

## Area Meeting Trustees Report 2017

Trustees have met 5 times so far during 2017, with a further meeting planned for December. We also had a useful training event facilitated for us by Linda Batten, and our Clerk attended the trustee's conference 'Spinning the Plates' at Woodbrooke.

Although we identified early in the year a list of AM policies we wanted to review, our 2017 activity has mainly focussed on the core responsibilities we have concerning the management of finances and buildings.

This included:

- Receiving regular financial updates from local meetings. Mainly at a high level rather than on the detail that is considered and monitored by Local Meetings
- Preparing and approving the annual accounts and Trustees report that is lodged with the Charity Commission. This year following the discussion at Area Meeting we included the full text of the 'Duties and Responsibilities' reports that Local Meeting's prepared.
- Reviewing and approving annual budgets sent to us by local meetings, particularly where there is a need for any large building expenses, or where there is a risk of large differences between income and expenditure.
- Considering how to set bursary amounts for Yearly Meeting Gathering following a decision in principle by Area Meeting to support this.
- Discussing how to assist Hope Valley during the period where they were without a treasurer
- Reviewing our banking arrangements as earlier in the year it appeared there could be changes with the ownership and operation of the Coop Bank

During the year we also undertook a detailed review of our financial reserves policy, and will shortly be bringing a series of issues and questions on this to Area Meeting for consideration.

Two key issues are currently under review by us, and may need to be considered by Area Meeting in early 2018:

1. ***The workload and complexity of the workload of the Area Meeting Treasurer :***  
We have become increasingly conscious of the demanding nature of this in relation to the preparation of the annual accounts and the requirements of the Charity Commission and are considering options to reduce this. This might include paying our accountant to undertake more of the early consolidation work.
2. ***Changing Data Protection requirements :*** We have been alerted to changing and more onerous requirements by Friends House and by our Area Meeting representative who manages this work on our behalf. These requirements are now becoming more complex we need to review how best to manage this.

Our workplan for the year had included the need to review our 'delegation arrangements' which are outlined in individual Memorandums of Understanding between the Area Meeting and Local Meetings.

Although we haven't yet managed to look at these in detail, a key issue is that the MoU requires us to have two Trustees nominated to attend the Premises and Lettings Meetings for both Doncaster and Sheffield Central. Whilst we have managed this for Doncaster, we don't currently have Friends able to attend the Sheffield Central Meetings.

We are conscious this needs to be resolved, particularly if there are continuing issues with Sheffield Central covering its Clerking role and being able to hold Business Meetings, and will be giving priority to finding a workable solution for this.

Robert Almond

Current Clerk to Trustees