

## North East Thames Area Quaker Meeting

### Funding for Courses, Conferences

There is a rich variety of courses and conferences for members and attenders. Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, Swarthmoor Hall, Charney Manor and Claridge House all have annual programmes. Other courses are available at Friends House, Euston or may be arranged by other Friends' groups throughout the country. There are occasional international events. Separate programmes are often arranged for young people. North East Thames Area Quaker Meeting encourages attendance on courses and conferences, believing individual and group learning to be of benefit to us all.

Attending courses and conferences can be expensive but there are sources of funding available to help. Nobody should be discouraged from training on financial grounds. This document explains the different sources of funding there are and how to apply for funding.

#### Area Meeting (AM) Funding

- AM has an annual budget of currently £5000 to support members and attenders at courses and conferences. This is currently underspent.
- Attendance at a course funded by AM is expected to be for the benefit of AM as a whole.
- Details of courses are sent to AM and LM clerks and are advertised.
- In all cases, it remains the responsibility of AM to decide which courses and who to fund.
- AM may ask AM Nominations Committee to find (a) name(s).
- Those nominated may be asked to report back.
- The AM clerk can authorise funding when a place needs to be reserved before the next Area Meeting, but should bring that decision to the next AM for endorsement.
- Below are specific scenarios where funding from the AM courses and conferences budget may be sought.

#### Training for AM Positions

- Those appointed to AM and significant LM positions are encouraged to attend a course to get a Society-wide perspective on their role.
- This includes Clerks, Treasurers, Elders, Overseers, those with premises responsibilities and those responsible for children.
- Clerks of committees should be aware of relevant courses and funding. Names should be passed to AM Noms clerk or AM clerk to bring to AM.

#### Local Meeting Recommendations

- An LM may wish to send someone on a course they feel would be of benefit to AM as a whole.
- The LM clerk should pass any names to AM Noms clerk or AM clerk to bring to AM.
- LMs may consider funding course fees themselves or funding and then asking if AM will pay any of the cost.
- An LM can also fund training from its own resources.

#### What will AM pay for?

- It is for AM to decide what costs they are willing to pay. This is sometimes a figure up to which they will pay. Funding is usually available for course and conference fees and reasonable travelling expenses, and can include a meal on the way.
- An individual can decide what proportion of these costs they wish to claim.
- Where AM agrees to fund a place or places, the cost of any place and expenses may be spread between more than one person.

## **Payment**

- Fees will be paid by the AM Bookkeeper if the applicant sends them the completed application form and the relevant AM minute. If booked online the applicant should forward the electronic invoice. Where the applicant has already paid they should send a copy of the receipt to the AM Bookkeeper requesting reimbursement.

## **North East Thames Quaker Trust (Overseers Fund)**

- Funding is accessed via Overseers.
- The Overseers Fund provides financial support to attend courses and conferences, and other activities with an educational purpose. These are often Quaker events but not exclusively so. This fund is available to all, regardless of personal financial situation. Application will be based on completion of an application form (Form A\*), which asks for details of the course/conference and the likely cost.
- Funding is also available automatically from the Overseers Fund for all children to attend High Leigh All Age Conference free of charge.

## **North East Thames Quaker Trust (Financial Hardship Fund)**

- Funding is accessed via Overseers.
- If anyone will experience financial hardship as a result of the cost of a course, they should apply to this fund rather than the Overseers Fund. Funding is available for Quaker and non-Quaker courses including attendance at High Leigh All Age Conference and Yearly Meeting Gatherings.
- Provision of such funding is dependent upon completion of Form A\* and also Form B\*, which asks for details of income and expenses. The Financial Hardship Fund is available to meet a variety of needs (not just course or conference fees) and should be discussed with an Overseer. (See separate leaflet.) The NET Quaker Trust meets quarterly and applications should be made through Overseers well in advance.
- Overseers encourage discussion of any financial need and can be relied upon to deal with all requests sensitively and confidentially.

## **Payment**

Fees may be paid by the Trust if the applicant gives Overseers the completed application form in good time. Where the applicant has already paid they should give a copy of the receipt to their supporting Overseer requesting reimbursement.

## **Self Funding**

Any applicant may fund their own training. Simply fill in any application and pay the expenses. Courses should not however be booked by individuals/groups in the expectation of agreement from AM unless those booking them are willing, if necessary, to fund themselves.

## **Bursaries and other funding**

Some courses and conferences can provide bursary assistance. This should be included in the course details. Check if you are entitled to a discount on a Woodbrooke course: currently you can get £50 off your first course attended there and for new members of the Society, a discount of 50% off a course applies. See <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/pages/financial-help.html> for further details. Other sources of funding may be available; it is worth discussing this with an Overseer.

\*Forms A and B are obtained from Overseers.

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