**Quakers in Yorkshire**

**Simplifying Charitable Functions Group**

**Notes on meeting held on 1 September 2023 by zoom**

**Present:** David Bower (Central Yorkshire AM), Erica Cadbury (Craven & Keighley AM), Rosie Darwood (Leeds AM), Deryck Hillas (Brighouse West Yorkshire AM), Ann Hindley (Sheffield & Balby AM), David Olver (QiY Trustees), Helen Rowlands (Pickering & Hull AM), Martina Weitsch (York AM).

We opened with a period of worship.

**1. Models chosen elsewhere in yearly meeting**

We spent most of the meeting reflecting on the models for merging, or collaborating, described by Lesley Richards at our last meeting. In summary, the models are:

1. merging charities and retaining area meetings to concentrate on fostering the spiritual and witness life of meetings;
2. merging charities and area meetings;
3. retaining current structures but collaborating across area meetings.

Welsh Friends have chosen the first model, whilst London and Scottish Friends are consulting on the second model.

**2. Which of the models make sense for Yorkshire?**

The group clearly feels that that proposing a model of merging charitable functions and retaining area meetings could simplify charitable function in Yorkshire and be made to work (i.e. Model 1 above).

Some points mentioned in favour of the proposal:

* Previous consideration of having three charities across Yorkshire would involve similar principles of merger for local Friends as a single charity so simpler to propose a single charity.
* There would be a significantly reduced number of trustees, making the task of nominations committees easier;
* AMs could return to their historic role of fostering the spiritual and witness life of meetings;
* A large charitable unit could employ staff who would be able to undertake some of the professional duties;
* The regulatory side of safeguarding could be considerably simplified. This also applies to finance and premises;
* Adopting this model as a first stage would not preclude merging AMs in future;
* Some AMs would feel a sense of relieve that action is being taken to simplify functions.

Issues which will need to be considered before making any recommendations:

* How would the relations between the trustee board for a single charity and **local meetings** be made to work;
* How would the relations between the trustee board for a single charity and **area meetings** be made to work;
* The historic ownership of funds and property can cause a lot of difficulty unless handled sensitively;
* How to manage the meeting houses (and burial grounds) to ensure a fair balance between local input and professional efficiency;
* Careful and sensitive communication of proposals will be essential.

Other matters raised:

* Noted that London has used an external group to provide change-facilitation. Scotland is using Lesley Richards in this role. Doubts as to how well external facilitation might work.
* The boundaries of area meetings is a separate issue which can be considered any time.
* Welcomed the interest from Craig Barnett in the work of this group and agreed to invite him to our next meeting.

**3. Next stage**

We welcomed the offer from Helen to draft a paper outlining the case for a recommendation to merge charitable functions. This can be drafted and discussed via email and a web-page before our next meeting.

We can then consider what work is needed to get us to the point where we can raise this formally at our AMs?

**4. Next meeting**

Martina will be hosting a face-to-face meeting at Hartrigg Oaks, York, on **Saturday 18 November 2023**.

David Olver

1 September 2023