**Trustees’ Report to**

 **Hertford and Hitchin Area Meeting for**

 **the period November 2015 – August 2016**

**1 – Introduction: The Trustees’ Report**

This Trustees’ report to Area Meeting follows the format and approximate timing of reports made to Area Meeting in previous years. It covers the period from November 2015 to August 2016 and charts the Trustees work and activities in that 10 month period during which Trustees met on 5 occasions.

Trustees information (passworded) is available on the Area Meeting website at [www.HertfordAndHitchinQuakers.org.uk/trustees](http://www.HertfordAndHitchinQuakers.org.uk/trustees) or [www.hhq.org.uk/trustees](http://www.hhq.org.uk/trustees) (contact your meeting’s Clerk or a Trustee for access information).

**2- The Trustees’ Activities**

**2.1 Reviewing the Area Meeting**

2.1.1 Role and responsibilities

Trustees are well on the way to finalising a memorandum of understanding with each Local Meeting. This document is recommended as best practice by Friends House and has been adopted by most Area Meetings in Britain Yearly Meeting. We plan to complete this exercise next year, and also to include Area Meeting Committees.

We have discussed in depth our responsibilities as Trustees which has been especially helpful as we have bonded and developed together from a group of inexperienced Trustees into a more competent body. We refer on a regular basis to the Trustees’ Handbook for support. We occasionally get updates from Quaker Stewardship Committee and are aware we can contact our link Friend for support.

2.1.2 Employment

The Trustees have been continuing the work of looking at employment across the Area Meeting, particularly of Wardens. We continue to clarify present contractual agreements with Area Meeting, Local Meetings and Wardens regarding employment contracts, pay and conditions. We have looked to understand more about the work of Wardens in our Local Meetings, and are entirely supportive of them and the excellent work they do .However, Trustees continue to be exercised with balancing a desire to support Wardens and Local Meetings with our legal obligations to Wardens legal position.

2.1.3 Properties and Trusts

Trustees are reviewing the lease and licence for part of Stevenage Meeting House and are in consultation with local solicitors on this matter. Trustees have continued to receive reports on the progress of the Hoddesdon Action Group and have this as an ongoing agenda item.

Trustees are currently involved in progressing an Area Meeting Property Scheme; assessing the status of properties held by Area Quaker Meetings for charitable purpose.

2.1.4 Area Meeting

Trustees have looked to ensure that at least one Trustee is present at every Area Meeting, and asked that this be minuted in the same way as Local Meeting representatives.

2.1.5 Finance

We received the examined Area Meeting accepted financial accounts for 2015, and submitted the relevant information in our annual report to the Charity Commission for 2015. Trustees remain aware of the possible implications of Area Meeting decisions, and ensure that consideration is given at Trustee Meetings to minutes relevant to Trustees including financial items. Trustees have considered the matter of how quotas from 2017 should be calculated at a meeting attended by the Area Meeting Treasurer and the Clerk of Area Meeting Finance Committee.

**2.2 How the Trustees work**

2.2.1 Trustees’ Meetings

Trustees have been meeting regularly, and have met 5 times during the last period. Trustees attempt to draw up a calendar of meetings annually.

We also refer to the Advices and Queries on Quaker Stewardship from time to time.

2.2.2 Trustees’ Minutes

We continue to minute the decisions we have taken. These minutes are circulated to “contact” Clerks in the Local Meetings, and to the Area Meeting Clerk, and are available on the Area Meeting website via. [www.hhq.org.uk/trustees](http://www.hhq.org.uk/trustees). This section of the website also contains where possible, the working papers of the Trustees meetings ,as well as some other documents such as the Governing Document and the Trustees Terms of Reference.

2.2.3 Trustees’ links

Trustees continue to consider more closely how to build trust and relationships within our Area Meeting. We continue to seek to be more visible and to understand more closely the needs of Local Meetings, Area Meetings and Friends. We are taking the greatest care to produce meaningful reports to Area Meeting and to the Charity Commission to ensure all Friends are appraised of our work done on their behalf.

2.2.4 Trustees development

Trustees continue to take up opportunities for learning, including attending Woodbrooke courses specifically for Trustees. Learning is then shared with other Trustees.