Darlington
Quaker Meeting

DARLINGTON FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE,

HIRER INFORMATION PACK 2026

Welcome to Darlington Friends Meeting House!

We hope you and your group will enjoy your time here and will find the Meeting House a pleasant and useful venue.

This hirer pack sets out some essential information you will need and guidelines for your use of the building.

If you have any questions, please contact the Booking team**.** All Booking requests should be made via email: **manager@darlingtonquakers.org**

For urgent or emergency contact only, the on -site warden number is: 07941 338169

About Darlington Quaker Meeting

At Darlington Friends Meeting you will find a diverse and welcoming community. Our official name is the Religious Society of Friends but we are more commonly known as Quakers or Friends.

Quakerism is rooted in Christianity but, today, Quakers are a broad-based group who believe that there is something of God (or the divine) in everyone. Our testimonies to Equality, Truth, Peace, Simplicity and Sustainability underpin our Faith.

Our Meetings for Worship are held on **Sundays at 10.30 – 11.30am and on Thursdays, 12.30 -1pm,** followed by coffee. They are open to everyone; all faiths and none.

ROOM HIRE TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. HIRE POLICY

Darlington Quaker Meeting welcomes bookings from any organisation whose activities and aims do not seriously conflict with Quaker beliefs. We reserve the right to make enquiries about new groups before accepting a booking and to decline or terminate a room hire contract where we believe the group's activities or aims are unclear or may not be in line with our Area Meeting policy on hiring rooms, which can be found at www.darlingtonquakers.org/room-hireBookings and cancellations

2. BOOKINGS

- All Bookings should be made by email which we aim to confirm within a few days.
- Provisional reservations can be made for up to 2 weeks and then should be confirmed or deleted. The signed room booking form returned to us will be required to confirm a booking.
- The mobile number advertised is only for urgent assistance and should not be used for bookings or other routine administration.
- Regular users should ensure bookings are renewed well in advance and not assume automatic renewal.
- Occasionally it is necessary for us to cancel a booking, although we will try to make alternative arrangements (e.g. offering a different room or time). We will endeavour always to give at least 4 weeks' notice of any such cancellation, but as the Meeting House is a place of worship, we may occasionally not be able to do this (e.g. if the building is required for a funeral.) We ask for your understanding in these rare circumstances.
- **Darlington Quaker Meeting will not be liable for any loss arising out of any cancellation or alteration of a booking.**

3. CANCELLATION

Seven days notice in writing is required to change or cancel a booking. This should be made by email and acknowledged by us. If less than 7 days notice is given, the full charge will normally be applied though this is discretionary. In some circumstances, we may ask for 50% of the room hire fee or even allow direct transfer of date. No-shows and cancellations with less than 24 hours' notice will almost always be charged at full price.

NB: You Must **ALWAYS** let us know if for any reason you will not be using a hired space, even if no refund is expected. This is a policy requirement in case of any emergency evacuation so we always know exactly who is in the building.

4. ROOM CHARGES & PAYMENTS

Room	**Fire capacity (which must not be exceeded)**	**A guide to comfortable capacities (seated)**	**Hourly rate**
Elm Tree	80	70	£18.50
Meeting Room	80	70	£18.50
Institute	30	12-20	£13.00
Library	30	12-20	£13.00
Willow Room	8	2-6	£12.00

- (Prices above as of September 2026)
- Please note the fire capacities. Comfort capacity will depend on space/seating arrangements and activity. A visit is encouraged if you are not familiar with the venue.
- Full day rates (6 hours +) are available on request.
- Rates are reviewed annually and written notice is provided to hirers.
- Invoices are normally issued at the end of the month and payment is requested **within 14 days of the invoice date.** In some circumstances we may ask for payment in advance.
- **Payments should be made by electronic bank transfer wherever possible.** Cheques are currently still accepted but no cash payments..

5. FACILITIES

- **ACCESSIBILITY:** The building is fully wheelchair accessible with toilet facilities in the centre of the hallway.
- **WIFI:** Hirers are welcome to use the free wifi in the building. All rooms now have wifi access points to ensure good coverage. The network name and password is posted in the rooms. Live streaming only with advanced permission.
- **CHAIRS/TABLES:** A large range of stacking chairs and folding gopak tables are available for use in most rooms.
- Hirers should leave the rooms as they find them (unless other instructions are given). Please return any furniture or equipment used.
- Other equipment available: Large screen TV, PA system, projector, screen, whiteboard and flip-chart are available. The TV needs to be booked with the manager in advance. Other equipment is available to borrow on first come, first served basis.

6. INTERNAL DOOR CODES

- At some times of day/eve individual rooms may be locked with a pin code door lock
- You will be provided with the pin code for the room you have booked at the induction.

7. INSURANCE

- We always recommend that hirers insure their own group against liability claims and any damage caused to our property (Public Liability Insurance or PLI). The group leader will be asked to confirm details of such cover on the booking form.
- However we recognise for small or adhoc groups this can be a significant financial burden. Where the activity is deemed of low risk to those taking part and to building property, PLI is not now mandatory. The group leader will be asked to initial a disclaimer on the booking form, confirming they understand the risk to themselves and participants.
- Where no PLI is in place, the group leader MUST inform all participants (public or members), that they will not be able to make claim any personal injury, loss or theft of property whilst taking part in activities at Darlington Quaker Meeting against Teesdale and Cleveland Area Quaker Meeting (charity).

8. HEALTH & SAFETY

- The Meeting House is not staffed full time. Group Leaders are therefore responsible for the safety and security of their group whilst in the building.
- All building users must take all reasonable steps to safeguard their own safety and that of other users and should comply with any health and safety requirements set out by Meeting House staff.
- **Children must be supervised at all times** and are not permitted to be in the kitchen or store room.
- Any electrical equipment brought into the Meeting House must have current PAT test certification. Speak to us for further information if needed.
- A first aid box is provided in the kitchen along with an accident book. If an accident or “near miss” occurs, please record it in the accident book and inform the Manager as soon as possible.

9. FIRE PROCEDURES

- You will be given a briefing when you first hire our space and occasional refreshers will be provided.
- It is your responsibility as group leader(s) to familiarise yourself with the fire safety procedures and emergency plan posted in the building.

- Ensure you point out nearest fire exits to everyone in your group regularly
- You should feel confident to lead an evacuation and account for members of your group. If you need more help, a refresher briefing including for new or temporary leaders please ask.
- Read through the "Fire safety procedures and evacuation plan" at the end of this document.

10. MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENTS LICENCE

- We hold a church music licence which covers certain activities including the playing of recorded music, live entertainment and the showing of films. Certain hire groups which identify as non-profit organisations may be covered by our licence but commercial hirers generally will require their own licence. Please discuss this with us in advance if you need guidance.

11. TV LICENCE: Important notice

- The Meeting House does NOT have a TV licence.
- It is therefore illegal to stream or record live TV Programmes on any channel using devices **plugged into the mains circuit,** whether or not it uses meeting house wifi or own data. This includes streaming and downloading programmes on BBC Iplayer.
- Those with their own licences who are using battery operated devices can view TV and iplayer via DQM wifi.
- Hirers will be liable for any penality arising from ignoring this warning.
- **For more information www.tvlicensing.co.uk/check-out-if-you-need-one/business-and-organisations**

12. SAFEGUARDING & DBS

- Group Leaders are responsible for maintaining an appropriate policy on the safeguarding of children and adults at risk of harm including obtaining Disclosure and Barring (DBS) clearance where needed.

13. KEYS & SECURITY

- Group leader(s) will be provided with codes to the electronic back door entrance of the building at the induction. A key for the tunnel gate will only be provided for evening groups who require it.
- Access codes are not to be shared by the group leader(s) unless it is agreed with the Manager.
- Group leaders are responsible for security whilst in the building. **The front doors must not be left open or unattended at any time.**

14. PARKING

- Limited space is allocated for hiring groups in the Skinnergate car park on the **RIGHT HAND SIDE** of the car park only. (The left hand side is for commercial licensees and must not be occupied by hirers at any time).
- As space is very limited hirer groups are restricted to one car for the group leader (a second car is permitted only if needed for someone with mobility issues).
- Parking is not a right when hiring and if the space allotted is already full, you must find an alternative.
- Parking is ONLY for the time you are hiring our space and should not be extended either side of the hire time. We will be starting to enforce this strictly from now onwards.

Note: Between 10am & 5pm Skinnergate is pedestrianised zone and the barriers on Duke street are in operation so there is no access. The bollard operators generally wont let vehicles enter unless exceptional circumstances. To speak to the operator, buzz at the Duke street bollard. Blue badge holders will normally be able to park on Skinnergate after 10am. Otherwise free street parking is only before 10am or after 5pm.

15. KITCHEN USE

- All groups are welcome to use the shared kitchen facilities as part of their room hire.
- Please follow any specific rules regarding use as posted on the walls.
- Users must provide their own tea/coffee/milk etc. There is some space to store these provisions in the kitchen cupboards and the fridge –
- Ensure you label any items stored and respect other users' property.
- Please ensure you have thoroughly washed and dried up, put everything away, wiped down surfaces and left the kitchen clean and tidy.
- Bear in mind it is likely there will be other groups in the building at the same time as yours. Please keep noise to a minimum in the kitchen and common areas.

16. STORAGE

- Storage space at the Meeting House is limited and is allocated by arrangement with the booking team.
- Any items in the building need to be stored tidily and confined to the allocated area. Please respect others' property.

Darlington Quaker Meeting cannot be responsible for any property at the Meeting House. Please do not leave valuables unattended.

17. SUSTAINABILITY

- Respect for the environment is an important Quaker principle and we therefore try to ensure our environmental impact is minimised wherever possible.
- Please assist us by using the recycling facilities in the hallway for paper and plastics. The compost caddy in the kitchen is for tea bags and fruit/vegetable scraps
- Please turn off lights and heaters where they are not needed.

18. SMOKING, DRUGS AND GAMBLING

- Smoking (including electronic cigarettes), alcohol, drug use (including legal highs) and games of chance (including raffles and tombolas) are strictly prohibited in the Meeting House and Burial Ground.
- Smoking is only allowed at the front of the building on Skinnergate.

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FIRE SAFETY PROCEDURES AND EMERGENCY PLAN

Darlington Quaker Meeting is committed to ensuring the safety of all users of Darlington Friends Meeting House and preserving the building as a community resource and heritage asset. These Fire Safety Procedures and the Emergency Plan have been produced in order to meet this commitment.

Group Leaders must:

- Attend the Fire safety and building induction carried out by the Manager (or deputy) before commencing hire
- Ensure that all members of their group are briefed on the building exits and emergency gather point.
- Complete a head count of their group each time they are in the building.
- Ensure that the room they are using is not over-crowded to an extent that would impede an evacuation. Group Leaders are responsible for ensuring occupancy does not exceed the following levels in any event:

Room	**Maximum capacity for fire safety**
Elm Tree	80
Meeting Room	80
Institute	30
Library	30

NOTE: these capacities are for the purpose of safe evacuation. Other factors including configuration of the room may reduce these numbers.

Where a group consists of a number of special needs users (e.g. disabled, elderly, children), consideration should be given as to whether these capacity limits should be reduced.

- Ensure any group members with special requirements (e.g. physical or sensory-impairments, elderly or young users) are assigned a “buddy” - an appropriate person who is confident and prepared to aid their evacuation if required.
- Be able to lead an evacuation if required and ensure all members of the group are accounted for.
- Not store any items likely to cause or accelerate a fire in the building.
- Not use any electrical equipment unless it has a PAT testing certificate issued in the last 12 months.
- Ensure group members comply with all fire safety instructions given by Meeting House staff.

All Meeting House users must:

- Know how to raise the alarm in the event of a fire and be able to evacuate the premises safely.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the fire safety of themselves and other building users.
- Not obstruct any fire evacuation route, smoke or use a naked flame in the building.
- Comply with all fire safety instructions given by their Group Leader or Meeting House staff.

FIRE EMERGENCY PLAN

UPON DISCOVERY OF A FIRE:

- Raise the alarm immediately using the nearest Break Glass call point (situated at all exits).
- Commence evacuation of the premises using the nearest safe exit point – see plan at Appendix 1.
- Do not attempt to tackle the fire unless it is safe to do so and you have been given instruction on the safe use of the fire fighting equipment at the Meeting House.
- Contact the emergency services on 999 once you have reached a place of safety.

IF YOU HEAR THE FIRE ALARM

EVERYONE:

- Commence evacuation of the premises using the nearest safe exit point – see plan at Appendix 1.
- If you have are assigned as a “buddy” to a person with special needs, assist them to evacuate.
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings. Do not try to move a vehicle from the car park.
- Do not attempt to tackle the fire unless it is safe to do so and you have been given instruction on the safe use of the fire fighting equipment at the Meeting House.
- Proceed to the Fire Assembly Point – see plan at Appendix 1.

GROUP LEADERS AND STAFF:

- Fully open front door if safe to do so.
- During evacuation, calmly check any rooms to which access is available (e.g. toilets, kitchen) if it is safe to do so.
- Close doors when each area has been evacuated, if it is safe to do so.
- Conduct a head count at the Fire Assembly Point.
- When the emergency services arrive inform them of:
    - Any member of the group unaccounted for
    - Location of the fire, if known
    - Location of building schematics – zone plan at fire control panel.

CONTACTING THE EMERGENCY SERVICES

- If a member of Meeting House staff is on site (wearing high-visibility vest), they will contact the emergency services.

- If there is no member of staff clearly present or you are unsure please contact the Fire Brigade on 999 using either a mobile phone or the telephone call box outside the Meeting House if safe to do so. If neither is possible, ask if a nearby business premises will call the Fire Brigade for you.
- State the premises address: Friends or Quaker Meeting House, 6 Skinnergate, Darlington, DL3 7NB.
- If possible, call the Meeting House emergency contact number: 07941 338169 to notify us of the incident.

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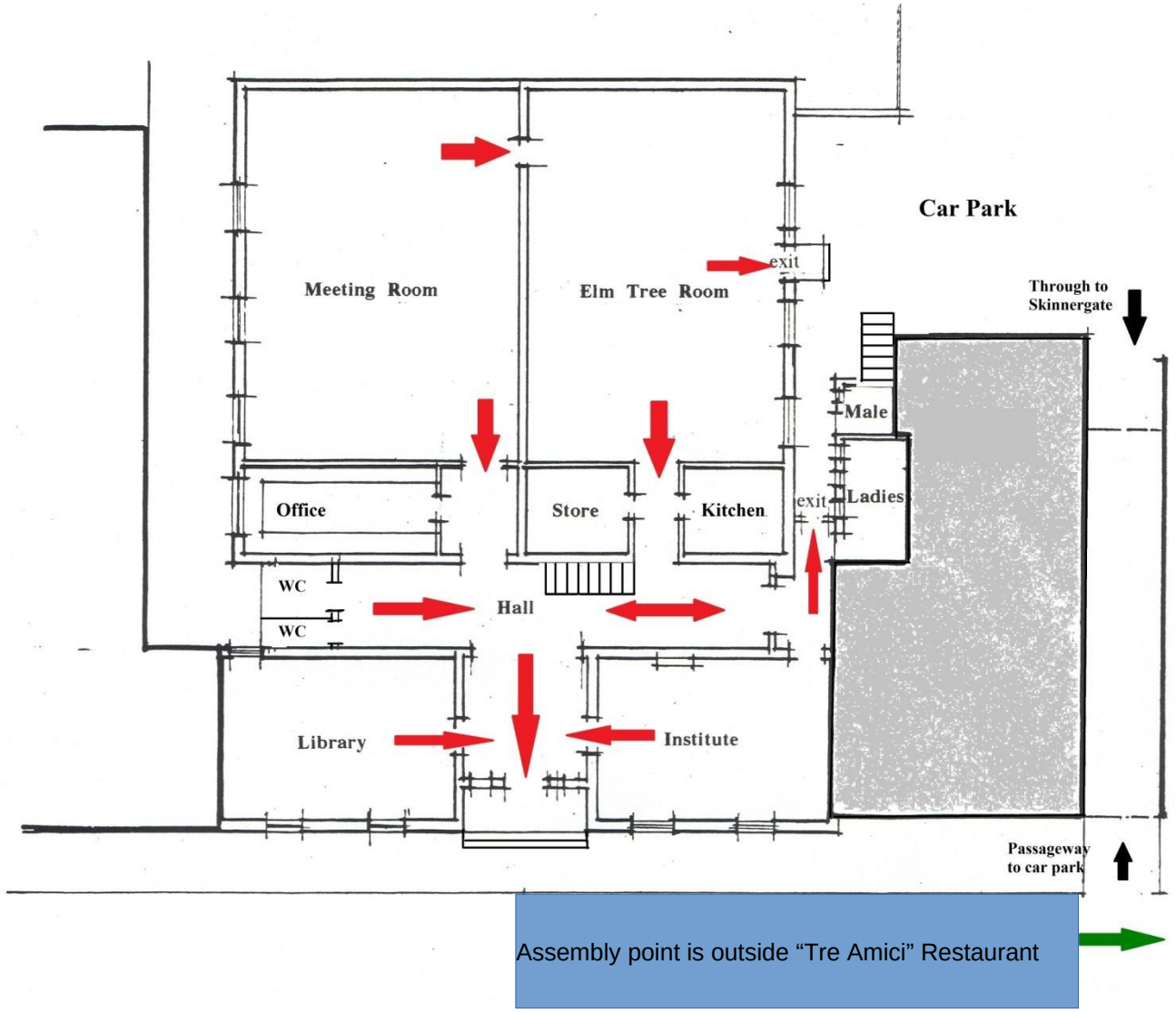

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