

# Towards worshipping again in 7 Victoria Terrace

Elders in Central Edinburgh forward the following to Local meeting for discernment and, we hope, action.

What follows is divided into four parts:

- 1) A policy governing the holding of Meeting for Worship in the Meeting Room at 7 Victoria Terrace, intended to
  - a. ensure conformance with Scottish Government [Phase 3: guidance for the safe use of places of worship](#);
  - b. serve as the basis for a risk assessment ;
- 2) Suggestions for immediate action;
- 3) A plan for each Meeting for Worship: what needs to be done every time before, during and after a Meeting;
- 4) Some concluding observations.

Note that the proposed policy is concerned only with matters specific to Meetings for Worship, starting from and supplementing the policies already formulated for the reopening of 7 Victoria Terrace.

We hope Local Meeting will endorse the policy and move quickly to carry out the immediate actions.

## I. The policy

### Participation

When laid out in order to comply with social distancing guidelines, the Meeting Room will hold 9 individuals and 4 pairs from the same 'household', that is, between 13 and 17 people, all sitting in chairs: the benches will not be used.

The doorkeepers will not come in, so do not need have reserved places, but one seat will be reserved for an Elder, and, at least for the first few weeks, one seat will be reserved for a member of the Clerking Team.

A few places will be reserved for visitors who arrive without having booked, two places in the first few weeks, then we'll adjust based on experience.

So in practice there will be between 9 and 13 seats available, and we need a way for people to request a place or pair of places and a process for deciding who will get them. We will use an online booking system, EventBrite in the first instance, for people to make requests.

Applicants will be notified whether or not they have a place by three days before a Meeting (for example, Thursday for Sunday).

Over time as we gain experience, we expect to allow a range of factors to be considered when allocating places, for example difficulty in attending via Zoom or return after an absence. The opportunity to attend in person should be shared as widely as possible over time, for all those who wish it, so recent attendance will lead to a reduced priority for some time thereafter.

People who requested a place but didn't get one are welcome to come and queue, outside, for the visitor places should they not be required, and for any allocated places not filled by 10 minutes past the start time of the Meeting.

Meetings for special purposes, for example Memorial Meetings or Meetings for the solemnisation of marriage, will obviously need their own priorities, but *all* Meetings will have to go through online booking, in order to provide a basis for the official record of attendance which regulations require us to keep.

Assistance will be available for anyone who for whatever reason cannot use the online system.

Participation via Zoom, with a screen, projector and speakers at the East end of the Meeting Room, will continue to be open to all. At first this will use the existing microphones which hang from the ceiling, but an improved audio-video installation is anticipated at some point.

### **Personal safety**

Per regulation, masks must be worn while in the Meeting House by everyone without an overriding health reason, which should be notified and explained in the request for a place.

People with symptoms, or from households governed by some form of quarantine, must not attend Meeting in person. Participation is at the discretion of the doorkeepers: people showing signs of symptoms at entry or during Meeting may be asked to leave.

Single-use masks and hand sanitiser will be available inside the front door.

No food or drink will be provided: Friends should bring their own water if required.

No “books on the table”: Friends are of course welcome to bring books with them for their own use only.

### **Movement in the Meeting House**

In order to respect social distancing requirements, use of the main staircase will be restricted as follows:

- Upward from the opening of the Meeting House through the first 10 minutes of worship
- Downward thereafter

Elevator use is restricted to one person/household at a time, primarily in the same way as the stairs, but counterflow at any time if necessary (for early departure or access to the toilets).

After the notices at the rise of Meeting, regulations require that everyone make their way out of the building more-or-less straight away. The hall, library and kitchen will not be available at all.

Both before and after Meeting, particularly after, care must be taken to keep social distancing on the stairs and through the foyer: once you start your journey, do your best to keep moving steadily, which need not mean quickly!

### **Still to come**

Arrangements for Children and Young People: Consultation between Elders and Childrens Committee is needed to figure out the best way to go about this.

All Age Worship: Similarly, we need to explore options for this.

## II. Immediate actions required

- 1) Adopt the policy set out above (I);
- 2) Appoint a Safety Coordinator and a group to work with them;
- 3) Authorise the Coordinator to implement the policy, based on the suggestions below and the suggestions in Steps 4 onward in the [9 steps to re-opening Quaker meeting houses and worship spaces safely](#) guidelines from Friends House.

## III. The plan for each Meeting for Worship at any time

### 1) Before the day:

- Create/update booking request form
  - Including name, address, email, telephone, able to wear a mask?, number of people, special requests
- Open and announce availability
  - Online at <https://www.quakerscotland.org/central-edinburgh>
  - By email
- Allocate places per the policy
- Notify applicants
- Print the roster (Needed at 7VT on the day)
- Confirm the team (two downstairs, one upstairs) for the day

### 2) On the day:

#### a) Before MfW

- Downstairs doorkeeper welcomes and manages the queue
  - Assistant reminds about masks and health, notes entry on roster, adds walk-ins if any, communicates with upstairs as needed, and at 10-past about walk-ins if any
- Upstairs doorkeeper checks masks again and keeps an eye on social distanced seating. Make sure anyone trying to go down uses the elevator.

#### b) During MfW

- Manage early exits/toilet trips

#### c) After MfW

- Notices Clerk to remind about leaving promptly
- File a record of actual attendance (roster with walk-ins, minus no-shows)

## IV. Conclusion

As you will see, there's a lot to be done before we can have our first Meeting for Worship back in the Meeting House. Once everything is ready, we expect Local Meeting Clerks will want to include a reminder about the policy and the way things will work for those attending in the announcement of the first Meeting.

Elders hope that we can all approach this experiment in a cheerful and cooperative spirit, an opportunity to come together in prayer and worship. No matter how we join in this unfamiliar form, we will be renewing the basis of our communal and individual spiritual lives.