

Central England Quakers – Trustees Finance Committee

Guidelines for handling cash collections

At the last review meeting held with our Auditor, Fred Slater, we were asked to review procedures for cash collections (counting and banking).

Most charities that undertake street collections, or empty collecting boxes in public places, have to follow procedures, to ensure probity and accountability, and our special collections are no different.

The following procedures represent “good practice”, but Finance Committee recognises that good practice sometimes needs to be combined with pragmatism. However the fact that we are Quakers, with a testimony to integrity, should encourage us to be vigilant and careful, not lax, over any transactions involving trust. Some relaxation of rules may be permissible if the amount of cash involved is small, and if the Friends involved are well-known and trusted, however the important point to make is that Meetings should be aware of how cash is handled by the Meeting, that the risks are understood, and that all reasonable steps are taken to comply with good practice and to protect those involved from becoming vulnerable to suspicion or criticism.

- 1 Cash is technically “vulnerable” at all stages, from emptying boxes to taking it to the bank, and there is no point in having a strict procedure for one part of the process but not for other parts. Be consistent!
- 2 Ideally two Friends (not related to each other) should be present when the cash is removed from a box, and it should be counted immediately in the presence of at least two people. This, in theory, protects the collection during subsequent stages of the process, as the “witness” can verify the amount banked.
- 3 If it is not practical to count the cash in the presence of two Friends, it should be placed in a sealed envelope and delivered to the responsible person (eg Treasurer) unopened.
- 4 Gift Aid envelopes must only be opened by designated individuals – ideally left unopened until delivered to the Treasurer – not just for security reasons, but also because the donation is private.
- 5 It is not good practice for cash to be accumulated by an individual between Meetings, paid into a personal bank account (or spent), then transferred to the Meeting account by personal cheque or direct transfer, though we accept that this practice is not uncommon, and may be the only practical solution for Treasurers that do not have regular physical access to a bank. If this practice is permitted by the Meeting, the money must not be paid into a personal account until a matching payment has been made to the Meeting, and cash must never be “borrowed” for personal purposes between transactions.

We invite Local Meetings to review their procedures and satisfy themselves that the procedures are both understood and appropriate. The larger the amount collected the more care needs to be taken, though the principles are the same, regardless of the amount of money involved.

Finance Committee, November 2013