

SOUTH WALES AREA MEETING (QUAKERS) – POLICY FOR THE LETTING OF MEETING HOUSES (OTHER THAN LONG-TERM LEASES)

Purposes

The primary purpose of Quaker Meeting Houses is as places of worship (including meetings for worship for business). (Other uses¹ are listed below, in descending order of priority.)

A secondary use of a Meeting House is for the furtherance of initiatives and activities which Quakers themselves set up and in which they are involved.

A third use is by groups with which Quakers are sympathetic and wish to support.

Finally, a fourth use is for groups who want a place to meet but for whom Quakers have no special sympathy.

Principles

Lettings can be a valuable means of promoting Quaker testimonies within the area served by a Meeting House. Thus we particularly welcome the use of our premises by groups:

- Which support marginalised members of society and promote social inclusion
- Whose activities promote peace
- Whose activities ecologically sound and sustainable living.

(The above list is not meant to be exhaustive.)

We are prepared to provide space for groups which promote moral, ethical and political debate, so long as the activities do not violate our testimonies to peace, equality, simplicity, integrity and truth. Acceptance of a booking from an organisation or individual does not imply that South Wales Quakers concur with their views or aims.

We undertake that our dealings with users and potential users of our buildings are based on trust and mutual respect, openness and transparency. In return we expect our users to comply with the local Lettings Procedure and to treat the fabric and the furniture and fittings of our buildings with care and respect.

Any publicity given to meetings held in the Meeting House must make a clear distinction between those organised by a Quaker Meeting (or other Quaker body), those for which the hiring groups are responsible, and those sponsored by Quakers and non-Quakers jointly.

We expect hiring groups to have regard to legislation and Welsh Government policies concerning the safeguarding of children and young people and vulnerable adults.

Rental/hiring charges

We may see virtue in keeping our charges low, in order to assist groups with which Friends are in sympathy. (See, for example, the “third use”, above.) We should, however, charge the full hire cost and then make a donation to the group. This course of action will be reflected in the Area Meeting’s Annual Consolidated Report & Accounts.

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Exclusions

We reserve the right to refuse the use of our premises to any organisation or person whose aims or objectives, or the stated purposes for which the premises are to be used, or the practices for which the premises come to be used, we believe to be in conflict with Quaker beliefs and values, for example, religious groups that are of a highly authoritarian nature.

Commencement Date

1 January 2012

End of Policy

Advice Note to Local Meetings re the Procedures to be followed

Day to day management of the lettings process²

- Set out the arrangements clearly both to the hirers and the Meeting.
- Establish a booking system for occasional users and have a written procedures checklist for each party to follow.
- Make it clear who sets up the room for each user and who clears up afterwards
- If required and if feasible provide necessary individual storage for any group that needs this. (Pre-school groups will be particularly demanding in this respect.)
- Establish a clear method of handling keys and access.

Have a clear line of responsibility for new hirers.

The lettings clerk should confirm the suitability of the hirer with premises committee, who in turn should bring the matter to LM business meeting for (a) information *or* (b) confirmation *or* (c) a decision, depending on the details of the proposed letting. Both the committee and the LM business meeting should make a minute, accordingly.

AM Trustees are available to give advice, when this is required.

References

¹ *Treasurers' News*, Issue 13, especially page 2 (www.quaker.org/treasurers)

² Paul Grey [Head of Hospitality & Facilities, Friends House] (29 June 2011), *Letting your Meeting House – some points to consider*.

DRH

14.12.11