

Simpler meetings – using digital to simplify

This document is about possibilities. It shares many ideas collected from Quakers around Britain about how we can simplify the way we organise ourselves. You can find more topics here: www.quaker.org.uk/simplermeetings. For each topic there is a document and a short video. All the topics are collected in “*Simpler Meetings – what is possible*”, which also explains ways you can approach the topics.

Email lists are a very straightforward way of communicating with a large group of people. Email is now a very widely used technology.

‘**Printing buddies**’ can be very useful, where one Friend prints things off for somebody who is not able to access emails.

Social media is obviously a big thing for us going forwards. This has been an explosion for many of the age groups that we're wanting to attract into our meetings. Social media is also increasingly being used by older people too. So focusing on social media is really important.

Electronic banking is proving very useful for many treasurers. It helps them cut down on some of the work. In particular it can enable hirers or contributors to make payments swiftly and easily. This reduces time spent chasing up payments or resolving errors and queries. Two people can sign off payments, just like two signatures on a cheque. Electronic banking also enables several people to have access to bank statements, in real time – like a treasurer, assistant treasurer and bookkeeper or accountant.

Online accounts packages are increasingly being used. These enable people to enter transactions or view information, remotely.

Video meetings are probably the most popular topic in talks about simplifying around the country. They enable you to have a video conference for committees and other meetings. The technology has improved considerably now. Many people have phones, tablets and PCs able to join a video call. Having a video meeting can save a lot of travel time and money, reduce your carbon footprint, and allow more people to join the conversation – because they can fit the meeting into their lives, or they would not need to travel.

Using video calls for worship is also developing. Woodbrooke has held an online meeting for worship for some years. Friends have been experimenting in other settings too. It can enable people to join worship wherever they are, whether prevented by ill-health or travel. With good discipline and a little preparation, worshipping with a video connection can be calm and spirit filled – just like a typical meeting for worship.

Questions to consider:

- Are we using email as a convenient and widely used communication method?
- Are there people who would benefit from a printing buddy, if they are not email users?
- Could we be using social media more, internally and externally?
- Would using online banking and/or an online accounts package simplify the load on our treasurers?
- Could we use video meetings, to save travel time and cost, reduce our carbon footprint, and include people who could not join the meeting otherwise.
- Could we consider using video connections to enable people to join meeting for worship?

Can you help?

The Simpler Meetings project is gathering and sharing ways that Quakers find work well for them. The aim is to liberate the joy of being a Quaker. You can learn more at www.quaker.org.uk/simplermeetings. Please send your ideas and suggestions to Jonathan Carmichael, Simpler Meetings Project Manager at JonathanC@Quaker.org.uk.

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