

Follow up Letter



Yearly Meeting of the
Religious
Society of Friends (Quakers) in
Britain

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

Meeting for Sufferings 2 February 2019

Dear Friends

You will find enclosed the minutes from our meeting on Saturday last and I am sure you will be ready to share our proceedings with your Area Meeting. Thank you for your focus and prayer in the business and in braving inclement weather to be together. The main items to explain to local friends are:

1. Our consideration of the post-truth world including the definition we understood and our commitment to truth and integrity in everything that we do. You may like to remind Friends of the advices to which we have returned and share the list (in your agenda papers) of other organisations with which we could link, either individually or at meeting level.
2. The agreement of terms of reference for the Sustainability Monitoring Group – do explain how important this work is and that when the Group is appointed, it will help Sufferings to monitor what is happening both in the centrally-managed work and in our area meetings.
3. We heard about yearly meeting – do encourage attendance (or on-line engagement) from friends in your meetings, especially those who may not think of going. Details are on the website [here](#). Meetings are asked to make sure that nobody is put off coming to Yearly Meeting because they can't afford it; if your meeting can't help you can contact the bursary fund – via Krishna Ramamurthy, krishnar@quaker.org.uk or 0207 663 1109.
4. The appointment of Friends to serve on the Book of Discipline Revision Committee will be of interest to many – we need to uphold them all in prayer as they begin to think about the task ahead.
5. Various other matters came to us in the afternoon – including the call to be truthful about Quakers activity in the first world war and to recognise the deaths of Quakers whether

conscientious objectors, combatants, ancillary service personnel or civilians. We heard 265 names have already been recorded but further names to be remembered may be sent to Helen Griffith by post to Friends House or email heleng@quaker.org.uk

I am looking forward to meeting again on Saturday 6th April – in the meanwhile, I think the Anglicans are holding their General Synod and that they will be addressing the social division within our society today – let's see if we can unite with them in their conclusions!!

In peace

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anne Ullathorne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anne Ullathorne
Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings

The following papers are included in this mailing:

- Functions checklist
- Minutes of the Meeting held 2 February 2019

Meeting for Sufferings: Functions Checklist (Quaker faith & practice Chapter 7.02) – Feb 2019

	Requirement	Minutes	Comments
A	To set the priorities for the centrally managed work		
B	To issue public statements in the name of BYM		
C	To receive regular interim reports from BYM trustees	12	
D	To receive the BYM trustees' annual report & accounts for information		
E	To make a report on its own activities to YM	9	
F	To determine the dates of YM	10	
G	To deliberate on how best to support the spiritual life of the yearly meeting and to further the development of its visionary and prophetic role	6	Sustainability Monitoring Group
H	To keep under review and to test as appropriate the existing and new concerns referred to it by AMs and others	7 16	Post-truth Quakers in WW1
I	To foster communication throughout the yearly meeting	7 8 15 16	Post-truth Yearly Meeting 2019 Quaker Recognised Bodies Quakers in WW1
J	To receive minutes from area meetings	7 16 17	Post-truth Quakers in WW1 Simpler meetings
K	To make appropriate entries in the prison and court register	5	
L	To appoint representatives to attend other Yearly Meetings	11	German YM, Sweden YM
M	To receive information about changes in the composition or status of general meetings and gatherings		
N	To make changes in the composition of area meetings		
O	To give assistance to area meetings in the amicable settlement of disputes		
P	To hear appeals against area meeting decisions		
Q	To give guidance on policy matters referred to it by the BYM trustees from time to time	13	Investment policy (noting action undertaken by Trustees in response to previous guidance)
R	To authorise action and minute as required under other sections of <i>Quaker faith & practice</i>	11 15 18	Appointments, including BoD Revision Committee Quaker Recognised Bodies CNC Review
S	To set up an arrangements group and support and working groups to assist its own work as it sees fit	6	ToR for Standing Norms Group and Sustainability Monitoring Group

At a meeting of Meeting for Sufferings

Held at Friends House, London on Saturday 2 February 2019

MfS/19/02/01 Opening Worship

During opening worship we have heard read Advices and Queries 37 and 38 and part of *Quaker faith & practice* 19.32

MfS/19/02/02 Apologies

We receive apologies from Dorset & South Wiltshire AM and West Somerset AM, which have not been able to send a representative on this occasion.

MfS/19/02/03 Membership

Since our last meeting we have received the following nominations for Meeting for Sufferings until the rise of Yearly Meeting 2021:

Nominated:

Jocelyn Bell-Burnell – Quaker Life Central Committee alternate
Arthur Charlton – North London AM alternate
Liz Scurfield – Quaker World Relations Committee representative
Anna Sharman – North London AM representative
Roy Stephenson – Quaker Life Central Committee representative

Further to minute MfS 18/10/21 we have received the following nominations for the new young adult places on Meeting for Sufferings:

Ellen Setterfield
Sophie Bevan
Kathryn Lum
Bianca Rawlinson
Joseph Fuller

We appoint the Friends named.

Release requests received:

Martin Pennock – Quaker Life Central Committee representative
Roy Stephenson – Quaker Life Central Committee alternate
Barbara Windle – Quaker World Relations Committee representative
We release the Friends named and thank them for their service.

Visitors invited to represent area meetings/committees in the absence of the appointed representative or alternate:

Stevie Krayner – Southern Marches AM
Peter Whiteley – Southern East Anglia AM

Other visitors:

Jan Arriens – Southern Marches AM
Tony Fitt – Committee on Clerks
Sally Hartog – Devon AM
Helen Meads – Committee on Clerks
Sherry-Ann Mitchell – BYM Staff, Recording Clerk's Office
Chloe Scaling – BYM staff, RCO intern
Anne van Staveren – BYM staff, Media Relations Officer

We also welcome Joseph Jones, the new editor of *The Friend*.

MfS/19/02/04 Agenda

The clerk has introduced the draft agenda, and we have agreed to this.

MfS/19/02/05 Court and Prison Register

Further to our minute MfS 18/10/06, we note that on 10 December 2018, Lyndsay Burtonshaw, an attender at Brighton Meeting, along with 14 others, was found guilty in Chelmsford Crown Court of intentional disruption of services and endangerment at an aerodrome under the 1990 Aviation and Maritime Security Act.

They were all bailed and expect to be sentenced in February. We are aware that these charges could result in lengthy custodial sentences. We receive minute 19.38 of Leicester AM held on 13 January 2019, about their support for the group.

We also receive minute 19/01/05 of Brighouse West Yorkshire AM letting us know that two of its members, Ian Bray and Chayley Collis, have been arrested undertaking action as part of the Extinction Rebellion movement. At this stage neither has been charged.

We ask for this information to be included in the Court and Prison Register and hold the Friends concerned in the Light.

MfS/19/02/06 Approval of Terms of Reference

We receive paper MfS 2019 02 06 with draft Terms of Reference for the Meeting for Sufferings Standing Nominations Group and the Meeting for Sufferings Sustainability Monitoring Group. With minor changes agreed in the meeting, we approve these Terms of Reference.

MfS/19/02/07 The Post Truth World- Truth and Integrity in the Public Sphere

Further to minute MfS 2018/04/09 we have returned to consideration of Southern Marches Area Meeting's concern about a Quaker response to a post-truth world. The following Area meetings have sent minutes, and we have heard there has also been consideration in many local meetings:

1. Bournemouth Coastal
2. Brighouse West Yorkshire
3. Cambridgeshire
4. Central Yorkshire
5. Chilterns
6. Cornwall
7. Cumberland
8. East Cheshire
9. East Scotland
10. Hampshire & Islands
11. Hertford & Hitchin
12. Ipswich & Diss
13. Kingston & Wandsworth
14. Lancashire Central & North
15. Luton & Leighton
16. Manchester & Warrington

17. Mid-Somerset
18. Mid-Thames
19. Mid-Wales
20. Norfolk & Waveney
21. North East Thames
22. Northamptonshire
23. Northumbria
24. North London
25. North Scotland
26. Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire
27. Oxford & Swindon
28. Pendle Hill
29. Pickering & Hull
30. Sheffield & Balby
31. South London
32. South East London
33. South Wales
34. Staffordshire
35. Surrey & Hampshire Border
36. Sussex East
37. Sussex West
38. Thaxted
39. Wensleydale & Swaledale
40. West Scotland
41. Wirral & Chester
42. York

We receive paper MfS 2019 02 07 continuing an overview, a summary of responses from AMs, and information about relevant work being done by other organisations.

We have been reminded today of our Advices 37 & 38:

Are you honest and truthful in all you say and do? Do you maintain strict integrity in business transactions and in your dealings with individuals and organisations? Do you use money and information entrusted to you with discretion and responsibility? Taking oaths implies a double standard of truth; in choosing to affirm instead, be aware of the claim to integrity that you are making.

If pressure is brought upon you to lower your standard of integrity, are you prepared to resist it? Our responsibilities to God and our neighbour may involve us in taking unpopular stands. Do not let the desire to be sociable, or the fear of seeming peculiar, determine your decisions.

Stevie Kraye, clerk of Southern Marches has introduced our consideration and we have had time to consider what we, as Quakers and as Britain Yearly Meeting, are able to do in response to the ideas and reflections we have received.

Post-truth may be defined as 'relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief'.

We can feel overwhelmed by the actions of the world around us 'None of this feels new. George Fox and other early Friends were equally concerned about being compromised by the world's values' (Pendle Hill AM).

Pickering and Hull AM articulate our own dilemma: 'We are concerned about the difficulty distinguishing truth in the modern world and about the tendency to act for personal advantage while disregarding others. We affirm our commitment to integrity in our personal lives and believe that this would shine through our interactions with others.' 'We reaffirm our testimony to truth' (Brighouse West Yorkshire AM).

'Quakers have a powerful contribution to make by following our commitment to plain speech, simplicity and speaking truth to power. In the silence we go deeply into the spiritual dimension of truth, seeking to discern what is true to our experience.' (NE Thames AM).

We have no doubt about the importance of this concern but only about our capacity. Great courage is needed to engage with untruth, particularly on social media and we need to encourage and support each other. We have been reminded that dishonesty isn't new, but social media means untruths can be disseminated much more widely and quickly than in the past.

Social media has great benefits as well, and can help us in our search for the truth. However, logical and reasoned response alone may not be the most effective way to engage with those with whom we disagree. Do we need a bigger and wider understanding of truth – and 'courage to love'?

Our testimony to truth and integrity underpins everything we do as Quakers both personally and corporately. It is how we do what we do and is consciously woven into our corporate work including our concern about values in education, working for nuclear disarmament, sustainability, challenging militarism, working for justice and speaking out on many issues about which we know some truths.

We have heard that staff are working with other civil society organisations to continue to challenge the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014 and other regulations which limit the ability of civil society to speak truth to power.

We have been reminded that we as Quakers can offer spaces for dialogue, learning and support. We have personal responsibility to not spread rumour or speculation and even if we don't have enough knowledge, we do care about open, honest and respectful discourse.

We do not suggest any new committee or programme of work at this time but hope that our representatives will share, within their area meetings, the information contained in the Appendix of relevant organisations with whom we may work. Friends may wish to network at area meeting level and we hope that Southern Marches AM may be able to coordinate this in the first instance.

We thank Stevie for being with us today and commit ourselves to ensuring that we uphold truth and integrity within our lives, in the same way that we are committed to peace in our lives. These testimonies are fundamental to our identity as Quakers.

MfS/19/02/08 Yearly Meeting 2019

Clare Scott Booth, clerk designate of Yearly Meeting 2019, has told us about the agenda planned and prepared by Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee.

Yearly Meeting 2019 will be an opportunity for Friends to examine our privilege and assumptions of privilege, and in particular how privilege impacts our ability to act on our urgent Quaker concerns regarding climate justice and sustainability, and inclusion and diversity.

Information about Yearly Meeting has been circulated to Friends and is available on the BYM website. Everyone is encouraged to engage in preparation, whether attending or not.

MfS/19/02/09 MfS Annual Report to Yearly Meeting 2019

We have considered the draft Annual Report of our work in 2018. With minor amendments agreed by us today, we forward the report to Yearly Meeting.

MfS 2019/02/10 Dates for Yearly Meeting 2021 and 2022

Minute MfS/11/02/8 determined a three-yearly pattern for the dates of Yearly Meeting. We receive minute YMAC 2018/10/15 proposing that Yearly Meeting should be held 30 April-3 May 2021 and 27-30 May 2022, both at Friends House London. We agree to this.

MfS/19/02/11 Appointments

a) Central Nominations Committee has brought forward the following names for service or release as indicated:

Friends Trusts Limited

To serve from 1 June 2019 – 21 May 2022

Nominated:

David Harries – South Wales AM

Re-nominated:

Peter Green – North East Thames AM (2nd term)

Nigel Barnes – Northumbria AM (2nd term)

Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations

To serve from 1 May 2019 to 30 April 2022

Nominated:

Janet Scott – Cambridgeshire AM

Judith Mason – Banbury & Evesham AM

Representatives to European Yearly Meetings

To serve as representative to the following Yearly Meetings in 2019, should BYM receive invitation:

German YM (3-6 October 2019)

Annette Duensing – Luton & Leighton AM (re-nominated 2nd term)

Sweden YM (30 May – 2 June 2019)

Matthew Alton – Sussex West AM

Review Group to Quaker Stewardship Committee

To serve with immediate effect until the work is completed:

Deborah Rowlands – South Wales AM / CCR De Cymru

These names being acceptable, the Friends are appointed or released, and we thank them for their service

b) Yearly Meeting Nominating Group has brought forward the following names:

Committee on Clerks

Request for release from:

Oliver Robertson – Mid-Thames AM

Central Nominations Committee:

Appointed between meetings

Beryl Milner – Leeds AM - to serve from December 2018 until YMG 2020

Fran Hicks – West Somerset AM – to serve from January 2019 until YM 2021

These names being acceptable, the Friends are appointed or released, and we thank them for their service.

c) The co-clerks of CNC outlined the process by which they sifted through the 200 names suggested for membership of the Book of Discipline Review Committee.

The diversity of the group is multi-dimensional in age, geography, gender, language and skills and we thank the CNC for their hard work in finding 24 names in addition to their usual annual round. The following names are brought to us today:

Book of Discipline Revision Committee

(24 Friends in total to serve)

1 Friend to serve as assistant clerk with immediate effect to the end of the process

Nominated:

Michael Phipps – Chilterns AM

4 Friends to serve as committee members with immediate effect to Yearly Meeting 2022

Nominated:

Anya Nanning Ramamurthy – North London AM

James Weir – Cumberland AM

Chris Alton – South London AM

Judith Thompson – Devon AM

Further committee members to serve with immediate effect to the end of the process

Craig Barnett – Sheffield & Balby AM

Tas Cooper – Oxford & Swindon AM

Ben Pink Dandelion – Pendle Hill AM

Joycelin Dawes – North London AM

Rhiannon Grant – Central England AM
simon gray – Central England AM
Jessica Hubbard-Bailey – Sheffield & Balby AM
Catherine James – North Wales AM / CCR Gogledd Cymru
Jennifer Kavanagh – London West AM
Sally Kikaya – North West London AM
Matthew Moore – Northumbria AM
Eleri Pengelly – South London AM
Rachel Muers – Leeds AM
Alice Southern – South Wales AM / CCR De Cymru
Nuala Watt – West Scotland AM
Ben Wood – Leeds AM
Mary Woodward – South East Scotland AM

These names being acceptable, we appoint our Friends accordingly.

MfS/19/02/12 BYM Trustees

Caroline Nursey, clerk of BYM Trustees, reported on the Trustees meeting held on 16 November 2018, drawing particular attention to the investment decision re Israel/Palestine (BYM 2018-11-05c) and strategic priorities (BYM 2018-11-15). We were able to ask questions.

David Olver (Assistant Clerk) and Linda Batten (YM Treasurer) introduced themselves, as did new Trustees Ellie Harding and Carolyn Hayman.

We thank Caroline and all Trustees for their work.

MfS/19/02/13 Investments in Israel and Palestine

Further to minute MfS/18/10/19 we receive minute BYMT-2018-11-05c, confirming that Trustees have adopted a revised investment policy, which takes into account the guidance of Meeting for sufferings.

The policy is available on the BYM website.

MfS/19/02/14 Current system of representation on MfS

We have considered paper MfS 2019 02 11 Representatives and Alternates. The current system of representatives and alternates began in mid-2012, and is now in its third triennium. Arrangements Group consider that now is a good time to review the approach.

We are not able to unite with any of the options proposed. We ask Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group to consider the matter further and welcome comments from Area Meetings.

MfS/19/02/15 Quaker Recognised Bodies

Further to minute MfS/15/12/17, we receive paper MfS 2019/02/12 recommending groups for registration as Quaker Recognised Bodies.

We agree to register the following groups for five years, with registration to be reviewed by February 2024:

External

John Horniman's Children's Trust

Free-standing

Quaker Socialist Society

Quakers Uniting in Publications

Linked

Dabane Support Fund

We agree to register the following groups for two years, with registration to be reviewed by February 2021:

Emergent

Friends in Tune

Roots of Resistance

MfS/19/02/16 Quakers in the First World War

Further to minute MfS 2018 07 08, we receive minute 18.09.68a of Lincolnshire AQM held on 16th September 2018; minute 10 of Hampshire & Islands AM held on 13 October 2018; minute 45/18 of Mid-Wales AM / CCR Canolbarth Cymru held on 21st September 2018 and minute 2018.47 of Cyfarfod y Cyfeillion yng Nghymru / Meeting of Friends in Wales held on 27 October 2018.

It is good to know that some Area Meetings and Friends in Wales have considered this further. We recognise today the deaths of at least 265 Friends who died in the First World War, including many who served within the military establishment.

We ask that a record of these names be created in the Friends House Library and ask Friends to forward any names to be recorded on this list to the Recording Clerk.

MfS/2019/02/17 Simpler meetings

We receive minute 51/8 of North Somerset AM held on 10 November, which considered the BYM initiative to help make our meetings simpler to run. The AM is not ready to make specific proposals but unites with the concern to encourage BYM to look again at our structures and organisation, which could reduce the administrative load on Trustees and Area Meetings.

We recognise there are potential benefits in reviewing, re-shaping and simplifying structures and process in our local and area meetings, and also in our national committees.

We forward this minute to Quaker Life Central Committee, which oversees the 'Simpler Meetings' project.

We also forward this minute to BYM Trustees, encouraging them in relation to the strategic priorities which aim to develop a simple church supported by a simple charity, to reinvigorate Quakerism.

MfS/19/02/18 Central Nominations Committee review

We receive Central Nominations Committee's minute 2018 11 35 Review of Terms of Reference.

There was a major review of Central Nominations Committee (CNC) in 2015 (minute MfS 2015/12/10 refers). When agreeing new terms of reference in December 2015, Meeting for Sufferings asked CNC to provide an update on its new way of working after there had been a year of implementation of their revised terms of reference; this report was received in mid-2017 (minute MfS 2017/06/10). It was also agreed that the terms of reference and way of working would be reviewed in three years' time.

This review is now due. We hope CNC itself will undertake the review, but this can be done when it is ready, bearing in mind that it is dealing with particular pressures at present.

MfS/18/11/19 Closing minute

We closed our time together with worship.

Anne Ullathorne
Clerk