avoid painting glazing sealants except traditional putty.



10. Obtaining tenders

There needs to be a distinction between smaller items of work that might reasonably be arranged by members of the meeting and those better dealt with professionally. Considerable works should always be undertaken through a professional adviser. This is because of the very real problems that can arise over specification of the work, compliance with regulations, financial control, and legal and insurance considerations.

We therefore limit our advice to work such as repainting or small repairs. If the meeting has a member equipped to control larger work, well and good; if not, such control should be bought.

1. Purpose

Most problems arise from failures to understand or explain properly the costs of the work, the extent of the work, how it is to be done and by when, and even when it is to be paid for.

Whenever building or maintenance work is carried out for reward, a contract is needed, which can vary from a verbal agreement for very small jobs like repairing a burst pipe to a formal legal contract complete with contract documents.

2. Short list

Tendering is a costly business and only one of a group of tenders can be successful. The client should not involve others in unnecessary costs. The number of tenders should normally be limited to three for smaller contracts. Most important is the choice of builders to invite. Select those of known integrity who have done satisfactory work in the locality and who are well organised. If the builder or tradesmen are competent and trustworthy and are treated with respect, the formality of the contract recedes in importance and the fine print of the clauses will not need to be referred to.

3. Tender information for small works

It is essential to provide the same information to all tenderers and to ensure that each is treated fairly and equally. That information should include the following:

- The content of the work expressed clearly and unambiguously by means of a written and detailed specification and accompanying detailed drawings.
- Two copies of all tender documents, one for the tenderer's own use and one for return with the tender and for subsequent use as a contract document.
- A statement of the basis of payments, usually a single payment on completion.
- Two copies of the quotation with spaces for the cost of the work expressed in words and figures and for the signature of the tenderer.

10. Obtaining tenders

- The date for return of tenders and a pre-addressed envelope.
- Value Added Tax should be excluded from the quotation, but the tenderer should be asked to insert his estimate of VAT.
- Arrangements for the tenderer to make a site visit. The name and address of the person to whom the tenderer may address questions.
- A statement that the client reserves the right to accept or to reject any tender and will not pay for the preparation of any tender.
- A statement that alterations or conditions must not be inserted by the tenderer and that queries must be resolved before the date for return of tenders. Adequate time should be given for tenderers to examine the information, send out and receive quotations from subcontractors, and prepare their tender. A minimum of three weeks is essential.

4. Opening tenders

Tenders, after receipt, should be held in strict confidence and opened by the committee or by two or more representatives. Any tender that contains conditions or insertions should be very carefully scrutinised and rejection may be appropriate.

5. Contract period

The dates for start and completion of the contract should either be stated in the tender document or, if left open, should be ascertained before acceptance.

6. Acceptance of a tender

Careful selection of firms invited to tender implies that the lowest tender should normally be accepted. There may, however, be other factors such as contract duration that can make a tender other than the lowest more attractive. In such cases the reasons for acceptance should be clearly recorded.

The successful tenderer should be informed promptly and contract preparation should proceed forthwith. After confirmation from the successful tenderer the other tenderers should be informed to assist their calculations of future workload.

7. Variations

After a contract is entered into any changes by the client can be costly and disruptive and should be avoided.

Even with the strongest discipline some variations may be unavoidable due to external factors, for example bad ground conditions or unavailability of materials. In such circumstances it is advisable to identify the cost effect with the contractor before putting the work in hand.



11. Contracts for small works and painting

Employer:

Contractor:

Location of the work:

Description of the work:

1. The Contractor will carry out and complete the work as outlined in the attached specification/ drawings in a good workmanlike manner in accordance with all relevant Regulations, British Standards and Codes of Practice, all for the sum of:

£ (in words:)

List of documents attached:

2. The Contractor will provide all the labour, plant, materials and equipment necessary to complete the work.

3. The Contractor will remove all rubbish as it accumulates and all tools, surplus materials, etc., from the site and leave it in a clean and tidy condition.

4. The Contractor will comply with all statutory requirements, local and national regulations and by-laws that relate to the work. The Contractor will make all notifications, arrange inspections, etc., in connection with the works.

5. The Contractor shall keep the meeting house available for use at the times agreed, including clear access and fire escape routes.

6. The Contractor shall take out all necessary insurances.

7. The Contractor will be responsible for the making good of defects to the reasonable satisfaction of the Employer for a period of six months after completion of the work.

8. Once the contract is completed to the reasonable satisfaction of the Employer the Contractor will submit a final account to the Employer, adjusted to take into account any variations. This will be paid within 14 days by the Employer subject to a retention of 5 per cent to be held until the satisfactory remedy of any defects at the end of the defects liability period.

Signed by the Employer: Date:

Contractor: Date:



12. Condensation in buildings

1. Source

As standards of comfort and of building insulation improve, the likelihood of condensation increases, as does the risk of consequential damage to the hidden parts of the structure as well as to the more obvious parts such as window-boards and paintwork.

Most people know that air can hold water vapour. As the air gets warmer it can hold more water. During a meeting those present breathe out a lot of moisture, which the warm air can absorb. However when it comes into contact with cold surfaces the air cools and cannot hold the water. The air then deposits the moisture on windows, cold walls, and tiled floors.

Kitchens and toilets add considerably to the moisture in the air.

2. Hidden conditions

Air also deposits moisture in hidden places, such as in partitions that separate a warm meeting room from a cold room adjacent to it, or other voids such as in the roof. A state of continuous dampness is conducive to mould growth that can be unhealthy and lead to rot.

3. New insulation

Professional advice should always be sought to obtain a sound specification that will avoid the possible problems noted above.

4. Slate or tile roofs

In old-fashioned slate or tile roofs there is so much air blowing through the roof space that the moisture evaporates harmlessly. In such roofs the flat part over the ceiling below can be insulated without moisture being trapped.

In similar roofs, where the underside of the rafters has been thoroughly sealed with sheeting, boarding, felt, etc., timbers have been known to rot because damp gets trapped and cannot escape. The introduction of a moderate amount of cross-ventilation, which can normally be done quite cheaply, will usually solve this problem.

5. Flat or hi-tech roofs

Real difficulties can arise with wooden roofs that are flat or hi-tech and are covered with an impervious surface such as metal sheeting or bituminous felt. Moisture cannot get out, and in cold weather condenses on the underside of the covering. No-one can see it until signs of

12. Condensation in buildings

excess damp or even rot start appearing below, by which time it is usually too late. It is possible, when removing a small section of covering to inspect such a roof on a cold damp day, to find the boarding just below not just damp but glistening with standing water.

6. Prevention

Condensation within the structure must be prevented by the incorporation of vapour barriers, proper ventilation and a humidity-controlled fan in the kitchen. Provide controlled trickle ventilation where opening windows have been weather-stripped to stop draughts.

7. Furniture

To avoid condensation and mould on cold walls it is advisable to ensure that there is space for air to circulate behind furniture, or avoid arranging furniture in front of cold outside walls.

8. Action

It will be seen that condensation is a complex subject that requires expert attention either to prevent or to cure.

Delay is disastrous.



13. Doing it ourselves

1. Introduction

There is an acknowledged place in the care of the meeting house fabric for 'doing it ourselves'. It can be inexpensive, effective, and can draw the meeting together. Occasional or regular days may be arranged for major cleaning and minor maintenance.

2. Preparation

To achieve these satisfactory results, however, clear organisation, guidance and instruction are needed, as well as forethought on equipment, materials and preparatory work (for example, not all decorating jobs can be carried through from first cleaning to top-coat in one day).

3. Safeguards

- Insurance: check that the policy covers injury to members of the meeting working on the premises, including lone-working provisions, and damage they may do to the meeting house (this includes those carrying out a quinquennial survey).
- Health and Safety at Work: failure to observe the provisions of this legislation could cause real trouble in the case of an accident. **Section 4: Property websites.**
- Electrical and gas installation: should be worked on only by someone suitably qualified.
- The hazards of inadequate work are far greater in a public building than at home, and accidental fires are less quickly noticed.

4. Taking decisions

It is easy for members of the meeting to defer to one of its number all decisions on whether work is needed and how it should be done. This is usually a most admirable way of using the available talents. However, it has been known to lead to long-term trouble where the person concerned has met each situation at the least possible expense. The accumulation over the years of inadequate remedial work can be disastrous. A second opinion should be welcomed at all times, and a proper quinquennial survey should pick up the problem before it gets out of hand.



14. Facilities for disabled people

Legislation on this provision is subject to change, so please visit the Congregational Insurance website at www.spow.co.uk



15. Requirements of a meeting house

Whether you are building or altering a meeting house, the planning group should review the whole of its potential use and its function in the community, present and future. They are advised to ask afresh what role the meeting house can or should play in providing for the needs of Friends and of the public. The following check list may aid this exercise.

If seeking funding through grants, you are advised to check on the requirements of the grant-awarding bodies. For example, the Meeting Houses Fund will expect there to have been proper consideration of sustainability issues.

Is the meeting house well suited for:

- meeting for worship
- public meetings
- use by the frail or disabled
- area meeting
- children's meetings
- special interest groups?

Does the entrance area provide:

- a welcoming image
- information in the form of notices, posters, pamphlets, etc., with ample space
- a useful space
- a safe space for coats, etc?

Does the main meeting room provide:

- quietness
- comfortable seating
- chair storage
- blackout
- good ventilation
- emergency exits
- good acoustics

15. Requirements of a meeting house

- seating for public meetings
- flexible lighting
- responsive heating
- a hearing loop?

For any rooms intended for children's activities (possibly for every room), make sure that doors have windows so that it is possible to view what is going on in a room without having to enter. Make sure that there are no cubbyholes or alcoves that cannot be observed from the door.

Are the smaller rooms suitable for:

- committees, with tables
- meetings for older children
- letting to special groups (e.g. art classes)?

Is there a children's room with:

- appropriate furniture
- access to water and drainage
- soft, impervious flooring
- a pin-up wall
- storage for materials and equipment?

Library facilities – should the books be:

- in lockable bookcases
- in general circulation space, easily accessible to enquirers
- open, in a special room?

Rooms with direct access into a garden or burial ground:

- Consider having two doors or a double door to make it possible to serve teas, coffees and refreshments inside, and have an entrance and exit door to prevent crowds of people trying to go in and out through a single doorway.

Does the kitchen provide:

- ample preparation and washing-up space
- easily cleaned surfaces
- a first-aid kit

15. Requirements of a meeting house

- generous space for helpers
- good storage space
- adequate ventilation
- a fire extinguisher
- space for service trolleys?

Catering:

- Can the kitchen serve directly into a generous social space?

Do the toilets have:

- adequate accommodation and access for the disabled
- fast-fill, quiet flushes
- isolation from the main rooms
- mechanical ventilation
- point-of-use water heating?

Is there adequate storage for:

- extra seating, tables, etc.
- cleaning equipment and materials
- refuse
- records, files, etc.
- ladders, tools, etc.
- all occasional equipment?

External notice boards, poster sites, etc:

- This is a very important outreach service – they tell people who you are and what you think. Are they adequate, easy to service and maintain, durable, and attractive?

Parking:

- Is there adequate parking for all users (and note local authority parking requirements)?



16. Residential accommodation

The following conditions apply to accommodation for a warden, caretaker or resident Friend:

1. Is the accommodation of an acceptable modern standard? Is there separate warden's access (essential if dwelling is let to non-warden), external space, car-parking, adequate storage, heating, own bathroom and kitchen with up-to-date facilities including space for washer, refrigerator, etc? Is the accommodation and its access suitable for use by a family or by a disabled person?
2. A new building, or alterations to an existing building, must have received planning, listed building consent, if listed, and building regulation approval before work commences.
3. Is the accommodation kept in good repair? In the contract between the warden and the meeting, is there a definition of the joint and separate responsibilities regarding repair or replacement of decorations, furnishings, fittings, and upkeep of joint or private garden? Is the warden responsible for monitoring car-parking?
4. Is the warden's accommodation secure? Are keys and access through communicating doors strictly controlled? Would security lights or other security measures be helpful? Are the boundaries of the warden's and shared spaces clearly defined and are the members of the meeting aware of these?
5. Have you considered intrusion to either party by noise, business activity, pets, children, hanging out washing, or use of the meeting house?
6. If the meeting invites relief wardens when the warden is absent, are there arrangements for the care of the warden's possessions?
7. All gas appliances must be serviced in accordance with the equipment manufacturers' instructions by a 'Gas Safe qualified person, and Landlord Gas Safety Certification be obtained annually. See *also Section 19: Gas systems and appliances*. Failure to do this is a criminal offence.



17. Gardens and burial grounds

Maintenance of gardens and burial grounds

Meetings are encouraged to maintain their gardens and burial grounds.

Trees

Some trees are subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and trees in a conservation area are also subject to protection as if a TPO were in place. Before pruning or removing trees you are advised to check with your local planning department whether your burial ground or garden are located in a conservation area or if any of your trees are subject to a TPO.

A guide to protected trees can be found here:

www.planningni.gov.uk/8pp_tree_preservation_order_lores.pdf

Use of burial grounds

Please refer to 14.31–14.35, and 17.11–17.15 of the fifth edition of *Quaker faith & practice*.

It is sensible for area meetings to have a clear policy on the use of their burial grounds in readiness for a request for a burial.

Policy and advice

The following is an example of the policy and advice adopted by an area meeting (Gloucestershire):

Burials, Interment of Ashes, Scattering of Ashes

Policy and Guidance

POLICY

We draw attention of all Local Meetings to the Minute 07/06 on eligibility for using our burial grounds:

“It was reported that there is a growing shortage of burial grounds. We therefore agree that only Friends, their spouses or partners or their dependent children and long-term Attenders, their spouses or partners or dependent children can be buried in our Quaker burial grounds.”

The Trustees clarify that the Order applies to Meeting House grounds as well as burial grounds and to the interment of ashes and the scattering of ashes, as well as burials.

17. Gardens and burial grounds

GUIDANCE

Orders for Burial and Scattering of Ashes

We agree to the procedure as outlined below:

1. Local Meeting appointed person for funerals contacts Clerk of Area Meeting Trustees to request an Order for Burial, Interment/Scattering of Ashes.
2. Order issued by Clerk of trustees to LM appointed person.
3. After burial, interment/scattering of ashes the LM appointed person completes relevant section of the Order and sends to Clerk of Area Meeting.
4. Clerk of Area Meeting signs off the Order, notes it for inclusion in next Area Meeting News of Friends and returns Order to Clerk to Trustees.

Agreed by A.M.Trustees 20 July 2009

AVAILABILITY

Burial Grounds

The current position of availability:

- Cheltenham. Meeting House Garden. Open for scattering of ashes.
Contact: Convenor of Premises Committee.
- Cirencester. Meeting House Garden. Open for the interment and scattering of ashes.
Siddington burial ground. Closed.
Contact: Clerk.
- Gloucester. Meeting House Garden. Open for the scattering of ashes.
Contact: Convenor of Premises Committee.
- Nailsworth. Shortwood burial ground.
Open for burial, interment of ashes and scattering of ashes.
Meeting House Garden. Open for the scattering of ashes.
Contact: Convenor of Premises Committee.
- Painswick. Dell burial ground. Open for the scattering of ashes.
Meeting House Garden. Open for the scattering of ashes.
Contact: Friend responsible for funerals.

17. Gardens and burial grounds

ADVICE: GRAVESTONES, SCATTERING AND BURIAL OF ASHES

Friends are left at liberty to adopt the use of plain gravestones in any burial grounds: it being distinctly understood that, in all case, they are to be erected under the direction of the area meeting so that, in each particular burial ground, uniformity is preserved in respect of the materials, size, form and wording of the stones, as well as in the mode of placing them, as may effectively guard against any distinction being made in that place between rich and poor.

Gravestones at Shortwood Quaker Burial Ground, Gloucestershire Area Quaker Meeting

We ask that future gravestones:

- a) are modest in size, use local stone and are sympathetic to existing gravestones.
- b) have wording consisting of only the name of the deceased, together with full dates of birth and death, plus age if desired.
- c) have only simple, incised lettering (not filled with lead or other material and with no symbols or decoration).

We ask Nailsworth Quaker Meeting to be responsible for ensuring the observance of these requirements.

Burial of Ashes

Where there is a wish for ashes to be buried we ask that the following be observed:

- i. if a casket is used it should be biodegradable;
- ii. the turf is carefully removed, and is replaced neatly afterwards;
- iii. the ashes are poured into a hole of sufficient depth to allow at least 150 mm or 6 inches of soil and turf above;
- iv. no marker is placed to record the spot;
- v. the position is immediately recorded on the plan of the burial ground or garden.

Recording the Burial and Scattering of Ashes

Whilst it has been the custom in the past to use gravestones to mark the position of burials, we advise that it is more appropriate that where a family wish to provide a memorial it could take the form, after discussion with LM, of a garden seat, tree, shrub, or equipment for the meeting house. In such cases we would not object to a small plate or discreet inscription recording the name and date of the deceased, which we would expect to last during the memory of those who knew the deceased, and not necessarily longer.



18. Electricity and electrical installations

Electricity can kill and injure people, both through poorly maintained electrical equipment and fires started by faulty appliances and installations.

You need to carry out a risk assessment and make sure that all of your electrical systems, wiring, switchgear, fixed machinery (e.g. organ blower motors) as well as all portable electrical appliances are well designed, in good condition and properly maintained.

It is recommended that fixed electrical installations be inspected and tested every five years in accordance with IET (Institution of Engineering and Technology) guidance and an inspection certificate obtained in every case.

Any work required on the installation should only be undertaken by contractors registered with the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC) or the Electrical Contractors' Association (ECA).

Portable electrical equipment should be inspected on a regular basis and you should ensure that worn flexes, broken plugs or sockets, etc., are replaced immediately.

The Health and Safety Executive document *INDG236 – Maintaining portable electrical equipment in low-risk environments* provides further guidance. See the following website: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg236.pdf

Tungsten filament bulbs should be replaced with fluorescent or LED fittings in areas where there is any possibility of them being close to combustible materials.

Extension leads or temporary wiring should only be used as a last resort. All temporary wiring must be disconnected from the mains sockets when not in use, not just turned off. In order to avoid overheating, coiled extension leads and wander leads should be fully extended before being used.



19. Gas installations and appliances

The installation, servicing, maintenance and repair of gas installations and appliances are governed by the Gas Installation and Use Regulations. The regulations are rigorously enforced and contravention can lead to prosecution, fines and in some instances imprisonment. Only those operatives with appropriate qualifications and who are registered with Gas SAFE are permitted to work on gas installations and appliances.

It is a criminal offence to employ an individual to carry out gas work who is not qualified to do so. It is important to note that plumbers are not gas engineers unless they have additional qualifications and are Gas SAFE registered.

Consumers are permitted to use any control on a gas appliance designed for their use. Consumers are also allowed to increase the water pressure to combination boilers via the exclusive controls provided for that purpose.

Gas, electricity and water main control valves

All users of these utilities should be familiar with where they can be turned off and terminated in an emergency. In the event of a gas supply being terminated at the meter the supply should be reinstated by a registered Gas SAFE engineer. If you have turned off the main gas control at the meter do not turn it back on yourself.

Landlords' Gas Safety Certificate – duties of landlords

The following applies to rented living accommodation including that rented by Friends, Wardens or others and is applicable only in England and Wales with lettings for seven years or less where there is a financial gain or pecuniary advantage to the property owner or trustees. Certificates must be renewed within a twelve month period and must run consecutively. Tenants must be shown a certificate within 28 days. Tenants must be shown a certificate in a house supplied with gas even if they are not a gas user.

Many meetings obtain annual Gas Safety Certificates for their appliances as a means of ensuring assurance of the proper operation of their appliance(s).

19. Gas installations and appliances

Carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning

It is now strongly recommended that all properties should contain at least one carbon monoxide alarm even if it does not contain living accommodation. Where there is living accommodation it is recommended that the alarms are not fixed permanently in any one position. This allows the residents to keep the alarm near themselves especially during periods of sleep. Additionally alarms which are not permanently fixed can be taken on holiday to safeguard the user and their friends or family against CO poisoning in an unfamiliar or foreign location.

Note: 1.28% CO in a room can kill the average person within three minutes.

Ventilation of gas installations and appliances

Ventilation grills into a property should not be restricted or blocked. Most gas appliances and some gas installations require positive ventilation to outside air. In the past it was customary to site ventilation grills behind radiators so that the incoming air could be warmed by the radiator. This method of ventilation is now illegal and when discovered the grill or radiator should be located elsewhere so that free movement of air can pass through the grill unrestricted.

Gas installations and appliances – changes to regulations and procedures

Changes are normally only issued to Gas SAFE engineers and members of the Institution of Gas Engineers and Managers. Occasionally information for the public is posted in national newspapers and magazines. For general advice phone Gas SAFE 0800 408 5500 or contact your local Gas SAFE engineer.

Reporting an emergency - obtaining help and advice

The main objective of the gas industry is to keep the public safe and save lives. The gas industry would prefer you to make a suspected report about a gas escape or fumes which subsequently turns out to be erroneous rather than not make the call at all.

In the event of a gas escape or a report of fumes. Phone 0800 111 999 immediately.



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21. Relevant extracts from *Quaker faith & practice*

From *Quaker faith & practice*, fifth edition

Meeting houses

Certification and registration

14.24 Meeting houses in England and Wales should be certified as places of worship under the Places of Worship Registration Act 1855. Forms for this can be obtained from the superintendent registrar of births, deaths and marriages for the district in which the meeting house is situated. Such certification will establish the meeting house as a place of worship for the purpose of any legislation where evidence of use of the property is required. Places of public religious worship are exempt from the payment of non-domestic rates and there are significant concessions for other property used for charitable purposes. In order to ensure that the full entitlement is obtained, it is necessary to inform the rates department of the local authority of the nature and purposes of such property. There is no provision for the registration of places of worship in Scotland and liability to or exemption from rates is governed by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1991.

New meeting houses

14.26 In the provision of meeting houses, area meetings should, wherever possible, choose sites which allow for the greatest possible use by the whole community. The acquisition of older property for conversion to a meeting house may involve difficulties which should be assessed by a surveyor before the area meeting considers purchase. In contemplating the building of meeting houses, area meetings should have regard to Quaker testimonies and the suitability of the building as a place of worship. Relevant criteria include simplicity of design, soundness of construction, minimising environmental impact, enabling easy access for people with disabilities, and avoiding extravagance.

Loans or grants, or both, may be available in suitable cases to area meetings to meet part of the cost of building new meeting houses; for the purchase and adaptation of properties to make them suitable for use as meeting houses; and for major alterations to existing meeting houses and major repairs to historic meeting houses. Information about the Meeting Houses Funds is obtainable from Quaker Finance & Property (and see www.quaker.org.uk/qfp).

21. Relevant extracts from *Quaker faith & practice*

Care of premises

14.25 A meeting house should not be regarded primarily in terms of bricks and mortar, or merely seen in relation to potential site value. Its real value derives from the worship and service of the meeting. Even so, our meeting houses no less than our own homes deserve our care, attention and imaginative thought, so that they may be attractive both to ourselves and to others whilst remaining faithful to our commitment to simplicity, care of the environment and equality. Care of our premises is an important and sometimes exacting responsibility, which should be exercised by or on behalf of the meeting to which it belongs. Area meeting trustees and local premises committees should be vigilant so that small defects do not pass unnoticed and lead in the future to extensive and costly repairs. It is recommended that premises be professionally inspected at regular intervals.

Use of premises

14.27 Area meetings are advised to permit and encourage the use of their meeting houses for educational and other suitable purposes which serve the needs of the people living in their neighbourhood. Such users should be expected to make an appropriate financial contribution to the running expenses and upkeep. It should be borne in mind that the primary purpose of the meeting house is as a place of public worship.

As premises used by the public, meeting houses must meet certain statutory requirements in respect of fire precautions, safety and hygiene. All premises must be adequately insured, including liability insurance as well as buildings and contents insurance; the Treasurers' Handbook should be consulted for more detailed advice.

In considering the proper use of their meeting houses, area meetings should be sensitive to the feelings of the worshipping community, whose members may object to the introduction of alcoholic drinks onto the premises or to other practices by other users of the meeting house. Hiring policies in respect of particular premises should be agreed between area meetings and local meetings, and conditions made clear to prospective users. The use of Quaker premises by political parties, and by other religious or secular organisations with whose principles or practices Friends might not be in sympathy, will always require careful consideration and full consultation with Friends in the meeting most closely concerned. Particular care must be taken to avoid bookings by 'front' organisations with undesirable aims; the bona fides of new users should be checked. In all cases it is important to ensure that any publicity given to meetings held on Quaker premises makes a clear distinction between those organised by a meeting, committee or other Quaker body as such, and those for which others are responsible, in order to avoid confusion in the public mind.

Meetings and committees involved in letting Quaker premises should always bear in mind the need to minimise disturbance to neighbours, hurt to individual Friends, division among the membership, and erosion of our distinctive Quaker identity.

Sale and other disposal of property

14.28 Area meetings or other owning bodies should assess realistically all the circumstances before offering for sale any land or buildings in connection with a meeting house. There have been cases in the past where a small meeting has been revived or one long discontinued has been reopened. It has become increasingly difficult to find suitable sites or buildings for the development of new meeting houses. This may be an additional reason for retaining existing meeting houses in Quaker ownership, in case one day they may be required again, but meetings should not allow themselves to become overly burdened by their property.

In England and Wales, trustees are responsible for the sale, transfer and other disposal of property. Buildings and land held in charitable trusts shall not be mortgaged, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of unless the trustees have first followed the procedure required by law and as detailed in the Area Meeting Governing Document and, where applicable, as defined in a scheme registered with the Charity Commission. In Scotland there are no restrictions on the disposal of charity land provided that it does not contravene the terms of the trust. However it is recommended that meetings in Scotland should, as a matter of good practice, follow the same procedure.

See the Trustees' Handbook for the responsibilities of trusteeship and access to advice and support, and consult with Friends Trusts Limited.

14.29 The prime consideration in the sale or other disposal of property is the best interests of the charity. Charity law does not require a disposal for the best price.

14.30 Scottish meetings are subject to regulation by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, which was established under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. The regulations on trusteeship and accountability are much the same as those which apply in England and Wales.

More specific references are included in the text of various sections of this document.