

Devonshire Street Meeting House: What is the heart of the problem?

1 Pre-1990 Building use:

- Very 'humble' condition but much activity
- Many groups meeting here
- Cheap accommodation, but only 1-2 rooms and very primitive
- Accommodation mainly for travelling Quakers
- People / families living here permanently
- Fewer regulatory issues.

2 Post renovation 1999: Financial Golden Era

- Income giving profit \$40K pa (accommodation and hall hire)
- More active Members – who were 20 years younger than now!
- Some long-term Hall users: weekly and monthly for many years
- Some long-term accommodation users: 2 nights per week for a number of years
- Quaker offices QSA, AYM Secretary: income plus people onsite to assist
- Many visiting overseas Quakers
- Insurance costs much less / fewer regulations / fewer repairs required.

3 Current Era: 2018+ income DOWN, Admin work UP, Costs UP

- A heritage building with strict Council guidelines, so repairs very costly
- Recovery from COVID/ Light Rail disruption
- More people working from home = less need of meeting space and business accommodation
- Fewer public meetings
- Increasing regulatory requirements, e.g. fire protection
- Building unsuited to commercial operations so it has to be run by volunteers, which can be onerous
- Regulatory, risk and financial barriers prevent the operation of the building in its current state for commercial gain
- Risk Management / insurance: \$23K per annum needed for insurance
- Scale of accommodation too small – 4 rooms (unable to make adequate profit)
- Guests today want higher level of service, e.g. ensuite
- Current wardens' flat is very modest
- Hall rental: occasional and not profitable.

4 Workload

- Workload unsustainable in the long term for the volume of tasks
- Yearly search for new wardens plus potential legal risks in new workplace environment.

NOTE: UK Quakers are having similar Issues re the management of Meeting Houses. This is a worldwide problem.