## 31 March 2020

# Ways of organising oversight and pastoral care 31 March 2020

Meetings may already have arrangements in place for keeping in contact and you may find that these meet current needs. Meetings who are operating circles, loops, looplets and others may not need or choose to change the way they are working. Bear in mind that some people have extra or particular needs under the current circumstances.

*Are your current communications systems working? How might you find out other people’s current needs?*

This is an example that one community is using to keep in touch and support each other during the coronavirus outbreak. It is framed as a pair of communications to Friends within the community and explains the use. It can be used in its entirety or adapted to suit your meeting’s needs.

## Letter number 1

*Edit as appropriate*

*Remove this text*

Dear Friends,

Our oversight and pastoral care group has been thinking about how best Friends in our community can support one another during the coronavirus outbreak. We intend to organise a set of temporary ‘Pods’ around our locality (local/area/other Quaker community) based on geographical areas. Each Pod will last for the duration of the outbreak. The purpose of the Pods will be to help one another in both practical, spiritual and social ways and we think this can best be done in local areas. The size of each Pod will be dependant on how many Friends live in a particular area.

### What will the Pods do?

Each Pod will organise itself and decide how it would like to run. Some suggestions are:

* Check on each other should circumstances change
* Do shopping for Friends who are self-isolating and leave it at their door
* Have a ‘WhatsApp’ or ‘Facebook’ group to share local information
* Have a ‘Zoom’ or ‘Skype’ coffee morning
* Send jokes, cartoons, helpful passages from [Quaker faith & practice](https://qfp.quaker.org.uk/) etc to one another

### Why the name ‘Pods?

The idea of a Pod is based on the behaviour of Dolphins and Porpoises. Dolphins in particular are very sociable and live in Pods of 5-20. These Pods are fluid, temporary groups with a common purpose e.g. nursing mothers, adolescents learning social skills etc. By co-operating and forming alliances, dolphins are able to influence their social environment.

The name is also appropriate because Dolphins communicate with whistles and ‘clicking’ sounds and we will be ‘IT clicking’ as a way of staying in touch.

### Opting In

We recognise that not all Friends will want to be part of a Pod. That said, we think there is some urgency to get these organised, so if you DO WANT to be in a Pod, please can you let us know within the next week and no later than **[INSERT DATE]** To opt in, let **[INSERT NAME]** know by email XXX or call **[INSERT NAME]** on XXX. We will then send your email address to others in your allocated Pod.

We also recognise that there will be some Friends in your Pod whom you may never have met. Our community is made up of Friends from **[INSERT DETAILS OF WHEN WORSHIP IS HELD EACH WEEK IN YOUR COMMUNITY]**, as well as those unable to attend Meetings for Worship, and we would encourage Friends to be in contact with those they do not already know.

### Woodbrooke Online Worship

We are pleased that Woodbrooke offers regular online opportunities to worship at various times during the week. More are being offered all the time.

* [www.woodbrooke.org.uk/about/online-mfw/](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/about/online-mfw/)

In Friendship,

**[INSERT NAMES OF FRIENDS WITH OVERSIGHT OR PASTORAL CARE RESPONSIBILITY]**

## Letter number 2

Dear **[INSERT NAMES OF PEOPLE IN THE POD]**,

Welcome to your Pod. We’re sending out names and emails of those F/friends who wanted to opt in near your geographical area. You may not recognise all the names as people may attend differently from you, e.g. Sunday or mid-week meeting for worship, Bible Book group. Now is the time to get to know each other and what you want to get from and give each other. We envisage that you will find your own ways of supporting each other practically, spiritually and socially at this unprecedented time.

We envisage these groups being warm, friendly, autonomous and self-organising in a fluid way. Each group will organise itself. Below are some suggestions for how you might wish to begin.

Introduce yourselves perhaps sharing how long you‘ve been connected to **[INSERT NAME OF QUAKER COMMUNITY]** and in what ways, and what drew you to opt in to a Pod.

Share how your household is living and what needs/resources you might have and/or what offers of help you might wish to make. Are you primarily looking at practical help, or spiritual support or stimulus, or social communication?

Some suggestions are:

* Check on each other should circumstances change
* Do shopping for Friends who are self-isolating and leave it at their door
* Have a ‘WhatsApp’ or ‘Facebook’ group to share local information
* Have a ‘Zoom’ or ‘Skype’ coffee morning
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We’re sure you’ll find your own ways forward. We thought it useful to share with you all useful official websites for medical and governmental updated information

### Medical updates

* England: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)
* Scotland: [www.scot.nhs.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.scot.nhs.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/)
* Wales: <https://covid19-phwstatement.nhs.wales/>

### Updated government guidelines

* England: [www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response](http://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response)
* Scotland: [www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/)
* Wales: <https://gov.wales/topic/980/latest>

### Safeguarding

As a community, we always take safeguarding into account. The sharing of emails means we all need to be mindful and vigilant about contacts inadvertently going outside our Quaker community. For example, someone might share a lovely poem and you feel you want to send it onwards to an acquaintance outside the meeting. Please ensure that you don’t accidentally copy in all the group addresses. Also at this time when other temporary agencies are popping up offering emergency assistance, please make sure you do not give your bank details to anyone new. Similarly there are lots of wonderful people out there beyond the meeting offering help. If they are genuine, they will be happy for you to check out their identity if and when they get in touch. If you have young people in your group remember that there are very similar needs as there are when meeting face-to-face. Parents will need to give permission or be online with young people. Be aware of what can be seen in your camera behind you when online.

*More details about safeguarding are in the section below. You may wish to add or remove sections as needed for your community’s needs.*

You may be interested to know that XXX Friends have joined one of our Pods and that there are XXX pods altogether. It is good that we have been able to form this temporary new type of community. Let each of us continue to uphold one another as individuals and as each Pod.

In Friendship

**[INSERT NAME]** Quaker oversight or pastoral care group

*Quaker Life and Woodbrooke, 31 March 2020*