

Follow up letter



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

9 October 2020

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

Meeting for Sufferings 2-4 October 2020

Dear Friends

When Friends in 1668 agreed 'to settle a meeting, to see one another's faces and open our hearts to one another' they could not have envisaged the form that would take over 350 years later. I'm sure I am not alone in yearning for a return to meeting-in-person but at the same time I continue to be heartened by Friends' adaptability and willingness to engage prayerfully in the process of meeting online.

We are still experimenting with this, dividing the business of what should have been our annual residential meeting into sessions on three consecutive days as well as offering a special interest meeting on QCCIR at the beginning of the week, and I look forward to receiving any comments you might have that will help Arrangements Group plan for the future.

Please email sufferings@quaker.org.uk

- Our evening on Sustainability matters provided food for thought and ways to take action, and also a chance to hear from QPSWCC about the way in which their strategy is developing.
- Trustees brought us news of their work since our last meeting and shared with us the papers concerning the naming of the William Penn Room at Friends House. Our following session in small groups provided an opportunity to engage with three questions on the topic of racism, and it is clear from the comments recorded that Friends wish to continue exploring – and acting – on the issue. A list of resources is attached: it is by no means exhaustive, simply what was mentioned at the time with the addition of links to Churches Together webinar recordings.

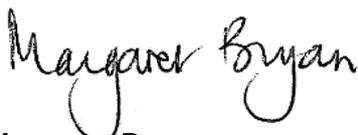
- Our Sunday morning session began with the Book of Discipline Review Committee co-clerks, Rosie Carnall and Catherine Brewer, outlining the principles and themes that have been discerned to underpin their work. I'm sure we all look forward to hearing how the review develops. Rosie and Catherine invited Friends to engage with their work and would also welcome invitations to visit meetings and groups.

As you know our next meeting, in December, will be held online, and Arrangements Group will be working with Children and Young People's staff to plan for the Young People's Participation in this event. We will also be looking at possibly repeating the experiment of additional special interest meetings. Meanwhile, let us go forth from our meeting with a renewed will to make change.

In the words of William Penn (from QfP 24.03, 1693):

Let us then try what love will do

In peace



Margaret Bryan
Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings

Useful links

- Maud Grainger, Woodbrooke's Learning and Research Co-ordinator, can be reached on Maud.Grainger@woodbrooke.org.uk regarding the 'Climate crisis: spiritual nurture and learning' project.
- Contact Livvy Hanks, BYM's Programme Manager for Economics and Sustainability Project Development and Programmes, on oliviah@quaker.org.uk if you wish to follow up on COP26 or 'Build Back Better'.
- This webpage <https://www.quaker.org.uk/resources/quaker-faith-and-practice/revising-quaker-faith-practice> gives details about revising our Book of Discipline. It includes the various ways for Friends to get involved and there are details for how to contribute suggestions and share pieces of writing. For the online creative project, follow <https://padlet.com/bdrc/OpenToNewLight>. The committee can be contacted on qfp@quaker.org.uk.

The following papers are included in this mailing:

- Functions checklist
- A list of resources following the session on racism
- MfS minutes October 2020

Meeting for Sufferings: Functions Checklist (*Quaker faith & practice* Chapter 7.02)

	Requirement	Oct 20	Comments
A	To set the priorities for the centrally managed work	9, 14	
B	To issue public statements in the name of BYM		
C	To receive regular interim reports from BYM trustees	10	
D	To receive the BYM trustees' annual report & accounts for information		
E	To make a report on its own activities to YM	12	Review of QSC
F	To determine the dates of YM		
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, 7, 8, 11, 17	
H	To keep under review and to test as appropriate the existing and new concerns referred to it by AMs and others	11, 14, 17	
I	To foster communication throughout the yearly meeting	13, 15, 16, 17	
J	To receive minutes from area meetings	15, 16	
K	To make appropriate entries in the prison and court register		
L	To appoint representatives to attend other Yearly Meetings		
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		
R	To authorise action and minute as required under other sections of Quaker Faith and Practice		
S	To set up an arrangements group and support and working groups to assist its own work as it sees fit	18	Request to Arrangements Group to prioritise delegated Yearly Meeting business

Racism – resources suggested during Meeting for Sufferings, October 2020

Non-Fiction

Tribes: How Our Need to Belong Can Make or Break Society by David Lammy
Little, Brown (2020) ISBN: 9781472128737

Brit(ish): On Race, Identity and Belonging by Afua Hirsch, *Vintage Publishing (2018)*
ISBN: 9781784705039

Black and British: A short, essential history by David Olusoga, *Pan Macmillan (2020)*
ISBN: 9781529063394

Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire by Akala, *John Murray Press (2019)*
ISBN: 9781473661233

A Portrait of English Racism by Ann Dummett *Penguin books (1973) ISBN*
9780140216073

Afropean by Johnny Pitts, *Penguin Books Ltd (2020) ISBN: 9780141987286*

Fiction

Girl, Woman, Other by Bernardine Evaristo *Penguin Books (2019) ISBN*
9780241984994

Home Fire by Kamila Shamsie *Bloomsbury Publishing (2020) ISBN*
9781408886793

Autobiography

Red Dust Road by Jackie Kay *Pan Macmillan (2017) ISBN: 9781509858392*

My Name is Why by Lemn Sissay *Canongate Books (2020) ISBN 9781786892362*

The Life and Rhymes of Benjamin Zephaniah by Benjamin Zephaniah *Simon & Schuster (2019) ISBN: 9781471168956*

TV/Video

The School That Tried To End Racism - 2x 60 min episodes *Channel 4 (2020)*

Also

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland - [Black Lives Matter and Racial Justice](#) - a collection of reflections, articles, videos and more. CTBI's website also has recordings of several recent webinars including:

[The Windrush Scandal](#)

[Immigration, racism and Brexit](#)

[The Hostile Environment](#)

[The Grenfell Tower Fire Tragedy](#)

[Impact of Covid-19 on BAME communities](#)



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

At a meeting of

Meeting for Sufferings

Held online from 02 – 04 October 2020 by video conference

Minutes

MfS/20/10/01 Opening Worship

During opening worship paragraph 20.17 from Quaker faith & practice was read.

MfS/20/10/02 Membership of Meeting for Sufferings

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

Release requests received:

Maureen Jackson – Hardshaw and Mann AM representative

Nominated:

Leslie Hereward – Cornwall AM alternate

Richard Melling – Hardshaw and Mann 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:

Amanda Veale – West Kent AM

Janet Veitch – South London AM

Ex-officio member

Maureen Sebanakitta – BYM Head of Finance and Resources, joined Management Meeting on 21 September 2020

Other visitors for relevant parts of the meeting:

Jeff Beatty – Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee

Michael S Booth – BYM staff, Recording Clerk's Office

Catherine Brewer – Book of Discipline Revision Committee

Steven Burkeman – Quaker Stewardship Committee Review Group

Rosie Carnall – Book of Discipline Revision Committee

Maud Grainger – Learning and Research Co-ordinator, Woodbrooke

Livvy Hanks – BYM staff, Quaker Peace & Social Witness

Neil Jarvis – BYM staff, Recording Clerk's Office

Joseph Jones – The Friend

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

David M Robson – Quaker Stewardship Committee Review Group

Deborah Rowlands – Quaker Stewardship Committee Review Group

Anne van Staveren – BYM staff, Media Relations Officer

MfS/20/10/03 Apologies

We receive apologies from West Wiltshire & East Somerset Area Meeting.

MfS/20/10/04 Agenda

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

MfS/20/10/05 Appointments

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

Group to Review Yearly Meeting and Yearly Meeting Gatherings

To serve from appointment until the work is complete

For appointment:

Alexandra Boliver-Brown	Young Friends General Meeting	1st term
Sarah Donaldson	Manchester & Warrington AM	1st term
Joseph Fuller	Gloucestershire AM	1st term
Ann Kerr	West Scotland AM	1st term
Lesley Richards	Worcestershire & Shropshire AM	1st term
Carolyn Sansom	South Wales AM	1st term
Chris Skidmore	Craven & Keighley AM	1st term
Keith Walton	Kingston & Wandsworth AM	1st term

For appointment to serve as convenor for the group until the work is complete:

Sarah Donaldson	Manchester & Warrington AM	1st term
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Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations

To serve from 1 May 2021 to 30 April 2023

For appointment:

Debbie Cates	Cambridgeshire AM	1st term
Madeleine Pennington	South London AM	1st term

For reappointment:

Catherine Brewer	Northumbria AM	2nd term
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Quaker Housing Trust

For reappointment to serve for a one-year extension of their service from April 2021 to April 2022:

Malcolm Bowker	York AM
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Quaker Life Central Committee

To serve from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2023

For appointment:

Helen Chambers	Bristol AM	1st term
Rachael Swancott	Worcestershire & Shropshire AM	1st term

For reappointment:

Max Kirk	York AM	2nd term
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Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee

To serve from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2023

For reappointment:

Mike Coote	Sussex West AM	2nd term
Annie Dickson	Bournemouth Coastal AM	2nd term

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee

To serve from 3 October 2020 to Yearly Meeting 2020

For appointment in the interim, on behalf of Yearly Meeting:

Andrew Rendle	London West AM	1st term
Martin Ward	South East Scotland AM	1st term

Release from service:

Anne Bennett	Lincolnshire AM
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Book of Discipline Revision Committee

Release from service:

Chris Alton	South London AM
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(b) Yearly Meeting Committee on Clerks brings forward the following names for service from January to December 2021:

Meeting for Sufferings Clerk:

Margaret Bryan	York AM
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Meeting for Sufferings Assistant Clerk:

Robert Card	Dorset & South Wiltshire AM
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We appoint and release the Friends named accordingly, and thank them for their service.

For information

The following appointments were made in the interim by a between meetings decision of the Meeting for Sufferings clerks.

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Appointed to serve from 30 July 2020 to 31 December 2020:

Kit Fotheringham	Bristol AM	1st term
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Quaker Life Central Committee

Appointed to serve from 16 June 2020 to 31 December 2021:

Susannah Tombs	Banbury & Evesham AM	1st term
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MfS/20/10/06 Sustainability Monitoring Group

We received the first report (paper MfS 2020-10-06a) of Meeting for Sufferings' Sustainability Monitoring Group, which began work in mid-2019. Its purpose is to support MfS in overseeing the YM's commitment to Sustainability through monitoring reports we receive from Trustees, committees and AMs, and updates us on the ways in which Quakers throughout the Yearly Meeting are working on our commitment to become a low-carbon, sustainable community.

The report follows the five headings of the **Recommendations for Action** which we adopted in 2014 (and adapted in 2017) and there is much to celebrate despite the restrictions that have been placed on our activities in recent months. Friends have suggested that it would be helpful in addition to noting the fact of an activity to have an indication of the impact of that activity. We have also heard calls to collaborate with other organisations.

MfS/20/10/07 Climate crisis: spiritual nurture and learning project

Maud Grainger (Woodbrooke's Learning and Research Co-ordinator) has introduced the Spiritual Nurture and Learning Project: a BYM-funded project aimed at strengthening the spiritual underpinning of our response to the climate crisis (paper MfS 2020 10 06b). The project will run for 5 years providing study materials, courses, workshops and retreats; giving advice guidance and support; and building community to strengthen our individual and corporate responses to the climate crisis. This work with individuals and meetings will complement the outward-facing work of QPSW which is focussed on political and systemic change.

Friends have been excited to hear of this work and look forward to participating in it; they are particularly enthused about the inter-generational aspects of the work.

MfS/20/10/08 Economics and sustainability programme

We have heard from Economics & Sustainability Programme Manager, Livvy Hanks, about the priorities adopted by QPSW's Economics and Sustainability subcommittee for the period up to the end of 2021. COP26, to be held in the UK in November 2021 provides a tremendous opportunity for the voice of Quakers to be heard.

MfS/20/10/09 Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee Strategy

Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee (QPSW) has shared its work on deciding a strategy to cover the activities of QPSW until 2025 (paper MfS 2020 10 07). We have been joined by the committee's co-clerk Jeff Beatty. We accept the general direction of this strategy, which is still being developed, and look forward to seeing it work out in practice.

MfS/20/10/10 BYM Trustees

We receive the minutes of Trustee meetings held on 12-14 June, 15 August and 11-12 September.

We have heard from Caroline Nursey, Clerk of trustees, and Linda Batten, treasurer about the work trustees have been doing since our last meeting in June.

We wish to renew our commitment to upholding all our staff and trustees as they wrestle with the challenge of simplification, which is complicated by the situation created by Covid 19.

We recognise that giving full consideration to all the important issues before us requires a level of discernment that is impossible to achieve in a few short hours today, and we ask MfSAG to look at how we might offer further opportunities for engagement.

MfS/20/10/11 Responding to racism

We have spent time in small groups to reflect on the following questions:

- The mistreatment George Floyd faced, resulting in his death, was because of his race, class and gender. What can we in the UK learn from his death and how should we respond?
- How can we best acknowledge and help heal the wounds of the transatlantic slave trade? Quakers participated in this trade of empire, and continue to enjoy its benefits as part of the wealth of the UK today.
- How should we continue our discernment, and how can we welcome and be led by the voices and experiences of BAME people when our Society is predominantly white?

MfS/20/10/12 Review of Quaker Stewardship Committee

In response to minute 14 of Yearly Meeting 2018 (minutes MfS/18/07/15, MfS/19/02/11 and MfS/19/04/10), Meeting for Sufferings appointed a group to review Quaker Stewardship Committee (QSC). We received a report from the group (paper MfS 2020 10 10) and Deborah Rowlands, the group's convenor, introduced it to us.

Friends welcomed the report and accepted its recommendation that QSC should be laid down. Points were raised about the ways in which this change will work in practice and we recognise that MfS may need to give more time to considering the new responsibilities that are being given to it in section 3 between now and YM 2022.

We also ask QSC and Quaker Life Central Committee to begin the preparatory ground work necessary for the smooth transition of responsibilities set out in the report if Yearly Meeting accepts the group's conclusions in 2021.

We forward this minute to Yearly Meeting.

MfS/20/10/13 Quaker Recognised Bodies

We receive paper MfS 20 10 11 recommending four groups for registration as Quaker Recognised Bodies.

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

- Forward Africa Education Trust
- Friendship Cohousing Limited
- Quakers in Criminal Justice
- Restoring Relations

We note the China Group, a Quaker Recognised Body, was laid down in October 2019.

MfS/20/10/14 Annual Report from Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR)

Stephanie Grant, member of Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) has spoken to the committee's report (paper MfS 2020 10 12). The report sets out the themes of the past year, the impact on Covid-19, and outlines several current and future concerns for ecumenical and interfaith work. Friends have had the opportunity to engage with the work of the committee in an additional session prior to our meeting and expressed their appreciation of it. We look forward to further such opportunities.

MfS/20/10/15 Update on four minutes sent by Meeting for Sufferings

We note the progress of minutes received by Meeting for Sufferings and sent to other bodies (paper 2020 10 13).

Two minutes (one regarding poverty of UK public services and the other regarding UK involvement in war and other state initiated violence) were sent to Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee and we note the subsequent action taken.

We recognise the steps taken by Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC) to improve support for meetings in conflict. We agree with QLCC's minute in January 2020 (QLCC 20.15) that it is the appropriate body to oversee this work and ensure it is part of the integrated strategy for supporting Quaker communities.

We note QLCC's work to respond to minutes 10 and 40 Yearly Meeting 2014 concerning the membership of Friends who are not connected to a local or area meeting. We are glad that QLCC has made better progress recently partly through working with other groups, such as Friends World Committee for Consultation and Engaging Young Adult Quakers. We note QLCC is taking forward recommendations from the most recent working group.

MfS/20/10/16 Military spending

We receive minute 20/03/13 from Brighouse West Yorkshire Area Meeting.

Friends in Brighouse West Yorkshire are working with Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) as well as with other Quaker bodies. QPSW's Peace team is active within the Global Campaign on Military Spending and is working closely with Rethinking Security and Campaign Against the Arms Trade. BYM staff have been pressing to include the issue of military spending within the Build Back Better campaign. Internationally, BYM funds and QPSW works closely with QUNO and other Quaker bodies.

QPSW encourages Friends to inform themselves and supports them in their witness.

QPSW Central Committee's new strategy includes a fundamental commitment to our historic testimonies to equality, justice, peace, simplicity and truth, and to continuing valuable work on peace and peace-building.

MfS/20/10/17 Report from the Book of Discipline Revision Committee

We have been joined by Catherine Brewer and Rosie Carnall, co-clerks, to introduce the committee's first report to Meeting for Sufferings (paper MfS 2020 10 14).

We have heard that the group has identified seven key interlinked common themes that will need to be reflected in the book of discipline, and five key insights describing the unity of our Quaker way which will run as threads through it. Themes include:

- Spirituality, worship and discernment – individually and collectively with God;
- Quaker community – life in our meetings;
- Testimony and faith in action;
- Stages of personal life – journeys, and close relationships;
- Church government – how we organise ourselves;
- Our story – where we have come from and where we are going;
- Advices & Queries.

The insights have been articulated as:

- we can all have direct access to a transforming experience of the divine;
- we live under the guidance of the promptings of love and truth in our hearts;
- we recognise and seek to address that of God in each person;
- there is a dynamic spirit bringing continuing revelation;
- we hold the whole of life to be sacramental.

We have been excited to hear about this work and look forward to being involved as it develops.

MfS/20/10/18 Preparing for Yearly Meeting

We receive paper MfS 2020 10 15 setting out the anticipated agenda for Yearly Meeting which will be held online on 15 November. Only essential business will be taken and other business will be delegated to Meeting for Sufferings. We ask our Arrangements Group to prioritise this business where appropriate for our meeting in December.

MfS/20/10/19 Closing worship

We closed our time together with worship.

Margaret Bryan
Clerk