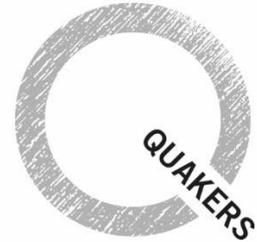


Follow up Letter



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

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

7 February 2018

Meeting for Sufferings 3 February 2018

Dear Friends

Trains were cancelled from Euston after our meeting on Saturday and so I do hope that your journeys home were not too difficult – we had had a busy day and I am sure you were tired. So now here are the minutes.

Key items to report to your Area Meetings (or committees) are:

- Yearly Meeting 2018 – various ways to prepare including booking for children and young people before 18 March; reading *Quaker Faith and Practice* and *God words and us*; using special preparation materials when they arrive; and then registering for the event and volunteering if possible. Note that the event will also be reported on social media of all sorts and so those not physically attending will also be able to follow it.
- Sustainability issues including the October gathering, the interfaith-climate statement and the fact that Sufferings will be receiving a report from the review group at our next meeting.
- Quaker Life report – some in your meetings will like to hear of progress on particular topics (minutes 11, 12 and 13), or that the Being Friends Together website now has free access. You may also like to talk about the strategy document that the Committee has produced and about our consideration of it. Together we reached some deep places. If you have any follow up from our sessions, then please send it in to jamesj@quaker.org.uk

We also heard about *Quake!*, a new email message service which you may wish to sign up for. *Quake!* is the monthly email update on the work of Britain Yearly Meeting and Quakers in Britain. It brings together different Quaker news and information, in one handy digest. Sign up to the email update [here](#).

We also heard about the programme offered by The Kindlers called 'Nurturing our Meetings' and we have provided a link to more information about The Kindlers [here](#).

Please can you check that your Area Meeting is aware of the need to nominate a new representative and alternate for the 2018-2020 triennium – names should be sent as soon as possible, please. Also as usual, if you have any (specific or general) queries or feedback, our address is sufferings@quaker.org.

I still have resonating in my heart the phrase from George Fox that we heard in our opening worship: *Sing and rejoice you children of the Light, for the Lord is at work in this dark night.*

Thanks for all the work you do,

Peace be with you,



Anne Ullathorne
Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings

The following papers are included in this mailing:

- Minutes of the Meeting held 3 February 2018

Meeting for Sufferings: are we addressing our functions?

Quaker faith and practice section 7.02 sets out 19 functions of Meeting for Sufferings (a-s). Arrangements Group hopes it will be helpful to monitor how the agenda items enable us to address these functions. Business at this meeting related to 7 of the functions. (We also hope that function i) *to foster communication throughout the yearly meeting* is addressed by representatives before and after every meeting.)

a) To set the priorities for the centrally managed work

- MfS 18/02/14, Quaker Life Central Committee

f) To determine the dates of Yearly Meeting

- MfS 18/02/08, Yearly Meeting 2020

h) To keep under review and to test as appropriate the existing and new concerns to it by AMs and others

- MfS 18/02/10, BYM Sustainability Group report
- MfS 18/02/11, Transgender and non-binary inclusion
- MfS 18/02/12, Vulnerable adult members
- MfS 18/02/13, Pastoral care of unattached Friends

j) To receive minutes from area meetings

- MfS 18/02/06, Central decision-making processes in Britain Yearly Meeting

k) To make appropriate entries in the prison and court register

- MfS 18/02/05, Court and Prison Register

l) To appoint representatives to attend other Yearly Meetings

- MfS 18/02/16, Appointments

s) To set up an arrangements group and support and working groups to assist its own work as it sees fit

- MfS 18/02/07, Committee on Clerks Review Group

Receiving reports from central committees adds to our understanding and decisions regarding both A priorities and G supporting the spiritual life of the YM



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

At a meeting of Meeting for Sufferings

Held at Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ
Saturday 3 February 2018

MfS/18/02/01 Opening Worship

During opening worship we have heard Advices and Queries 18 and 19 read.

We have also remembered a former member of Meeting for Sufferings who has recently died.

MfS/18/02/02 Apologies

We receive apologies from Lincolnshire and West Kent Area Meetings, which have not been able to send a representative on this occasion.

MfS/18/02/03 Membership

We have received the following nominations for and requests for release from Meeting for Sufferings until the rise of Yearly Meeting 2018:

Release requests received:

Rachel Berger – Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee representative
Jill Clarke – West Kent AM alternate
Robert Straughton – Swarthmoor (South West Cumbria) AM representative
Sue Tompkins – Swarthmoor (South West Cumbria) AM alternate
Graham Torr – Kingston & Wandsworth AM alternate

Nominated:

Jill Clarke – West Kent AM representative
Cindy Metcalfe – Swarthmoor (South West Cumbria) AM alternate
Roy Stephenson – Quaker Life Central Committee alternate
Sue Tompkins – Swarthmoor (South West Cumbria) AM representative
Keith Walton – Kingston & Wandsworth AM alternate

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:

Caroline Kibblewhite – Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee
Rebecca Marsden – Lancashire Central & North Am
Jane McQuillan – Swarthmoor (South West Cumbria) AM
Peter Varney – Norfolk & Waveney AM

Other visitors:

Jocelyn Bell Burnell – Quaker Life Central Committee
Iain Law – Quaker Life Central Committee
Alan Pearmain – Quaker Life Central Committee
Emma Roberts – Quaker Life Central Committee
Lis Burch – BYM Sustainability Group
Laurie Michaelis – BYM Sustainability Group Secretary
Emily Dervisevic – BYM staff, RCO intern
James Johnson – BYM staff, Recording Clerk's Office
Anne van Staveren – BYM staff, Media Relations Officer

MfS/18/02/04 Agenda

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

MfS/18/02/05 Court and Prison Register

We note that some of the details recorded at our meeting last October were inaccurate in relation to three of the six Friends who were arrested in September 2017, during a Meeting for Worship outside the Arms Fair organised by Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) at the ExCeL centre in Docklands, London.

We record now that on 19 September 2017, Chris Gwyntopher (North East Thames AM) and Hank Eynattan (Kingston and Wandsworth AM) were found guilty of obstruction of the highway and were released on six months conditional discharge and fined £85 court costs plus £20 Victim Support surcharge. Paul Milling (Kingston and Wandsworth AM) pleaded not guilty to obstruction of the highway and his case was not proceeded with.

We agree to include this updated information in the Court and Prison Register.

MfS/18/02/06 Central decision-making processes in Britain Yearly Meeting

We receive minute 17.73 from Kingston & Wandsworth AM held on 19 November 2017 regarding a concern setting priorities for centrally-managed work. This minute builds on two minutes previously sent to Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) by Kingston and Wandsworth AM, titled 'Central decision-making processes in Britain Yearly Meeting: a cause for concern?', which were both received in June 2017. At the June 2017 meeting, a period of threshing did not enable MfS to reach clarity about the way forward; MfS Arrangements Group was asked to consider this further and report back. We note that the work of MfS during 2017 has been reviewed against the functions listed in Quaker Faith and Practice Chapter 7.02 and that further guidance on central decision-making will be included in the MfS Handbook. We also note that MfS Arrangements Group is planning to set aside time in October 2018 for further consideration of this matter.

MfS/18/02/07 Review of Committee on Clerks

We receive draft terms of reference for the Yearly Meeting Committee on Clerks review group (paper MfS-2018-02-07). We approve these terms of reference.

MfS/18/02/08 Date of Yearly Meeting 2020

Further to minute S/11/02/08 which agreed a three-yearly pattern for the dates of Yearly Meeting, we receive YMAC minute 2017/09/15 regarding the dates of Yearly Meeting 2020. YMAC recommends that Yearly Meeting is held 1-8 August 2020 at the University of Bath. We agree to this.

MfS/18/02/09 Yearly Meeting 2018

We welcome Deborah Rowlands, clerk of Yearly Meeting, who has shared information about the planned agenda for Yearly Meeting 2018 and has encouraged us and our meetings to begin to prepare for it.

Agenda Committee was urged to continue embracing the use of technology in sharing in the participation in Yearly Meeting.

We thank Deborah Rowlands and Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee for their work.

MfS/18/02/10 BYM Sustainability Group report

*"I tell you naught for your comfort, Yea naught for your desire
Save that the sky grows darker yet, And the sea rises higher."*

G.K. Chesterton

We have welcomed Lis Burch, clerk of BYM Sustainability Group, who spoke to the report on progress made by the BYM Sustainability Group (paper MfS 2018-02-9a).

BYM Sustainability Group is a working group of Meeting for Sufferings, set up in 2014 to provide "a leadership role, similar to eldership and oversight" in relation to the Yearly Meeting's Canterbury Commitment to become a low carbon sustainable community. We recognise that we still need to see more engagement from individuals, local meetings and area meetings across the Yearly Meeting if we really want to see that Quaker values are active in the world. We have been challenged to consider "what is the meaning of a Yearly Meeting concern, if we as a Yearly Meeting don't do it?" Is this the best that we can be?

The Group has been working collaboratively with various committees and external bodies and we are glad to have sight of the schedule detailing progress in addressing the recommendations for action which were revised last year (paper MfS 2018-02-09b).

We note that the biennial national gathering will be held at Swanwick on 19-21 October 2018 and Area Meetings are encouraged to appoint Friends to attend. Area Meetings are also encouraged to consider signing the statement of intention of all faith groups (<http://www.interfaithclimatestatement.org>) which came from the 2017 Bonn climate conference.

We thank the Group for their report today and for their work and note that we will return to the question of how to take this concern forward at our next meeting when we receive the report of the BYMSG Review Group.

MfS/18/02/11 Transgender and non-binary inclusion

In February 2017, Meeting for Sufferings received and noted a statement made by North East Thames AM, concerning the inclusion of transgender and non-binary people in our Quaker communities. We welcomed this opportunity to learn more about the issue, and forwarded the statement to Quaker Life Central Committee for its consideration. Minute MfS/17/04/15 refers.

We now receive QLCC minute 17.89. QLCC is considering how best to help meetings explore these issues; and notes that because understanding of these issues is still evolving rapidly, the learning process may take quite some time.

MfS/18/02/12 Vulnerable adult members

In April 2017, Meeting for Sufferings sent QLCC a minute regarding Meetings' support for vulnerable adults, a matter which had been sent by Brighthouse West Yorkshire AM (MfS/17/04/14). QLCC has reported that it hopes to be able to circulate good practice guidelines soon.

MfS/18/02/13 Pastoral care of unattached Friends

Yearly Meeting 2014 (minutes 10 and 40) asked Meeting for Sufferings to work with Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC) to seek the views of Friends, particularly young adult Friends, whose life journeys may preclude them committing to a local or area meeting, and to consider how to respond to the call for a more flexible approach to membership in such cases. Our minute MfS 2014/09/07/a Membership refers.

QLCC has reported previously that it had set up a working group. QLCC has now reported that this group has been laid down and the Central Committee is continuing its consideration.

MfS/18/02/14 Quaker Life Central Committee

We have welcomed Jocelyn Bell Burnell, co-clerk of Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC), who spoke to its 2017 report to Meeting for Sufferings (paper MfS 2018-02-10a). The terms of reference of QLCC cover faith and practice, spiritual nurture and the practical tasks required for the running of our Quaker meetings.

We receive minutes QLCC 17.84 and QLCC 17.86, Our strategy; and QLCC 17.87, Our strategic priorities, along with the Quaker Life Central Committee Strategy for Quaker Life, 2018-22 (paper MfS 2018-02-10b). The QLCC report highlights the development of strategic aims for 2018 – 22 which will shape the future work of the Committee and staff. The strategy statement is structured in six sections, matching the six sections in Our Faith in the Future. QLCC has identified three initial priority areas, and has invited Meeting for Sufferings representatives to respond.

We have spent time in home groups, geographically arranged, and have considered questions about identification of the 'big issues' in the area of Quaker Life and what should be the most important strategic aims of the Central Committee.

Reflecting together in plenary, we have heard that meeting for worship remains the bedrock of living as a Quaker but we need to prepare for it and we need to nurture our spiritual foundations. Knowing and understanding our Quaker discipline also needs to be a priority.

The heartbeat of our Quaker life is the meeting for worship and if it is not beating strongly, where will we find support as we go out in the world?

We thank Jocelyn and the members of QLCC for their work and time with us today. We note that we expect to receive reports from all Central Committees at our residential meeting at the end of 2018 where we will be able to consider further the strategic priorities within central work. We forward this minute to QLCC.

MfS/18/02/15 Quaker Recognised Bodies

Further to minute MfS/15/12/01, we receive paper MfS 2018/02/11 recommending two groups for registration as Quaker Recognised Bodies.

We agree to register the following groups for five years, with registration to be reviewed by December 2022:

External

Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre

Free-standing

The Kindlers

MfS/18/02/16 Appointments

a) Central Nominations Committee brings forwards the following names for service or release:

Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group

Request for release:

Lizz Roe

South Wales AM (1st term)

Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee

Request for release:

Charlotte Seymour-Smith

Dorset & South Wiltshire AM (2nd term)

Review of Committee on Clerks

Appoint to serve:

Ethel Livermore

South London AM

Julia Gordon

Northumbria AM

Rhiannon Grant

Central England AM

Representatives to European Yearly Meetings

Appoint to serve:

Norway Yearly Meeting:

Ingrid Greenhow

Chilterns AM

Sweden Yearly Meeting

Gisela Creed

West Scotland AM

BYM Representatives to Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) serving on Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC)

Appoint to serve:

Ian Marshall

Lancashire Central & North AM (1st term)

b) Yearly Meeting Nominating Group brings forward the following names for release or service:

Central Nominations Committee

Request for release:

Cáit Gould

West Scotland AM (1st term)

Appoint to serve from now until YM2018:

Strawberry Roth

Dorset & South Wiltshire AM (1st term)

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee

Request for release:

John Pameley

Northamptonshire AM (1st term)

Mary Waldmeyer

Teesdale & Cleveland AM (1st term)

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

MfS/18/02/17 Close

We close, intending to meet again on 7 April 2018.

Anne Ullathorne

Clerk