

Quakers would welcome the introduction of a civil partnerships act in Jersey and if possible we would wish to be able to allow such partnership ceremonies to take place in our Meeting House in the manner of Quakers.

Quakers support a balance of equal rights with equal responsibility. For 9 years prior to the UK Civil Partnerships Act of 2005, Quakers were celebrating same sex relationships in their Meeting Houses through official Meetings for Commitment. Following upon the 2005 Act same sex couples in Scotland, England and Wales, who share Quaker beliefs, have been able to opt for a blessing or commitment ceremony after entering a civil partnership. If a Civil Partnerships Act is passed in Jersey we would like to be able to allow civil partnership ceremonies to actually take place in our Meeting House as it seems to us to be a natural progression from the commitment ceremony, after the event, which is practiced currently in the UK.

Quakers take marriage and civil partnership very seriously. To us it is not merely a civil contract but a religious act. As with marriage, only Members of the Meeting, or those who while not in formal membership are in unity with its nature and witness can be joined in a Quaker Meeting. This would also apply to Civil Partnerships.

For Quaker marriage services there has to be a registering officer within the Area Meeting (in Jersey's case this is the Southampton and Portsmouth Area Meeting) who is authorized to carry out the ceremony. If the Law on Civil Partnerships is enacted and ceremonies are permitted in places of worship, then we would wish the authority of the Quaker registering officer to be extended to include civil partnerships.