

## **LAQM Burial Grounds Committee**

### **Guidelines around the death of a Friend – who does what, and when, and even why**

Death is a stressful and difficult time, especially when unexpected. The members of the LAQM Burial Grounds Committee have prepared these guidelines to help Friends support each other at such times. There is also much helpful material available from Elders and the Pastoral Care Teams in LAQM and BYM.

The guidelines are also for the clarification of the role of the Burial Grounds Administrator so that this may be understood by all.

This document is a work in progress which will need to be updated and no doubt improved as time goes on – feedback and suggestions to the convener of the Burial Grounds Committee (convenerbgc@leedsquakers.org.uk)

### **Contents**

1. Roles and Abbreviations
2. Responsibilities and Duties at the time of a Quaker death or funeral.
  - 1, with external organizations such as funeral directors, other churches.
  - 2, within the Area Meeting
  - 3, for the individual Friend, their family and friends
  - 4, for the Local Meetings and its Elders and Pastoral Care Teams
  - 5, for anybody and everybody, practical matters

## **Roles, Abbreviations, and Contact details**

LAQM – Leeds Area Quaker Meeting.

LM – Six Local Meetings: Adel, Carlton Hill, Gildersome, Ilkley, Rawdon, Roundhay.

BGC – Burial Grounds Committee of LAQM

BGA- Burial Grounds Administrator: Peter Rice  
([administratorbgc@leedsquakers.org.uk](mailto:administratorbgc@leedsquakers.org.uk); 0789 686 7593)

Funeral Notifications Friend – appointed by LAQM to make sure news of a death and subsequent arrangements is circulated among Friends:  
([funeralnotifications@leedsquakers.org.uk](mailto:funeralnotifications@leedsquakers.org.uk))

First-Call Friend: the Friend in a Local Meeting publicly named to take news of a death.

Co-ordinating Friend: identified for each funeral to be alongside the family, preferably an Elder or member of the Pastoral Care Team.

Note:

Friends are reminded that burials of Members or Attenders of Leeds Area Quaker Meeting may take place at Adel; there is very limited space for burials at Gildersome and burials no longer take place at Rawdon. All three burial grounds are suitable for the interment or scattering of ashes by prior arrangement. All speculative enquiries about burial arrangements or the interment/scattering of ashes should be addressed to the BGA in the first instance.

## **Responsibilities and Duties at the time of a Quaker death and funeral**

### **Section 1: for external organizations, undertakers, legal bodies (coroner etc), local authorities, other churches**

- BGA may receive enquiries from funeral directors puzzled that there is no minister of religion officiating at the funeral
- BGA needs to be in a position to inform funeral directors and anyone else who enquires about Quaker procedure with regard to funerals, Meetings for Worship at funerals, burials or cremations, and be aware of the administrative processes involved in burials, cremations, and interment or scattering of ashes
- BGA should be knowledgeable about Quaker traditions with regard to headstones and should be in a position to refer any interested parties to the appropriate stone-mason
- BGA should have an awareness of the Fair Funerals commitment by some undertakers. See <https://fairfuneralscampaign.org.uk/map>

## **Section 2: for the Area Meeting, AM Elders, and Pastoral Care Teams, the Burial Grounds Committee, and the Burial Grounds Administrator**

- Together with the BGA, Elders and Pastoral Care Teams to encourage readiness for funerals.
- To make sure all Elders and Pastoral Care Teams have copies of Vol. 2 of the Elders and Pastoral Care Teams handbook 'Funerals and Memorial Meetings' available to them. (Obtainable from Quaker Book Centre.)
- To encourage individual Friends to prepare for their own death, using the form available in the booklet above.

When a death occurs (note: there are usually time constraints with fixed dates to be met)

- The AM Funeral Notifications Friend will receive details including date of death, age, and any plans for a funeral. They will circulate these to each Local Meeting so that Friends may plan to support the event and inform the BGA.
- The Assistant Clerk Membership will make sure that the news is recorded in the AM Minutes.
- At the end of the process this information will be recorded in the AM deaths record book kept by the BGA.

If a Quaker Meeting House or Burial Ground is in the plans

- If there are questions about eligibility, the BGA can advise whether someone can be buried in the Leeds Quaker Burial Grounds.
- Relatives of the deceased need to be told that while there is no charge for Members or Attenders of LAQM for the burial/funeral or use of the Meeting House, all other charges apply (for instance, to the funeral director, grave diggers, and so forth). If wished, a donation may be given to Quaker funds.
- The BGA should expect to be involved in communications about availability of premises, and will have established good contact with room bookers. The BGA may be contacted by the undertaker to discuss details of timing and placement and practical arrangements.
- The BGA will need to know the plans for the Meeting for Worship from the Co-ordinating Friend to have the conversations above. (Is a burial to take place before or after the Meeting, is a coffin to be inside or not, who wishes to carry the coffin? etc)
- The BGA can offer practical advice to the Co-ordinating Friend about things such as catering, parking, headstones, etc

- If there is a shortage of Friends to support a particular Meeting, the BGA may make suggestions of who might help from their knowledge across LAQM.
- If asking for help, be specific and personal, not 'can anybody?' but 'can you?'
- The BGA will issue the white Burial Order to the Elder present at the graveside (or interment/scattering of ashes)
- The BGA will receive the completed Burial Order and file it, together with any other paperwork (green, yellow, other) from the undertaker or coroner's office.
- If Adel Burial Ground is used, the BGA will record this on the Genuki online record. They will also check that other Adel Burial Ground records are being maintained safely.

### **Section 3: for the individual Friend, their family and friends**

- Consider your end of life choices. Consider using the form from the Handbook on Quaker Funerals and Memorial Meetings to record these. Make that record available to family and Friends (if you wish for Quaker involvement in your funeral).

After death has occurred

- Relative or Friend should inform the named First-Call Friend in the Local Meeting of the death and whether it is wished that Quakers be involved in the funeral.
- If so, the First-Call Friend will then identify a person in the Local Meeting (or wider) who will help the family plan the event. The relative will share that name (of Co-ordinating Friend) with the undertaker. It is important that the Co-ordinating Friend acts as the sole conduit of information between the BGA, the family, and the undertaker, rather than other Friends trying to be helpful and muddling the arrangements.
- If a crematorium event is to be booked, a double time slot is advised to allow for unprogrammed Quaker Worship.
- The family will be able to discuss the details of the Meeting and practical arrangements like flowers, catering, etc, with the Co-ordinating Friend; their wishes should be seen as paramount.

## **Section 4: for the Local Meeting and its Elders and Pastoral Care Teams**

Friends in the Local Meeting should

- Encourage Friends to make their wishes around the time of death known
- Make clear which Friend is the first point of call when a death occurs, could be Clerk, Elder or Pastoral Care Team, or other seasoned Friend, also other relevant people in the Meeting. (BGA to hold this info too.)
- If wished or suitable, copies of forms completed in the first section could be entrusted to the First-Call Friend named in the second section.

Well before your Meeting House hosts a funeral Meeting and /or burial consider the following

- What are your rules/guidelines about the availability of the Meeting House? Who knows about these and implements them?
- Who arranges the cancellation of hirers?
- Are you prepared for large groups? What options are there?
- Does it make a difference if the deceased is a Member of your Meeting or not? How?
- What catering facilities are available? What options are there?

After a death has occurred, Local Meeting Friends should

- Identify one of their number (preferably an Elder or a member of the Pastoral Care Team) as Co-ordinating Friend who is willing and able to help support the family through the funeral planning process. This information to be passed to the BGA.
- The Co-ordinating Friend should contact the family as soon as possible to offer their services and arrange to meet.
- The Funerals Notification Friend should be informed so they can circulate the information through the Area Meeting. The BGA will be alerted.
- The Co-ordinating Friend discusses with the family their wishes and the wishes of the deceased. (No funeral, cremation, burial or Memorial Meeting are all possibilities.) Helps the family plan the Meeting that they feel is suitable for the deceased. See the Handbook for much useful advice
- The booking of a Meeting House can be discussed with the relevant Friend (BGA will advise).
- The booking of a burial plot and process also to be arranged through BGA.
- If there are not enough Friends available on the day, BGA can advise where supporting Friends in other Meetings might be approached.
- Plan helpers on the day, with identified Elders, doorkeepers/welcomers, catering (see below).
- Co-ordinating Friend may be asked for details of service by undertaker in order to facilitate collaboration. If another Friend is Elder for the actual Meeting, they may be involved in this as well.

## **Section 5: for anybody or everybody: practical matters**

- Clarity about access to the Meeting House
- Considering other users and their timing
- Keys to open and close
- Heating
- Parking, and liaison about parking.

### Inside the Meeting House

- Arrangement of chairs in advance, sometimes may be done by funeral director's staff
- Provision of flowers (if wished)
- Collection plate/s for donations (if required)
- Displays of photographs (if needed)
- Contact/co-ordinator for catering, however it is to be done.

## **Funeral Catering with particular reference to Adel Meeting**

This section has been approved by Adel Local Business Meeting.

It is important to do all that we can to honour the memory of the deceased and uphold the family. Yet Friends should remember that they should not promise more than they can realistically deliver. In the event of a funeral or burial taking place at Adel, Friends are urged to remember that Adel is a small Meeting and Adel Friends cannot be expected to shoulder the whole burden of setting up or catering as has often happened in the past. Friends are reminded that, although there is no financial cost for a Quaker burial or interment/scattering of ashes, this does not apply to the catering. The cost of this must be borne by the family of the deceased or the Local Meeting.

In the past too great a burden has been placed on Adel Friends with regard to time and energy. From henceforth in the event of a funeral or burial taking place at Adel, Adel Friends will make their Meeting House available and allow their facilities to be used but cannot themselves assist. The BGA and Friends from other Meetings should check the arrangements they are planning with Adel before making any assumptions.

All arrangements from setting out the chairs, provision of music, photographs and flowers (if required), providing refreshments, and washing up must be undertaken by the Local Meeting or family of the deceased. Funeral directors can often find people to arrange furniture.

Adel's kitchen is small and equipment limited. For this reason it is recommended that outside caterers are used as they can provide a waiter/waitress service and clearing up facilities. Advice about reputable catering companies may be obtained from the BGA. When ordering or supplying any catering, Friends are reminded to be mindful of the laws of health and safety, and food hygiene regulations.

### **Funeral Catering at other Local Meetings**

In the event of a funeral, interment of ashes or Memorial Meeting taking place at any of the other Local Meetings, the family of the deceased and/or the Local Meeting must make arrangements in good time about any provision of refreshments. Issues to be considered include the following: whether the Meeting is able and willing to provide refreshments ranging from simple tea/coffee and biscuits to more large-scale catering or whether the family is required to engage and pay an outside catering firm who will provide all the essentials and clear up afterwards.