**Hertford and Hitchin Area Meeting**

**10:30am on Saturday 23 Sep 2017 at Welwyn Garden City MH**

*The Meeting for Worship for Business will start at 10:30am, we hope to finish business at around 12:30.*

*After a bring-and-share lunch, social activities will begin at about 1:30, with a tea at about 3:30 or 4pm.*

**Agenda**

* **Membership**
* **Finance** *see page 2*
* **Area Meetings in 2018** *see page 3*
* **Future Clerking of Area Meetings** *see page 4*
* **Nominations Committee Report** *see page 4*
* **Hoddesdon** *see page 5 and separate document*
 Friends may wish to consider laying down the Hoddesdon Development Group
 and setting up a new group to consider options for Hoddesdon
* **Trustees Matters** Minutes of 13 Aug 2017 *see page 6*
 Annual Report *see separate document*
* **Impressions of Yearly Meeting Gathering 2017***Friends who were at YMG are invited to share their impressions of the event
(it might be helpful to make some written notes, as this item might have to be postponed, depending on the progress of earlier business)*
* **Hertford Meeting Report**  *see separate document*

**Finance**:

1 - CCPAS (Churches Child Protection Advisory Service) are asking for an increase in their subscription from next year, to £120. CCPAS provide documentation and courses which we have used, and are recommended by Friends House as the source of outside guidance in the event of a "safeguarding" occurrence.

2 – The website and email hosting provider increased their annual charges last year, and that together with the biannual charge for domain registration means that this year the cost of the website and email is £143.99.

3 – In the course of collecting information for her report on Hoddesdon, KF became aware that the site, now in parts derelict, was open to trespass, having low walls and an unlocked gate. Following consultation with the Clerk of Finance Committee, the Area Meeting Treasurer, and others, ST is arranging for an estimate for fencing and a gate lock. If this work is not done the Area Meeting could be liable under the Occupiers Liability Act 1984 for compensation if any injury occurs to a trespasser.

**Area Meetings in 2018**

DH has prepared a list of possible dates and locations of Area Meetings next year based on the pattern of meetings for the current year. The list suggests continuing to meet on the 3rd Saturday or Sunday of the "odd" months (January, March, May, July, September, November), with the following exceptions:
 - a midweek meeting in July at Letchworth (as in the last few years)

 - the 4th Saturday in September to allow Friends time to recover from any summer break

The list also suggests that the September meeting will be co-clerked by Guilden Morden but held elsewhere (as in 2017) given the transport and other difficulties in meeting at Guilden Morden.

(Note also the early start of the January meeting, and a choice of dates for the July meeting)

If Local Meetings can agree with this list and find a host for the September meeting then we can publish the list, otherwise we may need to hold an arrangements meeting before the November Area Meeting to resolve dates and places.

|  |
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| **Area Meetings in 2018 PROVISIONAL DATES and PLACES**  |
|  | Sat | 20 Jan | Stevenage | Stevenage is the easiest place for us all to get to if weather is bad, slightly early start so we might get an early winter evening finish |
|  | pm | 2 pm |  |
|  | Sun | 18 Mar | Hitchin |  |
|  | pm | 2:30pm |  |  |
|  | Sun | 20 May | Welwyn GC |  |
|  | pm | 2:30pm |  |  |
|  | Wed | 11 or 18 Jul | Letchworth | midweek eveningpreceded by tea in the garden?bring your children to share the tea? |
|  | eve | 6:30pm for 7:15 |  |
|  | Sat | 22 Sep | Guilden Morden | Sat Morning? All day? |
|  | all day | 10:30am | at ?????? | NB 4th Sat, venue TBC |
|  | Sat | 17 Nov | Hertford | Saturday morning meeting, |
|  | am | 10:30am |  | Saturday afternoon exploring Hertford? |

**Future Clerking of Area Meetings**

Recent meeting of the Area Meeting Clerking Group have discussed the future clerking of Area Meeting, and suggest that Area Meeting now appoints a Clerk. This will improve continuity and visibility between Area Meetings; the Clerk would also feel empowered to take initiatives such as coordinating with Local Meetings and groups such as Elders and Overseers.

However, the Clerking Group feels that the past opportunities to take part in the Clerking of Area Meeting has been of benefit in spreading the experience across a wider group of Friends than would otherwise have occurred, and the Group thought it important not to lose the opportunity for a good number of Friends to have the experience of sitting at the Clerk’s table. The Group suggests that the appointed AM Clerk should be assisted in Area Meetings by an Assistant Clerk or Co-Clerk from the hosting Local Meeting, appointed for that specific Meeting. The hosting Meeting could also appoint a Friend to sit in the role of an Elder with the Clerks to support them and the Area Meeting; the Friend would not need to be an Area Meeting Elder. Local Meetings could make these appointments at the beginning of the year.

Area Meeting Nominations Committee has names to bring to Area Meeting as Clerks for 2017 and for 2018-2020.

**Area Meeting Nominations Committee Report
For September Area Meeting**

From the Clerking Group Meeting held on 27th July at Welwyn Garden City Meeting House:

Nominations Committee need to bring forward to September Area Meeting,
David Hindle’s name as Area Meeting Clerk in2018, and Katey Earle’s name as Area Meeting Clerk from Jan2019 to Dec 2021.

Therefore we bring the name of **David Hindle** of **Guilden** **Morden** LM to be **Area Meeting Clerk** from **Jan 2018 to Dec 2018**. **Katey Earle** of **Hertford** LM to be **Area Meeting Clerk** from **Jan 2019** to **Dec 2021.**

In accepting these arrangements the role of **Continuity Clerk** will cease from the end of this year.**Introduction to the Hoddesdon Report at September AM**

The extent to which I have been moved in researching and writing this report has surprised me. I have reflected on the efforts and commitment of early Hoddesdon Friends who were led to build and maintain a Meeting House in Hoddesdon. Many left monies in their wills to ensure the sustainability of this worshiping community. I have wondered, as I looked through the key hole of the Meeting House, of the ministry and life of Hoddesdon Friends over so many years. I have felt the ministry in the stone and wood and body of the building. Though tired and out of puff it has a presence that is hard to put into words.

I have reflected with great sadness on the conflicts that have simmered over its disposal. Many Friends associated directed or indirectly with the Hoddesdon Development Group have during the research for this report, expressed feelings of guilt over what they should, ought or could have done differently. And I feel the same. However, I am reminded that we all have responsibility for stewardship.

14.18 of Quaker Faith and Practice reminds us regarding stewardship of our funds:

*‘A fundamental principle of this part of our church government is corporate integrity. All Friends share responsibility for upholding this principle. This means that at every level of our church government Friends must be seen to be above reproach in our corporate, as well as our personal, conduct in respect of finance and property. We hold these assets in trust and the way we use and develop them is an important part of our witness. Whether we are formally appointed trustees for a period of service or not, each of us has responsibilities for the provision and stewardship of money, premises and other material resources belonging to the meetings of which we are members.’*

Now we are required to take our discernment forward on Hoddesdon together and to reflect on what love requires of us.

29.01 …..

’if we dwell in the presence of God, we shall be led by the spirit. We do well to remember that being led by the spirit depends not so much upon God, who is always there to lead us, as upon our willingness to be led. We need to be willing to be led into the dark as well as through green pastures and by still waters. We do not need to be afraid of the dark, because God is there’

[*KF September 2017*

 **HERTFORD AND HITCHIN AREA MEETING TRUSTEES MEETING**

 **Sunday 13th August 2017 at 7:00pm at Stevenage Meeting House.**

Present : Ian Chandler, Roger Jarvis, Kim Noy-Man Jackson

Prevented : Frances Prestidge

1. Worship

 We have begun our meeting with a period of quiet worship.

2. Welwyn Garden City Local Meeting Financial Fraud

 We have discussed further developments with regard to the Welwyn Garden City Local

 Meeting fraud case.

 We agree to advise Area Meeting of options available to follow this up.

 In the light of correspondence with Lloyds Bank, trustees are not happy writing to Lloyds

 Bank. Two other options are:

* To write to the Financial Ombudsman, as suggested by Lloyds Bank, asking them to

 investigate.

* To employ a lawyer to give us the best possible professional advice on our situation.

 We suggest to Area Meeting that they ask Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage Local

 Meetings to bring forward names for trustees as soon as possible to facilitate

 communication between Local Meetings and the trustees.

 We are uneasy that discernment may not be being exercised as well as it might be at Local

 Meeting level.

 The terms of office of two of the current trustees end this year, in which case, if no new

 trustees are appointed; the trustee body would be inquorate.

 Signed……………………………….Roger Jarvis, Clerk to Hertford and Hitchin Area

 Meeting trustees.