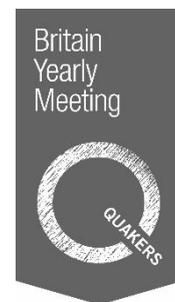


Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain

At the yearly meeting held by video conference
15 November 2020



Minutes

Minute 1: Clerks

The Yearly Meeting Committee on Clerks nominates the following Friends to serve as clerk and assistant clerks for Yearly Meeting 2020, serving until the first session of Yearly Meeting Gathering 2021:

Clerk	Clare Scott Booth	London West AM
First Assistant Clerk	Siobhan Haire	North London AM
Second Assistant Clerk	Adwoa Bittle	East Scotland AM

These nominations being acceptable, we appoint the Friends named accordingly.

Minute 2: Epistle/Testimony

During our opening worship, parts of the epistle from the Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand – Te Hāhi Tūhauwiri, 2020, have been read.

Minute 3: Yearly Meeting 2020

Further to minute 48 of Yearly Meeting 2019 we record with sorrow that we were prevented from holding Yearly Meeting Gathering at the University of Bath from 1–8 August 2020, due to public health concerns arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. Instead this Yearly Meeting is being held virtually online. We are saddened by the loss of this and many other opportunities to meet physically together, and thankful for the access to technology that has enabled us to remain connected with one another as Friends.

We note Meeting for Sufferings minute MfS20/06/09 Yearly Meeting, which calls this yearly meeting and agrees to a proposal to hold Yearly Meeting Gathering in 2021 at the University of Bath from 31 July to 6 August 2021, in place of the Yearly Meeting previously called for 30 April to 3 May 2021. BYM Trustees, Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee and staff will continue to monitor risks and act upon public health advice as their planning for this gathering develops.

We record that due to the nature and short length of this Yearly Meeting, some aspects of our usual practice set out in chapter 6 of *Quaker faith & practice* are not possible or appropriate on this occasion, noting in particular sections 6.16 (Time of Meeting), 6.17

(Yearly Meeting Committees), 6.23 (Epistle Drafting Committee) and 6.24 (Committee to Examine Minutes).

The Friends appointed by Minute 7 of Yearly Meeting 2019 to serve as Elders until the end of Yearly Meeting Gathering 2020 are serving as Elders during this Yearly Meeting. Other Friends appointed to service until the beginning or end of Yearly Meeting Gathering 2020 will instead come to the end of their terms of service at this Yearly Meeting.

We receive and accept the agenda as listed in section 4 of *Agenda and Notes*.

Minute 4: Welcome to all

We welcome everyone who is attending any part of Yearly Meeting this year. This year 959 people have registered in advance, to attend. Of this number, there are 120 non-members attending with permission, and 18 representatives and other visitors from yearly meetings and Friends' groups around the world.

Minute 5: Report of Yearly Meeting Committee on Clerks

The Yearly Meeting Committee on Clerks brings forward nominations to serve as follows:

Britain Yearly Meeting trustees

To serve 1 January–31 December 2021

Clerk	Caroline Nursey	London West AM
Assistant Clerk	Graham Torr	York AM
Yearly Meeting Treasurer	Linda Batten	Sheffield & Balby AM

These nominations being acceptable, we appoint the Friends named accordingly.

Minute 6: Yearly Meeting Nominating Group

We reappoint the following Friends to serve as the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group from the rise of Yearly Meeting 2020 until the rise of Yearly Meeting 2021.

Elizabeth Backhouse (convener)	Brighouse West Yorkshire AM
Margaret Burt	London West AM
Rachel Frith	South East Scotland AM
Sasha Lawson-Frost	Young Friends General Meeting/Oxford LM
Janet Scott	Cambridgeshire AM
John Sheldon	Central England AM
Kellie Turner	Manchester & Warrington AM

Minute 7: The work of our national representative body: receipt of annual report from Meeting for Sufferings

We receive and accept the annual report for 2019 from Meeting for Sufferings. The report is at Appendix A in *Agenda and Notes* and has been introduced by the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings.

We give thanks for the service of all Friends appointed to Meeting for Sufferings. We are grateful for all their continued work on our behalf at this time.

Minute 8: The work of our yearly meeting trustees: receipt of annual report of Britain Yearly Meeting trustees

We receive and accept the *Trustees' annual report* including financial statements for 2019. The clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees and the Yearly Meeting Treasurer have introduced this report on the trustees' work and responsibilities.

We have been encouraged to hear of the work of the local development workers, and the sense of connection and energy which they are bringing to the area meetings they are already working with. We look forward to all of our area meetings having a local development worker within reach.

We were glad to hear that the discernment of trustees felt spirit-led, as they have engaged with difficult issues through a new format. We thank BYM Trustees for their work on our behalf.

Minute 9: Review of Central Nominations Committee and Committee on Clerks

Further to Minute 23 of Yearly Meeting Gathering 2017, we receive minutes MfS 19/12/15 and MfS 18/11/17 of Meeting for Sufferings which set out work done to review the terms of reference of Central Nominations Committee, and the recommendations of a review of Committee on Clerks.

Meeting for Sufferings, Central Nominations Committee and Committee on Clerks have been working on this for some time, along with Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees for the recommendations concerning Britain Yearly Meeting trustees' clerks. We are thankful for this careful process of discernment on our behalf, and accept their work and recommendations as follows:

- Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees should bring to Yearly Meeting nominations of Friends to serve as Clerk of BYM trustees and Yearly Meeting Treasurer. These appointments will be made for a term of three years. BYM Trustees should appoint their own Assistant Clerk from amongst their number.
- Central Nominations Committee should take on the work of bringing nominations for the clerks of Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings.
- Central Nominations Committee will establish subgroups and standing search groups, with additional Friends brought in to serve on them as needed. This

will enable expertise and capacity to nurture Friends before and during service.

Accordingly we lay down the Committee on Clerks, giving thanks for the work of the many Friends who have served to nominate clerks, and we accept the new terms of reference for Central Nominations Committee.

Minute 10: Meeting for Sufferings: call for nominations for the triennium 2021–2024

In accordance with sections 7.05–7.08 of *Quaker faith & practice*,

- a) Area meetings are required to nominate representatives to Meeting for Sufferings for the triennial period from Yearly Meeting 2021 until Yearly Meeting 2024.

Representation from area meetings is on the basis of two Friends per area meeting, one designated as the representative and the other as an alternate.
- b) The following standing committees are required to nominate representatives and alternates to Meeting for Sufferings for the triennial period from Yearly Meeting 2021 until Yearly Meeting 2024:
 - Quaker Life Central Committee
 - Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee
 - Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations
 - Quaker World Relations Committee
- c) The following bodies are asked to nominate representatives and alternates to Meeting for Sufferings for the triennial period from Yearly Meeting 2021 until Yearly Meeting 2024:
 - Young Friends General Meeting
 - General Meeting for Scotland
 - Meeting of Friends in Wales.

All nominations will come to Yearly Meeting 2021 for appointment. Area meetings, committees and other bodies making nominations are reminded of the requirements and advice contained in sections 7.05–7.08 of *Quaker faith & practice*.

Minute 11: Delegation to Meeting for Sufferings

We ask Meeting for Sufferings to act on behalf of Yearly Meeting on the following matters:

- Receipt of any further reports from our nominations committees requiring attention before Yearly Meeting in 2021
- Record of Meeting for Sufferings membership changes
- Receipt of the Tabular Statement

- Receipt and consideration of reports of:
 - Central Nominations Committee
 - Friends Trusts Ltd
 - Quaker Housing Trust
 - Quaker Stewardship Committee
- Receipt of any other reports requiring attention
- Any other matters requiring attention before YM 2021.

Minute 12: Testimony

Part of the testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Claire Watkins (pages 39–41 of the printed version of *Testimonies*) has been read.

Minute 13: Worship

We have met in worship together, to know one another in that which is eternal.

Minute 14: Receipt of the Yearly Meeting draft Epistle

Arrangements Committee has submitted a draft Epistle which has been accepted after amendment. It has been signed by the clerk on behalf of the meeting. It reads as follows:

Epistle of Britain Yearly Meeting, held online on Sunday 15 November 2020

To all Friends everywhere

“The human mind may devise many plans, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will be established.” (Proverbs 19:21, NRSV)

This letter of greeting comes to you in a year when so many plans have been disrupted, along with our ways of working and of meeting. We had planned a week-long gathering for up to 2,000 Friends of all ages to worship and build community, and to discern leadings for our yearly meeting on “Listening, prophecy and reconciliation: allyship in a climate emergency”. We had hoped to welcome among us many Friends from other yearly meetings. Instead, due to the coronavirus pandemic and continued uncertainty over what would be possible, our Yearly Meeting is short, held by electronic means, and for only necessary business and to worship together.

Nevertheless our greetings to you all are as warm and loving as always. We have been learning again the importance of faithfulness in keeping our meetings and building our Quaker communities, whilst discovering new and unexpected ways to connect and worship together. One hundred years since the first world gathering of Friends came together to affirm a worldwide opposition to war and to building the social conditions for peace, we are thankful to belong to our world family.

The issues of privilege and climate injustice, which have been exercising our yearly meeting, are still urgent. Inequalities have been exacerbated by the pandemic and

the response to it. Tackling systemic racism is a spiritual imperative. The impact of changes in the climate grows. Work and learning on these issues continues around our yearly meeting.

In these extraordinary and challenging times, we have seen that it is possible to make changes in our way of life. We have hope. We trust that the leadings of love and truth will come right.

Signed in and on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting

Clare Scott Booth
Clerk

Minute 15: Epistles from other yearly meetings

We have received greetings from Friends around the world via epistles from 39 yearly meetings and other bodies, available on the website of Friends World Committee for Consultation and listed in *Testimonies* (page 5)

Minute 16: Testimonies

The following testimonies to the Grace of God as shown in the life of deceased Friends have been received (pages 8–42 of the printed edition of *Testimonies*) in addition to those from which extracts have been read in our sessions.

Warren Adams
Judith Mary Effer
Marion Fairweather
Sheila J. Gatiss
Joyce Gee
Joan Gibson
David Henshaw
Kate Joyce
Richard Lacock
Lesley Parker
Erika Margarethe Zintl Pearce
Angela Maureen Pivac
Margaret Rowan
Peter Rutter
Margaret Slee
Rachel Smith
Allan N. Wright

Minute 17: Thanks

We record our thanks to all those who have made this meeting possible, and to our staff and volunteers who have served us so well in difficult circumstances over the past year. We uphold those working on the planning for our Yearly Meeting Gathering in 2021.

Minute 18: Naming of clerks for Yearly Meeting Gathering 2021

The Central Nominations Committee expects to bring the following names to serve as Yearly Meeting clerks for 2021:

Clerk:	Clare Scott Booth	London West AM
First Assistant Clerk:	Siobhan Haire	North London AM
Second Assistant Clerk:	Adwoa Bittle	East Scotland AM

We ask the Friends named above to undertake the work of preparing for Yearly Meeting 2021 as required, expecting to appoint them at the first session of that Yearly Meeting.

Minute 19: Concluding Minute

The Truth is one and the same always, and though ages and generations pass away, and one generation goes and another comes, yet the word and power and spirit of the living God endures for ever, and is the same and never changes.

Margaret Fell, *Quaker faith & practice* 19.61

This Yearly Meeting has been a very different experience, and yet the enduring spirit of the living God has been still present. We travel this strange landscape as a community. We do not need to be perfect, but to do our best. In this year of uncertainty and change, loss and disruption, may we find together, from that word and power and spirit, the courage to keep on responding faithfully.

There being no further business for the Yearly Meeting, we separate, hoping to meet again from 31 July–5 August 2021, should nothing occur to prevent.

Clare Scott Booth
Clerk