Midlothian Friends Meeting (MFM)
Quaker Town Crier & MFM Directory Guidelines
Last Updated 9/30/2023

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Section 1: Quaker Town Crier (QTC) General Instructions

NOTE: These instructions are electronically stored on the USB drive that is kept in the *Midlothian Friends Meeting Handbook* that is kept in the office. Be sure to update that USB drive with any changes to these instructions, as well as its backup kept in the meetinghouse safe. Then print the updated instructions and place the paper copy in the *Quaker Town Crier* section of the *Midlothian Friends Meeting Handbook*. *Due to the passwords documented in these guidelines, this document should not be made available on the MFM website.*

A. Purpose of the Quaker Town Crier and its Editor

The purpose of the Quaker Town Crier is to function as an email system that allows others to communicate with MFM, and a vehicle for MFM to communicate with others when a personal email is not advisable. For example, the meeting's official communication with MFM Friends listed on our MFM Directory is done by utilizing the Quaker Town Crier, rather than a personal email.

Many notices are sent to the QTC Editor by Friends to send out to all Friends on the MFM Directory. Be sure to read these notices thoroughly and before sending them out, make sure they fall within the parameters outlined within section D, *"Sending Out a Message via the Meeting's Group List(s)"*.

The **clerk of meeting** is usually assigned the role of **Quaker Town Crier editor**, and is responsible for following the instructions outlined in these guidelines, since many have been approved by MFM's *Meeting for Discernment* as the practice of Midlothian Friends Meeting. Therefore, be aware that changes to guidelines which cover the type of information that should and should not be sent via the Quaker Town Quaker, should first be brought to *Meeting for Discernment* for approval.

B. Who Uses the Quaker Town Crier email Address to Conduct Business with MFM

The entities listed in this section use **Quaker_Town_Crier@msn.com** to communicate with MFM via email regarding critical business and notifications pertinent to MFM. Should this email address ever be discontinued for a new email address , the following organizations need to be contacted with the new email address, and MFM documentation needs to be modified to show the new email address.

Often, the Quaker Town Crier receives emails from other organizations that need to be forwarded to the correct individual at MFM. These emails can be urgent and time sensitive. So, it is best for the QTC Editor to check the Quaker Town Crier emails daily if at all possible. Here are some of the originators of email messages that come through the Quaker Town Crier that will need to be forwarded to the correct individual at MFM:

- Richmond Friends Meeting
- Baltimore Yearly Meeting
- Another Quaker Meeting
- A Thrifty Quaker customer
- Someone interested in information about MFM
- A notice regarding an electronic contribution to MFM
- A bank notice regarding an electronic monetary transaction
- Other types of inquiry or informational emails
- Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC)
- Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM)
- GuideOne Insurance
- Truist Bank
- The Thrifty Quaker
- Richmond Friends Meeting
- Venmo.com
- Meeting Owl
- Roku
- Zoom
- Verizon
- Dominion Energy
- *There are likely others not mentioned here that utilize the Quaker_Town_Crier@msn.com address to conduct business with MFM.*

Most of the above incoming emails should not be answered by the QTC Editor. Rather they should be forwarded to the appropriate MFM individual to address. Consult the **MFM List of Volunteer Contacts** to find the name and email/phone of the appropriate person.

C. Sending Out a Message via the Meeting's Group List(s)

If a message meant for all Friends at MFM was sent to your personal email, forward it to quaker_town_crier@msn.com for potential emailing to the meeting's email list(s). The Quaker Town Crier is primarily used for advertising offerings and news directly pertinent to Midlothian Friends Meeting (MFM) or individual Friends who are participants in the meeting. **It is not to be used to advocate, oppose, or give the impression that MFM advocates a political candidate, political party, or a "cause" that has not first been approved by MFM's Meeting for Discernment. It should never be used to promote commercial businesses, clubs, or non-profits supported by individual Friends – but not approved by Meeting for Discernment as a supported non-profit by Midlothian Friends Meeting.**

Before sending out something that is not directly pertinent to MFM, first consider:

1. Is it related to Quakerism directly (the event is within a Quaker context) even if it is not related to MFM?
2. If it is not directly related to Quakerism, is it indirectly related to something pertinent to MFM or Quakerism and is being held locally; therefore, likely to be of interest to MFM'ers?
3. Is it something that MFM'ers can't discover elsewhere; or does MFM have unique information to add that would make this event of interest to MFM'ers?
4. Would folks on our directory not consider it just noise (that could cause them to ignore future emails from MFM)?

The above four 'tests' are not an exact science and certainly opinion comes into play when answering these tests, but a 'Yes' answer to any of the 'tests' adds to a decision to potentially send the item out to MFM Friends.

Before sending an email to Friends via the Quaker Town Crier, determine whether it should be sent to just the ***MFM Local Friends*** group list or both the ***MFM Local Friends*** group list and the ***MFM Distant Friends*** group list. Be aware that since the advent of Zoom, Friends that live distantly from the MFM meetinghouse are now able to attend most MFM events remotely. Therefore, it is Midlothian Friends Meeting's practice to include the ***MFM Distant Friends*** group list in all Quaker Town Crier emails that are sent out.

Messages sent to the Quaker Town Crier editor (you) are often cryptic, incomplete, lengthy, or not thoroughly understandable. You should edit the message before sending it out in order to correct these deficiencies. Here's some tips to help you with your "job" as Quaker Town Crier editor:

- Notices about events at Midlothian Friends Meeting (either at the meetinghouse or over Zoom) should be entered into the MFM calendar that is featured on the MFM website. Such calendar entries should not be entered into the website calendar by the Quaker Town Crier editor – if possible. Rather, these entries should be entered in the website calendar by the person responsible for the event.
- If the message sent to the QTC editor is not already in the MFM Website calendar as an upcoming MFM event, it might be necessary to research the essence of the message a bit – to ensure it is appropriate to send out to Midlothian Friends. Ask questions of the message originator and check websites, etc. that are referenced in the message to ensure it is appropriate. Then compare your impression of its appropriateness with the guidelines at the beginning of this section. **The Quaker Town Crier is not to be used to advocate, oppose, or give the impression that MFM advocates a political candidate, political party, or a "cause" that has not first been approved by MFM's Meeting for Discernment. It should never be used to promote commercial businesses, clubs, or non-profits supported by individual Friends.**
- When editing the message, re-arrange sections of the message to first address WHAT the message is about, then WHEN it will occur, then WHO it is about, then finally any WHY'S or HOW'S.
- You may need to "dumb up" parts of the message sent to the Quaker Town Crier by the message originator before it is sent to Friends. Most Friends listed on the MFM directory who receive the Quaker Town Crier emails are not intimately acquainted with Quakers, their terminology, their organizations, or how they operate. So it is always a challenge to convey the message in a way that will be understandable to everyone in as brief of a form as possible. Do not use Quaker'ese (use common English instead) and briefly explain any Quaker organizations referenced. Avoid acronyms.
- Imagine in your mind how a new person will react to the message. Will they grasp it? Will they understand it? Will they be left with questions? Will they be turned off by the message? Anticipate questions generated by the message and answer these at the end of the message you are about to send, in advance.
- If information from the message originator is in an attachment and it is reasonably doable: attempt to move the contents of the attachment to the body of the email you will be sending out. People just don't take the time to open attachments.
- Add links to websites that provide more information about organizations/events referenced.

Section 2: Quaker Town Crier (QTC) Email Notifications

A. Quaker Town Crier (QTC) Email to Friends

Occasionally, events and news for upcoming events need to be sent to Friends via the Quaker Town Crier email, using both the ***MFM Local Friends*** and ***MFM Distant Friends*** email distribution lists. Usually, this occasional information for Friends has not been placed on the MFM calendar.

B. Steps to enable Sending out Quaker Town Crier Emails from your Computer

1. From your browser home page go to where you would normally add a new account. NOTE:
    a. If using Google Chrome, click in the circle at the top right of your screen – the circle usually shows your initial. Click that you want to 'add another account'.
    b. If using Microsoft, enter msn.com and then click on 'outlook.com'. Click that you want to sign in with a different account, and then possibly click the + that is in a circle to indicate that your want to add a new account for you.
2. Enter 'quaker_town_crier@msn.com' as the account name in the 'Sign in' field and click 'Next'.
3. Enter 'Aookie1$' in the password field.

C. Whenever accessing the Quaker Town Crier Emails

1. View any messages in the inbox from someone who wants their message to be sent to all Friends via the Quaker Town Crier; then determine if indeed it should be sent out to all Friends on the MFM Directory (Note: Sometimes junk mail is in the inbox or mail is there that only needs a response by someone who's responsible on behalf of the meeting).
2. To send a Quaker Town Crier email to all Friends, choose the ***MFM Local Friends*** and ***MFM Distant Friends*** email distribution lists to include all Friends in the email who are in the MFM Directory.
3. Be sure to **use the 'bcc' (blind copy) feature** in your email to list the group email names so that each recipient on the list won't be able to see the whole list of email recipients.

D. Alternative Ways to Access the Quaker Town Crier Email Account or MFM website calendar

The laptop computer in the Clerk's Table in the Worship room of the meetinghouse has an email account in it for Quaker_Town_Crier@msn.com. So if you are unable to access Quaker_Town_Crier@msn.com from your personal device, you may use instead that meetinghouse computer in the Clerk's Table. Just click the email icon in the bottom taskbar. Also, placed underneath that Clerk's Table laptop is a laminated card that lists tips for MFM automation; things such as PINs, userids, Passwords you will need to access the meetinghouse worship room computer).

If you are an authorized editor for the MFM website calendar, you can also access from the laptop computer in the Clerk's Table that calendar. Do the following:

1. Using your Microsoft Edge browser icon at the bottom of the computer, enter 'calendar.google.com'.
2. Enter the username of 'midlofriendscalendar@gmail.com'.
3. Click 'NEXT'.
4. Enter the password of 'George Fox' if requested.
5. When the MFM editable calendar appears on your screen:
    - Hover over an existing calendar entry and click on it, or
    - Hover over the red line and click on it to create a new calendar entry (you can change the day, time, etc. where the red line is located in the calendar).
    - Click the "pencil" in order to change the date, time, frequency, and text of the calendar entry, as desired. The text can be copied from a word document or an email and pasted into the calendar text area before

you proceed to the 'SAVE' in the next step. NOTE: When text is copied and pasted, it often results in the removal of spaces between some words; you will need to check this and replace the missing spaces.
- Click 'SAVE' at the top of your screen to save your work.
- Your final step should be to go to 'MidlothianFriends.org' Calendar tab to ensure your calendar entry appears correctly.

6. Here-on-out:
   - As long as you use the same Microsoft Edge browser, when you enter 'calendar.google.com' (the first step above), you should be immediately taken to the editable calendar – without having to do steps 2 through 4, above.
7. Keep in mind:
   - Once you have become an authorized MFM Calendar updater, you will be able to create and edit all calendar entries. So, be careful not to update an entry that you are not responsible for.
   - Obviously, anyone with these instructions, the username, or password can add, edit, or delete an event on the MFM calendar. So, this information should not be shared with just anyone, or treated carelessly so that a "hacker" has access to it.
   - In light of the above two realities, those authorized to alter the MFM calendar have been limited to those MFM Friends who have a need to know.

Section 3: Instructions for Updating the MFM Directory

A: General MFM Directory Information

1. **Normally,** A Midlothian Friend has volunteered to edit and update the **MFM Directory**. The Directory is created using Microsoft Word. So you must have Microsoft Word installed on your computer in order to be the **MFM Directory Editor.**
2. Whenever there is a new **MFM Directory Editor**, if an electronic copy of the current MFM Directory is not at hand, someone could easily email their copy of the latest Directory to the new MFM Directory Editor.
3. **The Directory Editor should initiate an update of the Directory regularly.** The easiest method is to send an email to all Friends with the Directory attached in Word and PDF formats, asking them to correct any information incorrectly listed in the Directory for themselves and household family members. Also, ask them to indicate if they no longer want to be listed in our directory. This email should be sent using both the group distribution lists ***MFM Local Friends*** and ***MFM Distant Friends*** (this ensures non-local Friends will receive the email as well as local Friends).

B. Adding/Changing/Deleting a Friend to the Meeting's Group List(s)

1. If altering the **MFM Directory** information due to changes, you must also change any corresponding information for the individual in the ***All Contacts***, and then in the ***MFM Local Friends*** or ***MFM Distant Friends*** listings associated with the Quaker_Town_Crier@msn.com Microsoft email.
2. Go to www.msn.com.
3. Click on 'Outlook'.
4. Enter 'quaker_town_crier@msn.com' in the username field.
5. Enter 'Aookie1$' in the password field.
6. Utilize the 'PEOPLE' icon (usually on the left of the screen) to either add the individual's email, change it, or delete it from the contact list. If adding the individual, depending on their proximity to Midlothian Friends Meeting, add the individual to either the group list ***MFM Local Friends*** or ***MFM Distant Friends***. This allows the Quaker Town Crier to send an email to local Friends and distant Friends.
7. **Note:** When creating an email entry for ***MFM Local Friends*** or ***MFM Distant Friends*** in item number 6 above, occasionally a Microsoft bug can manifest itself where two unrelated email addresses can become merged as one in the listing you added within ***MFM Local Friends*** or ***MFM Distant Friends***. To fix this bug,

you will first need to delete that merged listing that you just entered. Then return to add to the ***All Contacts*** (from item 1 above) two more occurrences of the individual's same email address that is already present. Finally, you should now be able to successfully repeat the adding of the individual's email address to ***MFM Local Friends*** or ***MFM Distant Friends***.

C: <u>Updating the MFM Directory in Word</u>

1. Double click on the heading in order to **change the month and year.**
2. **To add a new entry,** place the cursor in the row that will alphabetically follow the new entry to be added. Click 'Table' in the menu bar. Then click 'Insert Rows'. Fill in the information in the same manner as other entries. Be sure to **enter all information** and use called names (not formal legal names). Type in "Unknown [email, address, phone]" if it is unknown. Finally, enter in Arial font 6 the name of the entry's spouse or domestic partner in parenthesis if he/she is also listed in the directory. If a minor child is entered, indicate this by entering in Arial font 6, '(minor)'.
3. **Changes** should be made to directory entries when indicated. Place the month and 2-digit year in parenthesis in Arial font 6 beside the name in the entry.
4. Use the normal **black font color for all entries except the phone number**. Once you type it, highlight it and go to the font color icon at the top of your screen (or use 'Format' in your menu bar) and change the phone number font to red.
5. The font for each entry is 'Arial'. **The size for the *name* is 12**. The size for other entries is 10. To change the font size, highlight the area you want to change, click the drop-down for the font size at the top of your screen (or use 'Format' in your menu bar), and click on the correct size.
6. **Once you type the email address, you will need to *AutoFormat* it** if that feature is not already turned on (you will know if it is turned on because the email address font will change after you type it, and it will display in blue with underlines). If you need to *AutoFormat* it, highlight the email address, click 'Format' in the menu bar, then click 'AutoFormat', then select the document type of *'email'* from the drop-down menu, and then click *'OK'*.
7. **To delete an entry**, place the cursor on the entry and click 'Table' in the menu bar. Then click 'Select Row'. Then click 'Table' again in the menu bar. Then click 'Delete Rows'.
8. Remember that **no notation of recorded membership is ever made for those Friends in the Meeting Directory** (by decision of *Meeting for Discernment*).

D: <u>Distributing the MFM Directory</u>

1. Once finalized, **the updated Directory should be sent via email to the entire meeting** using the ***MFM Local Friends*** and the ***MFM Distant Friends*** group lists (this ensures non-local Friends will receive the email). It is best to attach 2 versions of the Directory – one in Microsoft Word and one in PDF format. That way, everyone will be able to at least have a paper copy.
2. Because the email addresses will be AutoFormated in the Word version, **Friends can open the Directory while connected to the internet and click on any email address** in order to format and write an email to another Friend. Friends can even click and drag the Directory document to their desktop for easy access.
3. **After updating the Directory,** be sure to back it up to a USB drive.