

Minutes of Manchester & Warrington Area Meeting Trustees
24th September 2026 at 7.00pm at Central Manchester and online with Zoom

Trustees Present: John Booth (Clerk), Ruth Turnock, Richard Taylor (Treasurer), Valerie Clark, Sharon Powell, Polly Thorpe (online).

Prevented: Jeffrey Dean, Andrew Wood, Siobhan Harpur, Robert Card

Others Present: Liz O'Neill (Executive Officer), Eric Silk (Observer)(online)

Number	Topic	Minute
2026/38	Opening Worship	Quaker Faith & Practice 2.11 was read during opening worship.
2026/39	Welcome and Declarations of Interests	The Clerk welcomed Trustees to the meeting. There were no declarations of interest relevant to any item on the agenda.
2026/40	Minutes and Matters Arising	The minutes of the meeting of 16th July 2026 were distributed to trustees prior to this meeting. With reference to minute 2026/35, the issue of recruitment of Trustees is now being dealt with by the joint Nominations Committee/Trustees nominations group. The issue of dates and number of trustee meetings for next year will be raised at our next meeting in November. All other matters arising are included on this agenda.
2026/41	Safeguarding Policy review	Our Area Meeting Administrator has updated our Safeguarding documentation, including notices at Local Meeting Houses with up-to-date names and other minor changes on our website. We thank her for this. A Safeguarding review will take place at our next meeting, when Siobhan Harpur, our Lead Trustee for Safeguarding, is present.
2026/42	Executive Officer's report	Alice Ng left the staff team at the end of August and has been offered the opportunity to arrange an exit interview with Ruth Turnock. Charlotte Floyd has been recruited to replace Alice. A two-week handover took place. Charlotte is settling in well. Rosa Stone has resigned her post and will leave the team at the end of December.

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		We often struggle to cover hospitality staff absences. As a result, we are making increased use of agency staff. Trustees support the Quaker Trading Directors' wish to explore the cost of expanding the contracted team, potentially with a term-time only post that would reflect the general pattern whereby bookings tend to be much lighter during school holiday times. Trustees ask our Executive Officer to move this forward with the Staffing Subgroup. Listed Building Consent has been granted for the planned remedial work on the Bootle Street boundary wall at Central Manchester Meeting House. Our Facilities and Operations Manager has informed Manchester City Council that the wall has moved outwards by more than the 10mm advised amount. The Council have said that they will come to inspect it. Our Facilities and Operations Manager will be taking over from Donald Insall Associates as the Principal Designer for the delivery of the work as he has significant experience in this field. The best current cost estimate for the repair work is £150,000 based on the investigative work done to enable the Listed Building Consent application. It is impossible to give a more accurate figure before receiving detailed tenders. Trustees approve the expenditure of up to £150,000 on this project, while acknowledging that this may need to rise, once more detailed investigations have been carried out. Trustees delegate responsibility for approval of specific works and expenditure within the above limit to the Clerk to Trustees and the Treasurer. An enquiry has been received from the Seventh Day Adventists for a potential booking of the whole of South Manchester Meeting House every Saturday from November for two years. Quaker Trading directors have requested that our Executive Officer liaise with the Premises Committees of Warrington and South Manchester about this issue. We ask our Executive Officer to do this and to report back to Trustees as soon as possible.

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		Trustees thanked our EO for her report. A redacted copy of the report is appended to these minutes.
2026/43	Treasurer's report	In the first quarter of the present financial year, the CIO's income was £68,361 and our expenditure was £68,990, giving a negative operating income of £629. Compared with budget, income was higher by £12,935 due mostly to timing differences in donations and tenancy income. Expenditure was lower than budgeted, as property maintenance takes time to get started and to complete. Quaker Trading reported a net profit of £12,962 in Q1. The Q1 budget expected a £44,306 loss. The difference was due to higher room income than expected, and lower business and admin costs, which are partly a timing issue. Our investments with Rathbones stood at £704,273 at the end of Q1 – a rise of £135,890. They have since peaked at £719,555 in mid-August before falling back to £700,858 last week. The 2025/26 Quaker Trading accounts show a profit of £93,125, which will be donated to the CIO before the end of December. The budgeted profit was only £5,660, so this is a welcome and impressive result. Trustees wish to pass on congratulations and thanks to all staff who made this possible. Changes are being made to our bank signatories. Signatories for Cooperative Bank, Triodos Bank and Ecology Bank will now be Liz O'Neill, Charlotte Floyd, James Cragg and Richard Taylor. For our investments with Rathbones, signatories will be Liz O'Neill, Charlotte Floyd and Richard Taylor. The names of Alice Ng and Clare McCann will be removed from all the accounts. Trustees welcome the planned introduction of a new cash handling policy for Local Meetings. The new policy will require cash to be counted by two Friends, one of whom should be the Treasurer. Both will then be required to record and sign against the amounts held.

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		Cash should be banked once per month, or when the amount collected reaches £250. Trustees will deal with the review of our current investment policy with Rathbones at our November meeting.
2026/44	Trustees Annual Report and Accounts – review and sign off	The Trustees Annual Report and Accounts have been reviewed. Trustees authorise the Clerk to Trustees to sign the document off on their behalf.
2026/45	Letter of Representation	The Letter of Representation on the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2026 has been reviewed by Trustees and accepted. Trustees authorise the Treasurer to sign the letter on their behalf.
2026/46	Management Letter and other audit issues	Trustees have considered the Management Letter and now request our Executive Officer to bring a staff response to the Letter to our next meeting in November.
2026/47	Intercompany payments	Trustees welcome the suggestion by Quaker Trading directors to establish a task-and-finish joint subgroup to support the staff team in developing the brief, reviewing tenders and appointing a firm to undertake this work. The Treasurer is already part of the group. The Clerk to Trustees will also join the group.
2026/48	Summer School Financial Review	Richard Taylor reported on the financial situation of the Summer School. This year the event ran up a loss of between £2-3000. Richard gave full reasons for that, which are given in his report which is appended to these minutes. Given the need to identify a venue for the 2027 Summer School as a matter of urgency, Trustees agreed to fund any reasonable shortfall in funding in 2027, should the need arise.
2026/49	North West Quakers Working Together/Regional Gathering	The Regional Gathering was held in Liverpool Meeting House on Saturday 19 th September. The event allowed Friends across the region to get to know each other better through workshops. The Working Together initiative was discussed in the afternoon, with a view to planning how to move forward. There was a lack of consensus, as Friends felt that they needed more time

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		to discuss the matter. A further Regional Gathering may take place in the Spring.
2026/50	AGM planning	Trustees agreed that the AGM could go ahead before the next Trustees meeting in November.
2026/51	Time without staff	Trustees spent time without staff being present.
2026/52	Reporting back to local meetings	The following trustees will report back on this meeting to their local meetings: Central Manchester: Richard Taylor Eccles: Ruth Turnock Sale: John Booth South Manchester: - Warrington: Polly Thorpe

Final Trustees meeting of 2026

Agenda Meeting 7pm	Trustee Meeting 7pm
9 November 2026	19 November 2026

John Booth
Clerk to Trustees
24 September 2026

Area Meeting Trustees, 24 September 2026
Agenda Item 4: Executive Officer's Report – REDACTED

1 STAFFING UPDATE - Redacted

2 PREMISES UPDATE

2.1 Bootle Street Boundary Wall (Central Manchester)

Listed Building Consent has been granted for the planned remedial work, using ground anchors to shore up the wall while minimising (as far as possible) the risk of damaging the protected London Plane Tree. In the end, the suggested ground-penetrating radar survey was not required, but a topographical survey has been completed, at a much lower cost of £960.

James Cragg (Facilities and Operations Manager) has experience of managing complex project design and delivery so will be taking over from Donald Insall Associates as the Principal Designer for the delivery of the work. This is a regulated role that he has carried out before and bringing it in house will reduce expenditure on professional fees. Once this handover is complete, James will go out to tender for a principal contractor who might deliver all aspects of the job, or subcontract different elements.

The urgency of this project is increasing, as monthly monitoring continues to show incremental movement in parts of the wall. In two places this has now crossed the 1cm threshold that the structural engineer first set as the point at which emergency propping (and the potential closure of Bootle Street) might be required. As this level of movement is isolated to one area of the wall, we still hope to avoid costly temporary works, but continued monitoring is expensive (£690 a month) and delay only increases the potential for further complications. The staff team, is therefore, keen to move forward with the work.

Current cost estimates are based on the investigative work done to enable the Listed Building Consent application. It is impossible to give a more accurate figure before receiving detailed tenders, partly because each anchor comes with a significant materials/production cost and tender details will include an assessment of how many anchors will be needed. **Our working estimate therefore remains at £150,000. Expenditure at this scale requires explicit consent from Trustee consent before any project delivery contract can be signed. Trustees may wish to consider delegating authority to the Property Subgroup (or another Friend in role) to allow decisions to be taken between meetings.**

2.2 Painting and boundary wall repairs at Warrington

Interior painting of the Meeting House (except the main Meeting Room) is underway and should be complete by the time of the Trustees meeting. The wall connecting the Meeting House garden with the yard at 1B Academy Place (also known as The Cottage) was rebuilt in July. We have requested action from Warrington Borough Council to address excessive ivy growth affecting some of the other boundary walls as this is rooted on land owned by the council.

2.3 Eccles kitchen and toilets

The new kitchen has been fully installed, with some painting to do once the plaster has completely dried. The work was done on a tight budget, with the staff team carrying out some installation themselves and small independent traders fitting units purchased from Ikea. New water heaters were installed in the toilets earlier this month.

2.4 Redecoration at Sale

Minor works have been undertaken, including painting of the ground floor (and some cottage) windows and patch plastering of the ceiling in the entrance hallway.

2.5 Temporary repair to secondary glazing at Central Manchester

Work is underway to install an acrylic sheet to cover the space left by the secondary glazing panel in G4, that was removed in May for health and safety reasons. As reported to the June meeting, the panel was found to be loose and removal confirmed the presence of rot in the wood between the inner and outer frames. This is very much a temporary solution, providing a visually acceptable way to reduce heat loss as we enter the colder months of the year.

2.6 Planning for significant capital works

The 2023 Condition Survey of all five Meeting House identified an almost overwhelming number of issues to address and/or investigate. Many smaller items have been addressed and significant works have been completed at Warrington (replacement windows) and Central Manchester (medium term repairs to the roof), but all of our Meeting Houses still require significant care and attention.

The staff team is currently working to explore funding sources for potential capital works. That process begins with identifying potentially fundable projects, which might include the following list:

- **Window replacement at Central Manchester.** Information recently unearthed by the Operations team suggests that the metal framed windows were installed in the 1920s so it seems reasonable to begin planning for replacement, with a focus on environmental improvements through double glazing and, potentially, the addition of wooden shutters to improve heat resilience.
- **Roof replacement at Central Manchester.** As previously discussed in depth by Trustees, this project is likely to cost at least £1million. The next step is to commission a feasibility study that will inform project planning and fundraising. This work has been paused due to the urgency of addressing the stability of the Bootle Street boundary wall.

- **Roof replacement at Sale.** Repairs could be carried out to deal with the most worrying areas, but re-roofing would allow for a significant upgrade in insulation. We are also keen to explore the potential for solar installation.
- **Window replacement at Sale.** To improve environmental efficiency with double-glazed units on the first floor. This could be combined with roof works to minimise impact on Friends and bookings.
- **LED lighting, solar installation and improved insulation to all sites.**
- **Development of unused and under-utilised spaces** particularly part of the basement at Central Manchester and the kitchen at South Manchester.

No decisions need to be made at this time, but Trustees may want to begin considering how we can incorporate strategic planning for our buildings, alongside wider considerations and the annual budget cycle.

3 BOOKINGS UPDATE

3.1 Bookings at Sale

A new customer, Insight Counsellor Training, recently cancelled a number of confirmed and provisional bookings at Sale Meeting House, citing a cheaper booking in another venue. This is disappointing in itself but even more so as Insight's bookings had prevented a long-standing customer (Motor Medicals) from making a number of rather short-notice bookings and they too have now gone elsewhere. We will make some cancellation charges to Insight, and the Events team are encouraging Motor Medicals to return but Quaker Trading is likely to see a drop in income from bookings at Sale, in Quarters two and three of this year.

3.2 Identity School of Acting

IDSA have now increased their multi-room booking to four evenings a week, at Central Manchester, during term time. This brings very welcome additional income but also puts additional pressure on evening staffing levels, as the group's needs are quite complex with bespoke layouts and equipment, plus early access which limits time for changeover from daytime bookings.

3.3 Enquiry from Seventh Day Adventists Church

We have received an enquiry from Seventh Day Adventists Swinton, for a potential booking of the whole of South Manchester Meeting House, every Saturday from November, for two years. This was discussed by Quaker Trading Directors on 17 September and has also been shared with the Clerks of Sale Local Meeting and Sale Premises Committee. **I hope to be able to share a minute from QT Directors at or before the Trustees meeting.**

Liz O'Neill, 18 September 2026

Summer School Finance Review

Summer School this year was held at Preston Montford Field Study Centre, near Shrewsbury, from Sunday 2nd to Saturday 8th August and was attended by 35 young people from across the Northwest. The full report of the week will be presented at Area Meeting on 1st October.

Summer School raises income from the fees charged to participants and from grants made from the 7 Area Meetings in the Lancashire and Cheshire catchment area. Summer School also received the balance of the Teenage General Meeting (TGM) account (~ £9,000) when Manchester & Warrington AM took responsibility for TGM at the start of 2025.

Summer School currently uses Field Study Centre (FSC) venues as they can provide sufficient rooms and access for the electric wheelchair used by one of the volunteer helpers. The fees charged by FSC in 2026 were £15,443. This is a flat fee for the exclusive use of the entire site, including all 125 beds.

The Summer School treasurer calculates the fees based on a minimum number of participants. For 2026, the fees were £370 based on 45 young people all paying the full fee. Bursaries are provided by local and area meetings and where necessary by reducing fees. The additional money raised by the fees goes towards other expenses such as catering, resources and coach hire.

After bursaries, the money raised from the 35 young people attending came to £12,210. This is a shortfall of £3,233 just to cover the cost of hiring the venue and before any of the additional expenses. The catering team were given a budget of £3,500 for the week and managed to feed everyone for £2,635, while maintaining the same quality and positive feedback.

The seven Area Meetings contribute £5,700 per year between them and Manchester & Warrington cover this up front and then claim it back from each of the other Area Meetings. In addition, as a one off, the treasurer applied for a grant from Hardshaw Estates, George Shaw's Usages and received an extra £800.

After all costs, donations and fees are considered, the bank account will end the year with a loss of £2,000 - £3,000. Due to the money from TGM, the balance carried into 2027 will still be over £5,000 so the loss can be covered for this year. However, similar losses going forward are not sustainable.

The financial loss was caused by a combination of the FSC cost model and lower numbers than expected. Just 2 years ago in 2024, there were 54 young people attending Summer School. If there had been similar numbers this year, we would have seen a surplus of over £3,000.

Summer School is looking at 2 ways to avoid a repeat of this year's loss. First is to try and find an alternative accessible venue that uses a per person cost model rather than a flat fee for the entire site. The second approach is to build up the number of participants back to the mid-50s. This is more in our control but not necessarily any easier. There are some suggestions to build up numbers –

- AM Contacts. A network of Friends in each AM that distributes information.
- Website and social media. In 2026, Summer School and TGM developed a new website at <https://fsstgm.org>
- Family holidays. We know of several families who had already book holidays that clashed with the Summer School dates this year. Summer School will try to get 2027 dates out as early as possible, but this depends on confirming a venue.
- Expand the catchment area. Contact Local Meetings near where the venue is located and neighbouring Area Meetings that do not have an equivalent event.

The best scenario for 2027 – and beyond – is that the numbers of young people do increase and we can continue using FSC and their accessible venues or find an alternative cheaper venue. The worst scenario is that we have to use FSC again and numbers stay low.

Summer School continues to be a hugely important event for the regular participants. It performs valuable outreach to non-Quaker friends and keeps many young people involved with Quakers into their 20s and beyond.

Summer School will try everything it can to find more young people, but this may not happen immediately. Are trustees and Area Meeting willing to cover future losses if necessary?