

Simpler meetings – paying people for some tasks

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.

We already pay for some tasks

There seem to be some jobs we are quite happy to pay someone to do. We have paid wardens, cleaners and gardeners, and we pay for someone to fix the boiler, or clear the gutters. But there are some tasks that we rarely pay people to do. We could ask:

- Would it really be so bad to pay people for some other functions?
- Which tasks could other people do, so Friends can spend more time doing what only Friends can do?

Administrators

Some area meetings have a part-time administrator. This might be very part-time, say 10 hours a month. An administrator could deal with membership records and transfers, contact lists and GDPR. They might do Gift Aid processing, arrange insurance, or type up agendas and distribute papers – things that otherwise land on the clerk, or treasurer, or clerk to trustees.

Bookkeepers

In the Treasurers section, you can read more about the fact that 14% of local meetings already have a paid bookkeeper, and how this changes the treasurer role.

Managing lettings and buildings

Some meetings pay people to manage the meeting house lettings, rather than a warden. Some have a caretaker instead of a warden. Some use a residential lettings agent for investment properties, or to do the property maintenance – see the section on Property Management.

Employees can work for more than one area meeting

By the time somebody has learned how to handle things for Quakers in one area meeting, they could usefully do that for another. This could save learning, share good practice, and avoid the second area meeting being an employer, with everything that comes with that.

Extending a warden’s role

Some places have a warden who has a more extended role, providing a wider set of functions across the area meeting.

Independent Contractors

Some area meetings use independent contractors rather than employees for some functions. That can help to reduce some of the risks of employing staff.

BYM Employers Resource

On the Britain Yearly Meeting website at www.quaker.org.uk/employers there is an Employers Resource. It has a set of standard policies that area meetings can adopt, a set of standard terms and conditions for employees, and guidance on a range of topics. Using reliable policies and procedures can save a great deal of time and effort.

Local development workers

Britain Yearly Meeting has been piloting a number of local development workers, helping meetings across a group of area meetings with the things that matter most to them. The number is set to expand, to put a worker in reach of every meeting. See www.quaker.org.uk/MCS

Youth workers and children's workers

Britain Yearly Meeting's Children and Young People's Team are experimenting with paid youth workers in two parts of the country. They are also helping meetings who want to have a paid children's worker.

Questions to consider:

- Would it really be so bad to pay people for some other functions?
- Which tasks could other people do, so Friends can spend more time doing what only Friends can do?
- Should we consider having a paid bookkeeper, or some administrator time?
- Could we do this at the area meeting level, or share with a neighbour, extend a warden's role, or use an independent contractor?
- Would it help to use the BYM Employment Resource to have reliable and standard policies and procedures?
- Could we benefit from a Local Development Worker?
- Could we benefit from a paid youth work worker, or someone to help with children?

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.