



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

7 February 2020

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

Meeting for Sufferings 1 February 2020

Dear Friends,

Thank you all for your contributions to the meeting on Saturday last, which I hope you found varied and interesting.

Josh Habgood-Coote's report on the work of the Quaker Council for European Affairs was greeted with much enthusiasm, which I hope you will feel able to share with your area meetings. The themes of rethinking security, peace education, the welfare of child migrants and the combating of hate-speech are close to so many hearts. For more information about the work, including how to make a financial contribution if you (as an individual) or your local or area meeting would like to, please go to www.qcea.org

As you know, BYM trustees attend all our meetings. They hadn't met since before the December MfS so it was good this time to have the opportunity to hear about their forthcoming agenda and to be reminded how much they are guided in their work by our vision document *Our faith in the future*. We heard more about meeting-centred support, regional hubs and the roll-out of local development workers, and many of you are very excited at the plans for regionalisation.

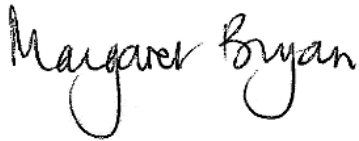
David Loxton (Head of Communications and Fundraising) and Alex Fulton (Impact and Projects Officer) challenged us with questions about communication, which you may wish to share locally – see page 3. Working out **what** to communicate, **when**, **how** and **to whom**, and with **what aim** in mind, is as important in our local meetings as at Friends House level.

Stimulated by reflections from our representatives who attended the recent Diversity and Inclusion conference, we spent time in small groups exploring our own thoughts and fears. This conversation is going on throughout the Yearly Meeting in 2020 and beyond.

Clare Scott Booth told us about the programme for Yearly Meeting Gathering at the University of Bath 1-7 August, and details are available at www.quaker.org.uk/ym. The closing date for bookings is 30th April – parents wishing children aged 0-14 to attend the Children and Young People's programme are advised to book as soon as possible. Nominations from area meetings for Junior Yearly Meeting (14-17 year-olds) will close on 10th March.

If you have any comments to make following the meeting please contact me via sufferings@quaker.org.uk

In peace

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Bryan". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of "Margaret" and "Bryan" being capitalized and prominent.

Margaret Bryan
Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings

Speaking Out

WHERE ARE YOU ON THIS CONTINUUM?



WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FOR YOU?



Strategic priorities for Britain Yearly Meeting





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

At a meeting of

Meeting for Sufferings

Held Saturday 1 February 2020 at Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ

Minutes

MfS/20/02/01 Opening Worship

During opening worship we have heard the postscript of chapter 23 of Quaker faith & practice read.

We have also remembered former representatives to Meeting for Sufferings who have recently died.

MfS/20/02/02 Membership of Meeting for Sufferings

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

Release requests received:

Nicola Hoskin-Stone – QCCIR alternate

Kathryn Lum – Young Adult Friend

Marion McNaughton – Manchester & Warrington AM representative

Julian Rutherford – Southern Marches AM representative

Maggie Taylor-Sanders – Southern Marches AM alternate

Nominated:

Jan Arriens – Southern Marches AM alternate

Judith Mason – QCCIR alternate

Maggie Taylor-Sanders – Southern Marches AM representative

We appoint the Friends named and thank the Friends released for their service.

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

Voirrey Faragher – Cornwall AM

Penny Osborne-Gajewski – Worcestershire and Shropshire AM

Other visitors:

David Loxton – BYM Staff, Communications and Services

Alex Fulton – BYM Staff, Recording Clerk's Office

Josh Habgood-Coote – BYM Representative to General Assembly of Quaker Council for European Affairs

Neil Jarvis – BYM Staff, Recording Clerk's Office

Sherry-Ann Mitchell – BYM Staff, Recording Clerk's Office

Anne van Staveren – BYM Staff, Media Relations Officer

MfS/20/02/03 Agenda

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

MfS/20/02/04 Prison and Court register

Heather Rostron, an attender at Sheffield Central local meeting, was arrested during Extinction Rebellion actions on 22 April 2019, 8 October 2019 and 10 October 2019 and for each arrest has been charged and appeared in court. On 1 November 2019, in the City of London Magistrates' Court, she was found guilty of wilful obstruction of the highway and failing to comply with a condition imposed by a senior police officer under section 14 of the Public Order Act 1986. She was given 6 months' conditional discharge, and court costs and victim surcharge amounting to £105. On 22 October 2019, in Westminster Magistrates' Court, she was found guilty of failing to comply with a condition imposed by a senior police officer under section 14 of the Public Order Act 1986. She was given 6 months' conditional discharge. On this occasion, the Crown Prosecution Service has subsequently said the proceedings may be re-opened, following a judgement in the High Court on 9 November 2019 that the police condition was imposed unlawfully. On 7 November 2019, at Westminster Magistrates' Court, she was found guilty of aggravated trespass and given 12 months' conditional discharge, and court costs and victim surcharge of £106.

John Lynes, a member of Sussex East Area Meeting, was found guilty at Folkestone Magistrates' Court on 5 December 2019 of breaching Section 14 of the Public Order Act on 21 September, in the course of an Extinction Rebellion event. He was given a conditional discharge for 18 months and ordered to pay court costs.

We agree to include this information in the Prison and Court Register. We hold Heather Rostron and John Lynes in the Light.

MfS/20/02/05 Quaker Council for European Affairs

Josh Habgood-Coote, BYM representative to Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA), has spoken to his written report (paper MfS 2020 02 06).

QCEA is based in Brussels, in a building owned by BYM. It is supported financially by the yearly meetings of both EU members and non-member states, and works with the Council of Europe, NATO and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, as well as the EU. There are two key areas of work:

The peace programme of QCEA aims to promote a process of 'rethinking security' and sets out to challenge the dominant narrative that conflict is best resolved by military means. The publication 'Building Peace Together' (2018) has reached a wide range of stakeholders and been translated into seven languages. It has been followed by a Peace Education report in January 2019. Peacebuilding is everyone's business.

Highlights of the human rights programme include work on child immigration detention and raising awareness of online hate speech, through a pilot project called #ChooseRespect.

Alongside high quality policy research and advocacy, QCEA engages in 'quiet diplomacy' – bringing together people in an informal, off-the-record setting to build common ground. The Quaker reputation for trustworthiness and integrity is vital in facilitating discussions that lead to real change.

Friends were impressed by the report and interested to hear about QCEA's financial situation. We affirmed the need for Friends in Britain to continue (and ideally to increase) support for the work of QCEA, both materially and spiritually.

The need for peace, and work towards it, has not lessened overnight, as we have left the EU.

We thank Josh for being with us today.

MfS/20/02/06 Joint Britain Yearly Meeting and Ireland Yearly Meeting statement

We are meeting on the first day after our exit from the European Union.

We welcome a statement issued jointly by Clare Scott Booth, clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting and Denise Gabuzda, clerk of Ireland Yearly Meeting.

MfS/20/02/07 BYM Trustees

Trustees have not met since our December meeting, so this was an opportunity for Caroline Nursey, clerk of BYM Trustees, to talk about the broader agenda of trustees work over the coming months and to seek the discernment of Friends.

Some trustee decisions need to be made quickly, for a variety of operational reasons. Other decisions can be explored at greater length, and trustees are keen to engage in more of a conversation with Meeting for Sufferings to test such matters.

One of the most important matters considered in 2019 was the setting of strategic priorities for the work of BYM the charity. In doing this trustees were guided by the vision expressed by MfS in Our Faith in the Future. The work aims to:

- Encourage thriving Quaker communities, reversing the risk of an ageing and declining membership
- Work for a sustainable and peaceful world, responding to the twin emergencies of climate change and violent conflict
- Simplify structures and practices, including the revision of Quaker faith & practice.
- And to do all of this in ways which are distinctively Quaker, integrated across our Yearly Meeting, and well-governed.

Meeting-centred support, regional hubs and local development workers are all part of the first strand of encouraging thriving Quaker communities.

A number of questions were posed about plans for regionalisation and local development workers:

- What will be the impact at Friends House?
- What will be the balance between national specialist and other generalist support?
- Also, how long can we sustain deficit budget?

We were assured that the process of change will be gradual and the wealth of expertise within BYM staff will not be lost. Regionalisation is welcomed by many.

We are thankful to have had this opportunity to engage with trustees and we hold them in the Light.

MfS/20/02/08 Speaking Out – being distinctively Quaker

David Loxton, Head of Communications and Fundraising, and Alex Fulton, Impact and Projects Officer, have spoken to us about their work. They sought guidance on two questions:

- Where is the right balance between being compelled to witness and compelled to achieve change?
- Is it better to be distinctively Quaker or to voice all concerns equally?

Friends engaged enthusiastically with these questions and are encouraged to share them widely.

We thank David and Alex for being with us today.

MfS/20/02/9 Appointments

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

Book of Discipline Revision Committee

For immediate release

Ben Wood – Leeds AM

BYM Representatives to European Meetings

Ireland Yearly Meeting

For reappointment to serve 16-19 April 2020
Tina Cunningham – West Scotland AM (2nd term)

Finland Yearly Meeting

For reappointment to serve 17 to 19 April 2020
Mary Woodward – South East Scotland AM (2nd term)

Switzerland Yearly Meeting

For appointment to serve 29 May to 1 June 2020
Rachel Malloch – Lancashire Central & North AM (1st term)

German Yearly Meeting

For appointment to serve 22 to 25 October 2020
Jessica Bishop – North London AM (1st term)

France Yearly Meeting

For appointment, to serve 30 October to 2 November 2020
Joyce Taylor – East Scotland AM (1st term)

Nordic Yearly Meeting

For appointment, to serve from 25 to 28 June 2020
Matt Alton – Young Friends General Meeting and Sussex West AM (1st term)

Friends Trusts Limited

For reappointment

To serve from 1 May 2020 to 31 May 2023
Paul Wyatt – Worcestershire & Shropshire AM (2nd term)

Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations

For reappointment

To serve from 1 May 2020 to 30 April 2023
Lynda Williams – York AM (2nd term)

To serve immediately until 30 April 2022
Penelope Cummins – Thaxted AM (1st term)

Quaker Housing Trust

For appointment

To serve from Annual Retirement Meeting 2020 to Annual Retirement Meeting 2023
William Bewley – Cumberland AM (1st term)

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee

For appointment

To serve immediately until the end of Yearly Meeting Gathering 2020

Heather Rowlands – Central England AM (1st term)

Judi Brill – Bristol AM (1st term)

Released from service

Noel Staples – Cambridgeshire AM

b) Yearly Meeting Nominating Group brings forward the following name for service:

Central Nominations Committee

To serve from immediately until the end of Yearly Meeting Gathering 2020

Ethel Livermore – South London AM

We appoint and release the Friends named accordingly, and thank them for their service.

MfS/20/02/10 Diversity and Inclusion

Sophie Bevan and Sam McNair represented us at the second Diversity and Inclusion gathering held at Woodbrooke, 17-19 January, and we have heard reports from these Friends. Kathy Gollin, Ivan Hutnik, Jenny Routledge and Mary Wilkinson also attended. After hearing some reflections of the event we spent time in small groups considering questions arising from the gathering.

In our plenary session we reflected on what we could do next as a result of these discussions.

We have welcomed the fact that this conference has enabled a range of voices to be heard, and have expressed our thanks for the diversity amongst Friends.

Nevertheless, we recognise the limitations of our inclusiveness and our fear of getting things wrong. It is in accepting the fear of our imperfection that we may be open to letting God intervene in our lives.

MfS/20/02/11 Quaker Recognised Bodies

Further to minute MfS/15/12/17, we receive paper MfS/20/02/12 recommending one group for registration as Quaker Recognised Body.

We agree to register the following group for five years, with registration to be reviewed by the end of February 2025:

Free Standing

The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust

MfS/20/02/12 Yearly Meeting Gathering 2020

Clare Scott Booth, clerk of Yearly Meeting, has told us about plans for Yearly Meeting Gathering to be held at the University of Bath, 1-7 August 2020. The theme of the gathering, discerned jointly with Junior Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee, is: 'Listening, prophecy and reconciliation: allyship in a climate emergency'.

There is preparation material for all Friends, whether attending the Gathering or not. Full details are available at www.quaker.org.uk/ym

MfS/20/02/13 MfS Annual Report to Yearly Meeting 2020

We have considered the draft Annual Report of our work in 2020, revised in the light of comments received before the meeting.

We agree this report today and forward it to Yearly Meeting.

Margaret Bryan
Clerk