

Central England Quakers  
**Trustees' Property Committee**

**Model Terms of Reference for LOCAL PREMISES COMMITTEES**

**Revised by Trustees Property Committee July 2023**

**1. Summary of purpose**

- 1.1 CEQ Meeting Houses exist to support the life, work and witness of our Local Meetings (LMs)
- 1.2 The LM has duties and responsibilities delegated to it by CEQ Trustees for the day-to-day care and management of premises within the care of the LM. These duties and responsibilities are set out in the property section of the Memorandum of Understanding ( MoU) between Trustees and Local Meetings (see Appendix 1).
- 1.3 The care of premises may be dealt with at the business meeting of the LM, but in most cases a Premises Committee will be appointed. In cases where there is no Premises Committee, the content of this document will apply to the business meeting of the LM with the exception of the paragraphs about committee membership. See 5 below for delegated actions.
- 1.4 Premises committees are accountable to their LM. Note: The CEQ Trustees' Property Committee asks each LM to appoint a member of Premises Committee (or to nominate a member of the Meeting, in the absence of a Premises Committee) to liaise with Trustees' Property Committee, receive guidance or instructions from Trustees' Property Committee and report briefly to Trustees' Property Committee before meetings of the latter. This person is referred to as the Property Correspondent.

**2. Membership**

- 2.1 The number of people serving on premises committee is to be determined by the Local Meeting, but should not be less than three. Members should normally form the majority but Attenders with appropriate skills and experience should be encouraged to serve.
- 2.2 The warden, resident Friend or Meeting House Manager should normally attend committee meetings, ex officio. The treasurer and lettings secretary should be invited to attend ex-officio if they are not already full members of the committee.
- 2.3 One Friend should be nominated to serve as clerk or convenor, either by the Meeting or by the committee itself. The Meeting should inform the CEQ Principal Officer and the Area Meeting Office of changes of clerk/convenor.
- 2.4 Nominations and appointments are made by the LM. Some rotation of membership is desirable, to encourage other members of the Meeting to serve, but limited term appointments may not be practical (especially for a small Meeting), and having members with appropriate skills (and a willingness to serve) may be more important.
- 2.5 The Committee will meet as frequently as needed to carry out its responsibilities, probably four to six times a year.

### 3. Duties

- 3.1 Undertake day to day management of local premises, within policy guidelines as may be set out from time to time by CEQ trustees, Area Meeting or the LM.
- 3.2 If the committee is the managing body for an employee, then a line manager should be appointed from its number to undertake regular line management and conduct an annual appraisal. *See Employment Committee Document "Guidance for Line Managers"*. The committee should meet without the employee to deal with matters relating to employment as a matter of routine, and not only when difficulties arise.
- 3.3 Consult with Trustees Property Committee, via the Principal Officer, whenever action is contemplated which could affect the asset value of the premises (e.g. extensions, structural alterations or other developments) or the financial or legal responsibilities of Trustees (e.g. change of use of premises, entering into a tenancy agreement). Details of proposals regarding tendering for all work over £4,000 [Excluding VAT] should be discussed with the Principal Officer.
- 3.4 The committee may employ contractors to carry out work, subject to the procedures set out in the MoU (clause 3.5 and 3.6).
- 3.5 As stated in the MoU (Finance section) all significant expenditure must be authorised in advance by a minute of the LM in session. The LM should consult with their Link Trustee if they are unsure if their planned expenditure is "significant". If the Meeting has a budget for property-related expenditure the LM may agree to allow Premises Committee to commission work that is within the agreed budget, but it is good practice to approve and record by Minute any non-routine expenditure.
- 3.6 The insurance broker must be informed when the work is taking place.
- 3.7 Meetings of the Premises Committee should be recorded in the form of minutes or notes, and these should be copied to the Link Trustee (*see MoU 3.11*). It is good practise to circulate the notes or minutes to the LM Clerk, Treasurer and Convenor of Elders. Printed copies of the notes or minutes of LM Premises Committee meetings should be sent to the CEQ Keeper of the Records periodically.
- 3.8 Complete the Annual Property Questionnaire, and carry out maintenance/repairs as needed.
- 3.9 When requested by Trustees Property Committee, arrange for the nominated surveyor to undertake a quinquennial inspection of the property. Carry out maintenance/repairs as needed. The Principal Office should be kept informed at all stages.
- 3.10 Ensure that routine maintenance and testing of equipment is undertaken at specified intervals, with certificates kept on file. A "routine maintenance & periodic inspection" schedule template is given in Appendix 2, but LMs are free to manage the tasks in their own way.
- 3.11 Review the Fire and General Risk Assessments annually, and where possible act to mitigate risks. Undertake a legionella risk assessment every two years.

#### **4. Finance**

The LM/Branch may apply to CEQ Trustees Property Committee via the Principal Officer for a grant or loan from the Building Fund to carry out works that are beyond the reasonable scope of the Local Meeting to fund. See guidance document "*Criteria for grants and loans to Meeting Houses*". Loan repayments should be made according to the agreed schedule and before the end of November. Requests for funding from the Building Fund should clearly show the estimated total cost of the work, the Meeting's expected contribution from available resources and the Meeting's aspirations in fundraising for the work.

#### **5. Delegation**

Practical action may be delegated by the committee to individual Friends, including any warden, resident Friend or Meeting House Manager as appropriate. Such delegated actions must be minuted or contained in agreed role descriptions or procedures. Payments made to individuals for work carried out must be compliant with the "*Guidance to Local Meetings regarding payments for services*" issued 20 May 2020.

### **Appendix 1**

#### **MoU 2023, Property section**

##### **3 Property Management**

Where a Meeting House or other CEQ property is available for the use of the LM, the LM undertakes the following:

- 3.1 Day-to-day care, security and management of the premises.
- 3.2 The LM should appoint a Property Correspondent, who should keep the Trustees' Property Committee fully informed of:
  - matters of major expenditure;
  - matters where legislation must be complied with; and
  - other matters that may affect the value of the property.

Small Meetings may deal with premises matters in their business meetings but normally a premises committee should be appointed. There are template Terms of Reference for LM / branch premises committees available, any variations to these should be agreed by the LM in consultation with the Principal Officer.

- 3.3 Keeping a close eye on the external and structural state of the buildings and grounds, alerting trustees or the clerk of the trustees' property committee when significant maintenance or remedial work is needed, preferably in time for inclusion in the next budget. Completing and returning the Annual Questionnaire.
- 3.4 Taking the initiative in suggesting improvements or alterations to Meeting Houses and other properties managed by the LM.
- 3.5 Arranging for, and meeting the cost of, redecoration and internal repairs in respect of the rooms used by the Meeting and its warden/resident Friend. Arranging for and meeting the cost of maintaining the grounds and any fencing/boundary walls etc.

Where the cost of a single item of work exceeds £4,000 [excluding VAT] this should be shared with the Trustees' Property Committee and the price should normally be market tested, if possible by competitive tender. If the LM wishes to use a contractor without market testing the reasons for doing so must be discussed with the Principal Officer.

The Trustees' Property Committee will advise on the availability of grants and loans from the CEQ Building Fund where the cost of the works is beyond reasonable scope of the LM to fund. Before requesting financial assistance from the Building Fund, reasonable efforts must be made by the LM to secure funding from other sources, such as (prudent) use of their own reserve funds, Trusts, grant-making bodies, or local/external fundraising. Requests for funding from the Building Fund should clearly show the estimated total cost of the work, the LM's expected contribution from available resources and the LM's aspirations in fund raising for the work. Loan repayments to the Building Fund should be made according to the agreed schedule.

- 3.6 Seeking approval from the Link Trustee before entering into any agreements (except for room hire, see §3.8) which require signature and which commit the charity to expenditure or legal obligations (eg. building contracts, licences, telephone or utility supplies, external grant applications or loans) on behalf of CEQ and arranging for the contract or agreement to be signed by the Link Trustee or Principal Officer on their behalf.
- 3.7 Inform the insurance broker of any significant work undertaken to the property (see definition of "Material Facts" provided by the insurance broker).
- 3.8 Arranging lettings or hirings using a form of agreement based on those that have been agreed with trustees. The LM Link Trustee should be given a copy of the form to be used.
- 3.9 Where parts of the Meeting House, or adjacent buildings, are let for residential or business use, choosing residents and tenants for leases, deciding the terms on which they should occupy rooms or accommodation and entering into such agreements, subject to prior approval of the Link Trustee. Arranging for the contract, lease or agreement to be signed by the Link Trustee or Principal Officer on their behalf. Receiving the income from the tenants and paying for the cost of all operations, maintenance and repairs together with the appropriate proportion of the cost of insurance.
- 3.10 Adopting, implementing and annually reviewing the CEQ Health and Safety Policy.
- 3.11 Sending copies of all minutes relating to property matters to the Link Trustee.

## Appendix 2

TEMPLATE: ROUTINE MAINTENANCE AND PERIODIC INSPECTION  
For guidance on frequency please refer to the Annual Property Questionnaire

TASK (examples)	FREQUENCY	RESPONSIBLE *	LAST DONE	NEXT DUE
Risk Assessment Fire R/A Legionella R/A				
First aid kit				
PAT testing				
Fire Extinguishers, Fire blanket				
Boiler maintenance				
Gas appliance safety checks				
Hearing Loop				
Alarm system				
Tree survey				
Electrical systems				
Emergency lighting, smoke alarm, Carbon Monoxide Alarm				
Fire drill				

\* If the tasks are shared between Premises Committee members, the names of the Friends responsible can be recorded in this column.