



So you're thinking of setting up a Facebook page!

Do you need one?

Not having a Facebook page is like not having a noticeboard outside your meeting house - it's just the street is online! Sometimes there are good reasons not to have a notice board; you might move around a lot or not have anyone to maintain it but generally speaking most meetings do and so most meetings should probably have a Facebook page...

Five Reasons you need to get a page:

- You have hirers using your building: If people are using your space then they will probably be sharing it on Facebook. If you don't have a page you are missing an opportunity to have hirers share info about your meeting linked to their event.
- You run outreach events: A page lets you make public events that people can share or click 'going' or 'interested' which reminds them when it's happening. If you run outreach events you're missing the opportunity for people to share it effectively on Facebook.
- If you are campaigning: Does your meeting have a concern? You'd likely benefit from a Facebook page to raise awareness and champion your cause. This is particularly useful if you have your own stuff to share such as photos or videos from demos or public statements.
- Your meeting has an advertising budget: If you're thinking of advertising in a local paper you might also want to consider Facebook advertising as a more targeted and cost effective alternative.
- If you want to stay in touch with members of your community who don't always make it regularly to meeting, such as older children of your meeting, spouses, people who have moved abroad, people working difficult hours, those with caring responsibilities etc.

Things to consider before setting up a Facebook page

- No one in your meeting has a Facebook 'profile': A profile is you on Facebook, it's your account where you upload pictures, add friends, like pages and share things. If no one in your meeting has a profile you might struggle to learn the basics of Facebook as well as learning how to manage a page (although not impossible!)

Great. So let's get started.

Step 1: Who will run it?

Facebook pages require a little work to be successful. For a local meeting page about 15 minutes a week is minimum but to grow your page you might want to put more time in to make sure you are sharing updates, making events, responding to comments etc. Once you are using a page you'll probably find yourself exploring new features and opportunities available to you!

Think outside of the usual suspects for support with your Facebook page. There might be family members who would be happy to show you the ropes of Facebook or people less involved in your meeting that might jump at the opportunity. Some meetings have had great success approaching young people who maybe don't come every week but would be happy to contribute. It can be a great role for new comers or who aren't always regularly there as it helps them feel part of the meeting and gives them a

reason to stay connected – these are also the type of people your page can reach and keep in touch with so the door feels always open to them.

What works well for some meetings is a team of people who can share managing the page; feeding in ideas and responding to comments. Facebook allows multiple people to do this and you can either divide and manage the page via rota or have a something like an email or Whatsapp group to coordinate.

Step 2: Who is it for?

Think carefully about who your page is for, it can be for multiple different groups but at its core Facebook is about connecting with people so start from who you want to reach and then work backwards.

If you are trying to reach the wider community you might share lots of local news. If you are wanting to build a community around all your hirers you could share posts and updates from them. If it's about outreach make sure every post is understandable to someone who knows nothing about Quakers (this is good practise anyway). If you want to keep visitors and Friends in your meeting informed of goings on you might focus on updates from each meeting or event. If you want to champion a cause or issue think about what groups you want to reach.

Step 3: What to call your page?

Think about what you are known for. If your page is for your meeting house (for above mentioned reasons about hirers and events etc.) then perhaps name it after the meeting house. People often know about the building and would be happy to follow a page about what happens in the building while being a little put off by the abstract of 'town Quakers' if they aren't sure what these strange Quaker folks are.

Don't use religious Society of Friends unless you're really sure that local people will know you by that name. Most people know vaguely what a Quaker is or at least they can look it up. Religious Society of Friends is off putting. Don't worry about dropping 'religious' in the name that will be covered by the category. Categories you can pick from include 'religious organization' or 'religious building'. Other options good options include 'charity' and 'community'.

Are you about to call your page 'North West Atlantic Area Meeting' - stop right now! Unless you are explicitly trying to reach just Quakers don't call your page Area Meeting. No one outside Quakers circles will know about the boundaries of Area Meetings. They do however recognise the idea of 'Quakers in London', 'York Quakers' etc. It might make sense for Local Meetings to group together to run Facebook pages but not under the name 'area meeting'.

Ultimately your name has to be clear to your audience. Let the function and audience of the page determine it! What will people get and what will they search for! Oh and don't use acronyms ever (unless you also write them out in the name).

Step 4: What will you 'post' on there?

Once you've thought through audience and name you might come up with some ideas of what to post. Generally speaking you want to post regularly in a way that resonates with your audience. Think about tone – informal and personable is best.

Here are some ideas of things to put on your page:

- Photos from meeting for worship or outside the meeting house each Sunday with a short reflection on what happened
- Make events on your page for any events or open days your meeting is running and share updates on planning for them and why everyone should go

- Share local news that's relevant.
- You could take posts from hirers of your meeting, say things like: "We are excited to have Eastminister Yoga group in today!"
- Share statements from your meeting or useful webpages
- Share things from other Quaker Facebook pages like: Quakers in Britain, Woodbrooke, Quaker Faith in Action or even pages like American Friends Service Committee or Quaker Council for European Affairs.
- If you're representing Quakers at a demonstration you can livestream video from your phone to your page or simply take some photos and share them.

Be creative! Other ideas will come. Videos or good pictures are generally more successful posts. Don't be discouraged if your page isn't getting many comments or likes, it's hard to break through – just being there is important. When you do get comments reply to them in a friendly manner to build up discussion. Share the page with friends and encourage people within your meeting to comment on posts.

Step 5: business meeting time!

Once your idea is thought through you can take it to business meeting with a great pitch on why a Facebook page will be really useful! Having a plan will put others at ease who might be cautious. It can be useful to remind Friends that early Quakers embraced the relatively new technology of the printing press with great enthusiasm. We can embrace social media to equal effect today! Sharing stories of other meetings on social media is a great way to back that up. You can always run an introductory session on how social media works – some of them might even want to get involved!

When thinking about the formal side of running a page remember the page will represent the whole meeting so this is a responsibility but also don't get too shackled by this. The worst thing you can do is build a heavy process around the page with people overseeing every post and watching over everything. Set a series of guidelines of what the meeting as a whole wants the page to achieve and what they would consider unacceptable on there (be careful around things like photographs of people – always get permission!). Once you've got that TRUST and EMPOWER the people running the page to do a good job. Let them be creative and make it fun otherwise it's a waste of potential and becomes a chore. Common sense is the best rule for not posting bad stuff!

Join the Social Media Cluster to connect with other Friends running social! It's a safe place to ask for help, share tips and work together.

Useful links and resources:

Writing a social media policy by Quaker Kathleen from New England Yearly Meeting : <http://quakerkathleen.org/2018/02/07/creating-a-social-media-policy-for-your-meeting/>
Britain Yearly Meeting Speaking out policy: <https://quaker-prod.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/store/5452d4da6f387d8420a1d978f28924736392a674b9c236afe76e89289818>

Toolkit for Action – Using Social Media: <https://quaker-prod.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/store/d08b068c8f21c0ea54eb0d8ed10b2cd57a1fdf07a9e1d68029cc53470d48>

Toolkit for Action – Reaching the Media: <https://quaker-prod.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/store/f4ed4ae78f11bc832d7086bf8116a2eea746a15195b352f1c9b122d6e03d>