

Report on a meeting of the Grand Union Quaker Camps held at Milton Keynes FMH 5th February 2017.

There were 5 trustees present.

This meeting incorporated the AGM, which in fact only consisted of being presented with the financial year accounts for 2016 which had been circulated in advance, for acceptance by the trustees as a true representation of the financial situation, which we did. GUCQ's income being under £10,000 we are only required to submit summary accounts to the Charity Commission. The main highlight of this was a discussion on whether to raise the camper night levy next year. I put my foot down with a heavy hand at this point, and said I thought incremental year on year increases were preferable to several years of non-increases and then facing a hefty increase due to unforeseen circumstances. The committee accepted this viewpoint, subject to review. Other topics discussed were the size of our operating surplus, £4,213.37 which we felt we would not want to become any higher, and also that we felt we should do some forward planning for equipment replacement, so that we know what we may have to budget for in future years. It was also felt useful to have a little flexibility to meet unanticipated contingencies.

Moving on from the AGM, we had a site report for this year's camp, and also consideration of future sites. This was one of those almost surreal moments where you can actually view the site layout from the comfort of a committee room, thanks to googleearth. The field we will be camping in this year near Malvern is bounded by the mighty river Severn; this field is also accessible to anglers, which presents a new sort of challenge to Quaker Camp! Another satisfying aspect of this year's camp is that the site payment is donated to FOAG, a charity supporting African farmers.

There is a strong possibility the first camp (our's) will receive a visit from Paul Parker leading a delegation from BYM.

GUCQ also encouraged the three camps to circulate their safeguarding policies, in order to exchange ideas and hold in mind in accordance with Charity Commission guidelines. Because our camps exceed 30 days, we need to apply for a camping certificate. As well as a constitution, we need a code of conduct to apply for this. A list of necessary compliances and a draft code of conduct will be circulated to camp committees for consideration at their next meetings.

Historically, the new arrangements are working well. The Joint Camps Committee (forerunner of GUCQ) was run through the Luton & Leighton bank account, and because originally the equipment had belonged to them, they always assumed responsibility for setting up the camp. However, since the setting up of the new charity arrangements all the monies go through the GUCQ bank account, and it has been demonstrated to L & L's satisfaction that as the equipment has been renewed over the years with subscriptions from the other camps as well, this is now no longer the case of their outright equipment ownership.. All camps now share responsibility for setting up camp on a rotational basis, and because the payments all get processed now through the GUCQ bank account, this has brought a greater sense of ownership and accountability from all three camps(well the trustees at least).

Roger T. Jarvis