

This is a version of the reference document used in the North Somerset and Wiltshire Monthly Meeting, the predecessor body of WWESAM, with minimal changes to terminology, etc., prepared for consideration by those revising reference documents. The revision date shown reflects merely the last date the electronic file was saved.

**Definitions:** Throughout the *Constitution* the term 'Member' (i.e. capitalised) is used to indicate someone in membership of West Wiltshire and East Somerset Area Meeting and therefore of Britain Yearly Meeting, and 'Attender' someone who attends a local meeting but is not in membership. 'Local meeting' covers both preparative and recognised meetings. [Text in square brackets is not part of the Constitution, but an attempt to assist in its interpretation.]

## 1. Functions of the Committee

The Committee is authorised by Area Meeting:

1. to conduct all the financial, property and employment affairs of the Area Meeting.
2. to raise funds and to invite and receive contributions, provided that in raising funds it shall not undertake any substantial permanent trading activities and shall conform to the requirements of the law.
3. to buy, take on lease or in exchange, any property necessary for the achievement of the objectives of the Area Meeting, and to maintain and equip it for use.
4. subject to any consents required by law, to sell, lease or dispose of all or any part of the property of Area Meeting.
5. subject to any consents required by law, to borrow money and to charge all or any part of the property of the Area Meeting with repayment of the money so borrowed.
6. to appoint or terminate the appointment of such paid or unpaid employees as are required to carry out the purposes of the Area Meeting and to ensure that all legal requirements in respect of them are observed.
7. to make provision for the welfare of such employees both during and after their employment.
8. to invest the moneys of the Area Meeting not immediately required for its objectives in such investments as the Committee shall decide in accordance with statutory and Charity Commission requirements.
9. to appoint one or more sub-committees consisting of a minimum of three members, the majority of whom must be Trustees, for the purpose of making any

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inquiry or supervising or performing any function or duty provided that all the acts and proceedings of such a sub-committee shall be fully and promptly reported to the Committee.

## 2. Communication

The Committee is asked to keep Area Meeting adequately informed about the financial, property and employment affairs of the Area Meeting and, without limiting its authority, to be alert and sensitive to the need and desirability of consulting Area Meeting about:

1. policy issues.
2. those matters which could have a material impact on the life and work of Britain Yearly Meeting or any part thereof.
3. those matters upon which it is likely that Friends would have difficulty in agreeing.

## 3. Membership of the Committee

- 1 3.1 The Committee shall consist of the following Members or Attenders appointed by Area Meeting in response to nominations made by Area Meeting Nominations Committee:-
  - 1.1 a Clerk to the Committee;
  - 1.2 up to two Area Meeting Property Stewards, appointed if and when a member or members of the Area Meeting, with the requisite experience in the care of buildings, are available to undertake the necessary duties;
  - 1.3 one Representative from each local meeting who, when representing a meeting with a meeting house, shall be an ex officio member of that Meeting's Premises Committee;
  - 1.4 the Area Meeting Clerk and Treasurer, both ex officio.
- 2 The Clerk and Property Stewards must be Members of the Area Meeting. Every effort shall be made to ensure that each Representative is in Membership, but if this is not possible in the case of any one of our Meetings, an Attender from that Meeting or a Member or Attender from a neighbouring Meeting may be appointed. Area Meeting shall ensure that at least half of those on the Committee are in Membership.
- 3 The Committee may co-opt up to two Members or Attenders.

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## 4. Deputies

Area Meeting shall also appoint a Member or Attender of each local meeting to attend meetings of the Committee if its Representative is prevented from attending. [*Should representation from a meeting be lacking for any reason, then representation from that meeting should be achieved through co-option prior to each Committee meeting.*] Similarly the Assistant Clerk of Area Meeting may deputise for the Clerk of Area Meeting and the Assistant Treasurer for Area Meeting Treasurer. None of the foregoing become Managing Trustees.

## 5. Trusteeship

Members of the Committee are, ex officio, Managing Trustees of the Area Meeting, as defined in section 15.04 of Quaker faith and Practice. They have ultimate responsibility for the administration and management of the financial, property and employment affairs of the Area Meeting.

The Custodian Trustee for the Area Meeting is Friends Trusts Ltd. As the legally registered owner of Area Meeting property, it must be involved in the acquisition and disposal of that property.

## 6. Appointments

As far as possible all members of the Committee (except those who serve ex officio) shall be appointed in such a way that:

- 1 each year one third of existing appointments shall be reviewed with a view to change or re-appointment of a serving member.
- 2 each appointment shall be made for a definite term which shall normally be three years.
- 3 no appointment shall be made which involves more than nine years' continuous membership of the Committee.
- 4 regard shall be had to the desirability of gradual changes in membership of the Committee so that a proper balance is maintained between change and continuity.
- 5 Except appointments made to fill casual vacancies, all changes shall be made with effect from 1st April.

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## 7. Conduct of the Committee and its officers

All meetings of the Committee shall be conducted in accordance with the established practice of the Society as set out in Quaker faith & practice.

- 1 Decisions shall be determined by the Clerk arriving at the sense of the meeting and recording it in a minute agreed in the meeting. However, before the Clerk declares that any particular minute has been accepted by the Meeting, any person present on that occasion may require that the subject matter of the minute shall be considered solely by those Trustees who are present; in which case any decision made by the Trustees present shall be treated as a decision of the Committee. *[Since the business of the Committee is often of a detailed or technical nature and may have legal implications, the Clerk may ask any Trustee present to give assistance at the table. In this respect, too, it is helpful if the Clerk is notified in advance if a new or controversial subject is to be raised. Representatives of local meetings and Property Stewards can also assist by giving the Clerk a list of the subjects which their reports will cover. Where a formal minute to satisfy a legality or technicality is required the member involved shall supply a written draft.]*
- 2 A quorum for all meetings shall be four Trustees.
- 3 If the Clerk is absent from any meeting, the Trustees present shall choose one of their number to be Clerk of that meeting before any other business is transacted.
- 4 The Committee may invite any person to its meetings at its discretion.
- 5 The Committee shall endeavour to observe best practice in the conduct of its affairs including such matters as:
  - 5.1 the holding of such meetings as are necessary to carry out the business of the Committee with three times per year as a minimum.
  - 5.2 timely circulation of agenda and other advance papers giving appropriate detail of forthcoming business.
  - 5.3 advance scheduling of regular meetings.
  - 5.4 giving at least two days notice of emergency meetings.
  - 5.5 prompt circulation of minutes to Committee members, deputies and other interested Friends.
  - 5.6 custody of its records.
  - 5.7 observance of relevant legislation.

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- 5.8 the compilation and maintenance of a Long-term File comprising a file of agreed practices and long-term information based on decisions made by the Committee or by Area Meeting, or documents likely to be of long-term use to the Committee,
- 5.9 briefing new members of the Committee on its work and their responsibilities, and supplying them with an information pack to include those items listed in the Long-term File.

## 8. Annual Accounts and Report

Each year the Committee shall prepare annual accounts and a report on the Area Meeting's financial, property and employment affairs in time to make them available to Area Meeting not less than five days in advance of the Area Meeting at which they are to be considered. Statutory requirements with regard to the accounts and report must be observed and the report shall contain a list of members of the Committee and their deputies with a note of the length of previous continuous service and of the date at which each appointment falls due for review.

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