

## Calling Letter



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

### To members of Meeting for Sufferings

21<sup>st</sup> June 2019

Dear Friends,

Our next meeting is in London on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> July starting at 10am in the Sarah Fell Room and the agenda and papers are attached. The main items this time are reflecting on Yearly Meeting in May 2019 and looking forward to the Yearly Meeting in 2020. We may share some preliminary thoughts as to the place of Yearly Meeting in the life of our Religious Society.

We have also received a number of minutes from Committees and Area meetings and we need to consider prayerfully the best way forward with each of them. Several are on-going matters on which we will be up-dated or to which we will return in future meetings.

We will formally receive the statement on Trans and non-binary inclusion that we have been sent from Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM) and we will also record the receipt of the discussion document on this issue that Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC) sent out at our last meeting of 2018. QLCC have been working further on this and have invited comments from local and area meetings. We will be able to hear from QLCC in greater detail at our October meeting and so at this stage the documents are for our information only. We will need to explore the spiritual dimensions of this issue, when we are ready.

We have also received a minute from Kendal and Sedbergh Area Meeting about the participation of young people in our Quaker communities and our recognition of attenders. There is a wide issue here, concerning pastoral care and the building of Quaker communities, about which we may reflect.

The trustees will report to us following their recent meeting and we will have an opportunity to receive and comment on the annual report and financial statements of BYM as we are required to do by *Quaker faith & practice*. These have been approved by trustees and the BYM treasurer, Linda Batten has presented them to Yearly Meeting. There are electronic links both to the [accounts](#) and to Linda's [presentation](#).

As usual, dear Friends, a varied and deep array of matters for us to consider but we do so under the guidance of the Spirit, and in the desire to build that heavenly kingdom of love here on earth.

If you have any specific comments or queries about any of the papers or supporting documents sent to you, it is helpful if you email [sufferings@quaker.org.uk](mailto:sufferings@quaker.org.uk) before the meeting so that we can respond directly if necessary or at least be better prepared!

In peace and friendship,



Anne Ullathorne, Clerk

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## Papers enclosed with this mailing

### Agenda

**MfS Arrangements Group** minutes

**MfS 2019 07 05** Court and Prison Register

**MfS 2019 07 06** Yearly Meeting 2019

**MfS 2019 07 07** Gender Diversity

**MfS 2019 07 08** Minutes received from AMs

**MfS 2019 07 10** MfS Arrangements Group Terms of Reference

**MfS 2019 07 11** BYM Trustees Report

**MfS 2019 07 11b** Support for meetings: beyond the Vibrancy pilot

**MfS 2019 07 12** Young Peoples Participation

**MfS 2019 07 13** Quaker Recognised Bodies

*n.b. the following papers will be available on the day of the meeting:*

**MfS 2019 07 03** Membership

**MfS 2019 07 09** Appointments

### A reminder of how you can prepare for the meeting

- Register (to help staff prepare rooms and refreshments)
- Go through the 'Essential Information'
- Read the agenda papers in good time
- Contact the other representative/alternate from your area meeting or body
- Consider possible names for a standing nominations group
- Send any comments or questions to the clerks, at least 24 hours before the meeting



# Meeting for Sufferings 6 July 2019

Sarah Fell , Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BJ

Britain Yearly Meeting  
of the Religious  
Society of Friends

## Agenda

	Item	Paper
09.00	<b>Arrivals</b>	
10.00	<b>Session starts</b>	
1	<b>Opening worship</b>	
2	<b>Welcome and introductions</b>	
3	<b>Membership (Tabled Paper)</b>	<b>MfS 2019 07 03</b> to note
4	<b>Agenda</b> Adoption and acceptance of the agenda	
5	<b>Court and prison register</b>	<b>MfS 2019 07 05</b> for decision
6	<b>Yearly Meeting 2019</b>	<b>MfS 2019 07 06</b> to receive
<b>Short break</b> (please hold the silence in the meeting room)		
7	<b>Gender diversity</b> To receive a minute from Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM) and an initial statement of Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC)	<b>MfS 2019 07 07</b> to receive, in preparation for October MfS
8	<b>Minutes received from AMs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sustainability:</b> minutes from Bristol AM, West Weald AM and Southern Marches AM</li> <li>• <b>Sanctuary everywhere programme:</b> minute from Staffordshire AM</li> <li>• <b>Britain's withdrawal from EU:</b> minute from South Wales AM</li> </ul>	<b>MfS 2019 07 08</b> to note
12.30	<b>Lunch</b>	
	<b>Informal lunchtime gatherings</b> Opportunities to meet with BYM Trustees over lunch in the Hilda Clark room	
13:45	<b>Session starts</b>	
9	<b>Appointments (Tabled Paper)</b>	<b>MfS 2019 07 09</b> for approval
10	<b>Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group (MfSAG) terms of reference</b> To consider the requirement to review our MfSAG	<b>MfS 2019 07 10</b> for decision
11	<b>BYM Trustees report</b> To and receive the minutes from the April and June 2019 meetings and hear from the clerk of BYM Trustees, particularly regarding <i>Support for meetings: beyond the Vibrancy pilot</i>	<b>MfS 2019 07 11a &amp; 11b</b> for information

	<b>Short break</b> (please hold the silence in the meeting room)	
<b>12</b>	<b>Young people's participation</b> To receive a a minute from Kendal and Sedbergh AM and to consider involvement of young people in the life of our communities	<b>MfS 2019 07 12</b> for consideration
<b>13</b>	<b>Quaker recognised bodies</b> To approve and register further Quaker recognised bodies	<b>MfS 2019 07 13</b> for approval
	<b>Closing worship</b>	
<b>16.00</b>	<b>Close. Tea, coffee and departures</b>	

# Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group

29 May 2019 at Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ

## Minutes

**Present:** Margaret Bryan (convenor), Karen Draycott, Gill Greenfield, Sherry-Ann Mitchell, Juliet Prager, Neil Jarvis, Anne Ullathorne

**Prevented:** Mark Lilley

### 1. Welcome

We welcomed Neil Jarvis to the meeting

### 2. Reflections on February Meeting for Sufferings

We have received comments from the Support Group and note that they feel under strength at times. Rather than going immediately to amending the Terms of Reference we suggest a more informal approach, by asking for a pool of volunteers to undertake tasks as required on the day

We recognise that there was a feeling of pressure on time for discernment. Holding the discipline in our meeting is very important.

### 3. Reflections on BYM

We have one matter laid upon us, that is, to review the purpose and function of YM and YMG (BYM minute 6)

### 4. Meetings attended by the clerks and others

- Anne Ullathorne and Paul Parker met with Mary Aiston, Mark Frankel and Keith Walton of Kingston & Wandsworth AM on 12th March. It was a good and positive meeting
- Gill Greenfield attended the QWRC forum on 23rd March on our behalf
- Anne Ullathorne and Margaret Bryan met Caroline Nursey (BYMT) and Clare Scott Booth (YM clerk) to discuss matters of common concern.

### 5. Forward agenda

We have reviewed our forward agenda which informs our planning.

### 6. Our next meeting in July

We have planned the agenda for our July meeting.

### 7. Date and time of future meetings 2019

Thursday 22 August 2019 (11-3.30pm)

Thursday 31 October 2019 (11-3.30pm)

Margaret Bryan  
Convenor

## **Court and prison register**

### **Introduction**

Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) was established in 1676, to consider the sufferings experienced by Quakers for their faith. Gradually the practice of recording Friends' names in the 'Great book of Sufferings' lapsed; but in 1997 MfS decided to maintain a register of Friends before the courts or imprisoned for matters of conscience. This enables us to record events, as well as to uphold the Friends concerned and to share information about their witness.

MfS is invited to consider making entries in the court and prison register regarding Extinction Rebellion.

The information below is the best we have at the time of preparing the papers. As far as possible, we've checked the details with the Friends concerned. We have been sent the names of some other Friends involved in actions, but if they're not included here that's because we haven't been able to confirm whether they were arrested, charged or sentenced. We can include more details if they reach staff by Friday 5 July – please send information by email to [sufferings@quaker.org.uk](mailto:sufferings@quaker.org.uk) Anything reaching us after that date can be brought to the following Meeting for Sufferings.

### **Draft minute**

For simplicity's sake, rather than repeating the information, a draft minute is offered:

#### **MfS 2019/07/XX Court and prison register**

We have been informed about a number of Friends arrested during actions with Extinction Rebellion (a movement using nonviolent civil disobedience to achieve radical change in response to the climate crisis).

Justin Kenrick (South East Scotland AM) and Eva Schonveld (South East Scotland AM) were arrested in Edinburgh on 8 March. They were held overnight in a police station. Justin Kenrick was charged to appear in court but to date no further proceedings have taken place.

Marcia Colley and Jan Scott (both of Devon AM) were arrested in London on 15 April. Peter Griffin (Cambridgeshire AM) was arrested in London on 16 April. They were released 'subject to further enquiry' and to date have not been charged.

Saul Kenrick (South East Scotland AM) was arrested in London on 16 April and 19 April. He was charged with Obstruction of the Highway; a trial scheduled for 28 June 2019 was postponed and a new date has not yet been set.

Justin Kenrick (South East Scotland) was arrested in Edinburgh on 16 April and charged with Breach of the Peace. A trial has been scheduled for 21 August 2019.

Cath Dyer, and Lesley Morrison (both South East Scotland AM) were arrested in Edinburgh on 16 April and charged with Breach of the Peace. Following an interim hearing a trial has been scheduled for 20 September 2019.

Ian Bray (Brighouse West Yorkshire AM) was arrested in London on 16 April. He has been released pending investigation.

Peter Tyler (an attender at Argyll LM, West Scotland AM) was arrested in London on 17 April. He has been summoned to appear in court in London on Friday 12 July.

Sue Hampton (Luton and Leighton AM) was arrested in London on 18 April and charged with a breach of Section 14 of the Public Order Act and Obstruction of the Highway without a Vehicle. To date, there have been no further proceedings.

Leslie Tate (Luton and Leighton AM) was arrested in London on 20 April and charged with a breach of Section 14 of the Public Order Act and Obstruction of the Highway without a Vehicle. To date, there have been no further proceedings.

Heather Rostron (Sheffield and Balby AM) was arrested for wilful obstruction of the Highway in London on 21 April. She was released and to date has not been charged.

Ian Bray (Brighouse West Yorkshire AM) was arrested in London on 25 April. He has been charged with causing an obstruction of the railway or carriage using the railway, contrary to s36 Malicious Damage Act 1861. At a plea hearing at Blackfriars Crown Court on 23 May he pleaded not guilty. A trial has been listed for 11 May 2020 at Inner London Crown Court and bail conditions have been applied for him not to travel by London underground, Docklands Light Railway or over-ground railways.

Justin Kenrick (South East Scotland AM) was arrested in London on 25 and 26 April. He was held in a police station overnight and has been released and to date has not been charged.

Further to minute MfS/19/02/05, we note action taken by Ian Bray (Brighouse West Yorkshire AM) in November 2018 as part of the Extinction Rebellion movement which led to his arrest, went to trial in Hendon Magistrates' Court on 10 May 2019 and was adjourned until 5 August for a case management hearing at Westminster Magistrates' Court.

We agree to include the above information in the court and prison register. We hold the Friends concerned in the Light.

We are aware that other Friends have been involved in similar actions. If details are forwarded to BYM staff, they can also be included in the court and prison register.

## **Yearly Meeting 2019**

### **Introduction and draft minute**

Substantive minutes of Yearly Meeting 2019 held at Friends House in London on 24-27 May are copied below.

During MfS we will have some time for reflection on Yearly Meeting 2019, introduced by members of Arrangements Group.

There are two specific matters for MfS to consider:

**Minute 6** asks Meeting for Sufferings to carry out a review of the purpose and function of Yearly Meeting and Gatherings, liaising with the Book of Discipline Revision Committee, and consulting more widely as appropriate, and to bring any recommendations to a future Yearly Meeting.

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group will bring proposals to a future meeting on how this could be carried out.

**Minute 21** concerns keeping the current Church Government text in *Quaker faith & practice* up to date while a new Book of Discipline is being prepared. Meeting for Sufferings offered to take responsibility for this and Yearly Meeting agreed to delegate this responsibility to Meeting for Sufferings. Yearly Meeting asks Meeting for Sufferings to continue to bring to Yearly Meeting any substantive matters of our Quaker discipline which require the attention of Yearly Meeting in session, and to include in Meeting for Sufferings' report to Yearly Meeting the updates made in the interim on Yearly Meeting's behalf.

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group has planned time in the agenda to reflect on the theme of Yearly Meeting: looking through the lens of privilege at climate justice and inclusion.

*Part of a draft minute might read:*

### **MfS 2019/07/XX Yearly Meeting**

We have received minutes from Yearly Meeting held on 24-27 May 2019. We note minute 6 asking Meeting for Sufferings to carry out a review of Yearly Meeting and Gatherings. We will return to this.

We note minute 21, which delegates responsibility to Meeting for Sufferings to revise Church Government text in *Quaker faith & practice* to keep it up to date with minor factual amendments, while the new Book of Discipline is being prepared. We note that Meeting for Sufferings is asked to continue to forward to Yearly Meeting any substantive matters of Quaker discipline which require its attention, and to report any updates to *Quaker faith and practice* to Yearly Meeting, annually.

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

**At the yearly meeting held in London at Friends House  
24–27 May 2019**

**Substantive minutes**

**Minute 6: Agenda**

We receive and accept the report of Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee in appendix A of the Yearly Meeting Programme and accept the agenda as listed in section 4.

We ask Meeting for Sufferings to carry out a review of the purpose and function of Yearly Meeting and Gatherings, liaising with the Book of Discipline Revision Committee, and consulting more widely as appropriate, and to bring any recommendations to a future Yearly Meeting.

**Minute 12: Proposed amendments to *Quaker faith & practice***

We receive part of Minute MfS/18/11/06 from Meeting for Sufferings held 23-25 November 2018, forwarding to us proposed amendments, prepared by Church Government Advisory Group, to *Quaker faith & practice* as follows:-

a) 4.23 – 4.26 Changes to the Appeals Process

Meeting for Sufferings recommends amending sections 4.23. 4.25 and 4.26 to reflect changes to the appeals process.

We agree to the proposed changes to the appeal process and to the revisions consequent upon this as contained in Section 4 of the Yearly Meeting Programme.

b) 6.21 and 6.22 Changes to Central Nominations Committee and Yearly Meeting Nominating Group

Meeting for Sufferings recommends amending sections 6.21 and 6.22 consequent upon changes to the Terms of Reference of Central Nominations Committee and Yearly Meeting Nominations Group agreed by Minute 28 Yearly Meeting 2016 and minute 22 Yearly Meeting 2017.

We agree the revisions as contained in Section 4 of the Yearly Meeting Programme.



### **Minute 17: Looking through the lens of privilege at climate justice and inclusion.**

“If you have come here to help me, then you are wasting your time... but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.” – Lilla Watson, Aboriginal activist.

How can we use our life experience to create a changed world? How might we use our experience of privilege and of disprivilege to reveal the kingdom?

We have reflected together on our own privilege and lack of privilege. Each of us has a complex identity rooted in human differences, and informing how we do things.

Acknowledging our privilege may make us feel guilty about the things we cannot control. Acknowledging our disprivilege can make us feel vulnerable and frustrated. It is important not to let these feelings overwhelm us or we may become more excluded.

Rather than guilt or shame which takes us nowhere, we need accountability and responsibility for our actions. Where we have privilege we must look at what we are doing to perpetuate it.

When we are wholly honest with ourselves and others we can be truly open to the workings of the Spirit.

### **Minute 20: The work of our national representative body: receipt of annual report from Meeting for Sufferings**

We receive the annual report for 2018 from Meeting for Sufferings. The report is at Appendix D in the Yearly Meeting Programme and has been introduced by the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings.

We are reminded in our consideration of the need to be clear what privilege is, and we will return to this tomorrow. We give thanks for the service of all the Friends appointed to Meeting for Sufferings and for their support of Friends in Britain.

### **Minute 21: Process for amending *Quaker faith & practice* while a new Book of Discipline is being prepared**

We receive part of Minute MfS/18/11/06 from Meeting for Sufferings held 23-25 November 2018, offering to take responsibility for keeping up to date the current Church Government text included in *Quaker faith & practice* while a new Book of Discipline is being prepared.

During the period of revision the current text will require minor factual amendments to keep it up to date. We agree to delegate the responsibility for agreeing such amendments to *Quaker faith & practice* to Meeting for Sufferings. We ask Meeting for Sufferings to continue to bring to us any substantive matters of our Quaker discipline which require the attention of Yearly Meeting in session, and to include in their report to us annually the updates made in the interim on our behalf.

We are reminded that the online published version of our *Quaker faith & practice* is the definitive version.

### **Minute 23: 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 2018. The clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees and the Yearly Meeting Treasurer have introduced this report on the Trustees' work and responsibilities.

Trustees are working to three strategic priorities:

- Supporting Quaker meetings and other groups to be diverse, to thrive and grow
- Working with and on behalf of Quakers towards a sustainable and peaceful world
- Simplifying structures and practices in our local and national organization

We have heard that in 2018 expenditure exceeded income by around three quarters of a million pounds, and that there was a fall in legacies and contributions by about the same amount. We have heard passionate encouragement to fund our work and examine our support for our Yearly Meeting's work.

### **Minute 24: Minute from Junior Yearly Meeting**

We have received minute 1 of Junior Yearly Meeting, as follows:

“What is our reality as a Quaker community and how does our privilege affect how we understand it?” As a Religious Society we are generally privileged, however we lack diversity. We may find it hard to understand privilege among minority Quakers as every one of us has individual, different experiences but by listening to other experiences and reflecting upon our own we can broaden horizons and understand others.

It's difficult to talk about privilege for some due to the complexity and intricacies of the issues faced by many, also some have avoided thinking about it due to guilt for their privilege. We are learning not to be guilty and that we each are privileged or not in diverse ways. The conversation is hard and awkward but can be done and we shouldn't shy away from it due to fear of conflict.

Are we presenting ourselves openly? Do we make newcomers comfortable? We recognise the exclusion we may create is not intentional but it doesn't mean we aren't responsible for it. There is a feeling Quakers are passively inclusive. Our testimony to equality makes us complacent. However, it is not enough that this testimony exists, our words and actions as a community and individually should back it up as well. We cannot choose which or when to follow a testimony if we want to challenge privilege and become diverse.

Many Young Quakers feel excluded from the wider Society of Friends specifically Local Meetings. These are sometimes felt to be exclusionary to younger Quakers as they aren't accessible to them in terms of times, dates and places. This creates a cycle, because if young Quakers are not included locally, they are less likely to be part of national Quaker bodies, meaning young Quakers cannot amend conventions to be inclusive for them.

We cannot reinvent Quakers overnight but trying is better than not. It is important to re-evaluate our relationship with our own privilege and make a shift in mentality in how we approach new Friends and existing minority Friends at all levels from local to national. This hopefully will allow us to be the truly welcoming community we hope to be.

Signed

Anya Nanning Ramamurthy and Lucy Cox Dodgson  
Junior Yearly Meeting Clerks 2019

### **Minute 28: Looking through the lens of privilege at climate justice and inclusion – further discernment and gathering the threads.**

If we have a stone in our shoe, and we complain about it, we need to instead remove it to stop the pain. The stones in our Quaker shoes hurt people now. But we are seeing signs of hope and change; on our journey there are times for tears and times for joy.

We will return to this matter tomorrow.

### **Minute 31: The work of Quaker Stewardship Committee: receipt of annual report**

We receive the annual report for 2018, including the compliance report, from Quaker Stewardship Committee. The report is at appendix E in the Yearly Meeting Programme, and has been introduced by the clerk of Quaker Stewardship Committee.

We accept this report.

### **Minute 33: Who we are? How do we live? What impact does our living have?**

We have embarked on an exploration of privilege, seeking to become aware of the unseen and unspoken chains that bind us, and affect our ability to act on our urgent concerns of sustainability and climate justice, and diversity and inclusion.

Through hearing personal stories and reflecting on our own lived experience, we have confronted our own privilege and lack of privilege. We have learned that we may be seen as privileged in some contexts and as disprivileged in others. Where we have privilege we can choose how to use it: we must choose carefully. We must each learn to love who we are, be authentic, and act out that love in the world, working in partnership to dismantle the institutions and transform the systems that marginalise people.

Exploring privilege can be challenging and it can be uncomfortable. We need to show each other compassion and trust. Quakers are all sorts of people with the capacity for both good and bad actions, and we find it hard to do the difficult work of looking at ourselves. As a religious society we face the obstacle of pride. Real power will come if we cease to be merely “good respectable people” and be a community that knows weakness and frailty. We must learn our weaknesses and those of our Friends to live with one another. Through our tears we can find power.

We have started our journey in different places and with different experiences. As we have laboured together on understanding privilege, we are journeying from guilt, shame and grief, to speaking of accountability and responsibility, and then to the

desire for action. We are impatient: we identified both sustainability, and diversity and inclusion as urgent concerns two years ago, and we want to see change and growth.

We are fearful of the monsters of war and climate breakdown that are hurting our fragile Earth. We know there is pain around inclusion in our meetings. Fear is holding us back. We fear being misjudged or being seen as preaching, and so we fail to challenge the norm. We fear losing our status. We need to address our fear to begin to do something positive. We have seen signs of hope, but we have work to do, to transform ourselves, our communities and our world.

Our exploration and our journey are not complete. We have examined the privileges we have; the next steps are to see the effects they have on us, and how they make us behave.

We can take passion back to our meetings: our passionate connection to the Earth. We can take a desire to listen to those who do not share our own privileges, and to walk alongside people who are fearful of what we hope for. We can share the emotions from the inspiration and challenge we have felt as we have journeyed together.

We call on Friends throughout our Yearly Meeting to continue this work in our meeting communities, to deepen and extend the work we have done, so that we can be the community we need to be to face the future. We encourage local and area meetings to share their insights.

We ask Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee to discern further how we can take the next steps to meaningful action, to be put before our Yearly Meeting Gathering next year.

#### **Minute 40: Meeting for Sufferings: interim membership changes since Yearly Meeting 2018**

We note that a number of appointments to and releases from the membership of Meeting for Sufferings have occurred since Yearly Meeting 2018. Table 5 of the schedule of nominations appended to these minutes records the membership of Meeting for Sufferings, excluding those who serve ex officio, as advised to the Recording Clerk's Office and appointed by Meeting for Sufferings, as of its meeting on 6 April 2019.

#### **Minute 41: Acceptance of reports from Quaker Stewardship Committee and Meeting for Sufferings**

We have received and now accept the report, including the compliance report, of Quaker Stewardship Committee (see minute 31) and the report of Meeting for Sufferings (see minute 20).

We give thanks for the work of these bodies, and all those involved.

#### **Minute 44: Receipt of minutes from the Children and Young People's Programmes**

We have received and heard read minutes from the groups of the Children's and Young People's Programme of this Yearly Meeting as follows:

### **New Shoots (0-1s)**

We formed a warm, caring worshipping group as part of a community which loved and looked after us. This community included our daily helpers who helped to create our happy, safe, fun-filled time.

We enjoyed seeing ourselves and others through glass doors, mirrors and through the play tunnel.

Together we learned about ourselves and our Friends through sharing our toys and spending time together.

### **Fox Cubs (2-4s)**

This weekend we have enjoyed making friends and thought about how to look after each other, and our world. We have had a lot of playtime with games, craft and music, and make rockets and trains out of parachutes and cardboard boxes. Today we have given tasty treats to some of our older friends.

Every day we have spent a little bit of time being quiet, and a little bit more time being noisy. We know lots of songs now – there was even some dancing! We have been very thankful to have help from lots of people from around the Meeting who have read us stories and given us snacks.

Lots of us have had different needs, so we know it is important to think about how to be kind to one another. It was fun to join grown-ups yesterday but we enjoyed playing outside too. It has been a happy time together.

### **Penn Friends (5-7s)**

We are the Penn Friends. Our theme this weekend was caring and including. We started our weekend by coming up with ways that we could care for and include each other in our group.

We listened to a Godly Play story about war and why we should stop war. We made folders to organise everything we made this weekend and started our journals.

We had our first meeting for worship where we held objects to help us stay still and quiet.

In the afternoon we were visited by Paul Parker and we visited the park where we played parachute games and ball games. We saw a statue of Gandhi and learned about Ramadan. We made collages using objects found in the park with lots and lots of feathers and leaves.

On Sunday we listened to a story called Fragile Earth in all-age worship and wrote about it in our journals. We made and decorated shakers to share with the New Shoots. We started our nominations process.

In the afternoon we went to the library where we made posters and saw lots of books. We also went to the basement where we saw tiny books that belonged to Elizabeth Fry and a very old teddy bear and the *Book of Sufferings*.

We sang songs and played our shakers with the New Shoots and they shared their biscuits with us.

We heard a story about caring for our earth and saw an Extinction Rebellion protest from the window.

We completed our nominations process and decided on our writers and readers.

On Monday we made collages about the environment and tried Morris Dancing.

### **The Spiritual Adventurers (8-11s)**

We are the Spiritual Adventurers (the 8-11 year olds) and we met together as part of Yearly Meeting 2019.

We have been reflecting on how we care for ourselves, others, the environment and allowing others to care for us.

We have enjoyed ourselves over the weekend.

We met together on Saturday morning and got to know each other. We learned about caring and including; we had worship and a reading from *Living our Beliefs*, the book created by Quaker young people. A Godly Play story about John Woolman helped us to think about caring for the environment and each other.

In the afternoon we learned about Captain Coram who created the Foundling Hospital, helping orphans and homeless children all through their childhood, and we went to visit Coram's Fields. Whilst we were there, we played, did yoga and parachute games. We experienced being together and - in playing the Wolf game - being on the outside and working together. It was a cared-for environment with animals. We enjoyed walking there and back, which was good for us and the environment.

On Sunday morning we visited the Library at Friends House where we did an I-Spy quiz, a treasure hunt and practised poster making, which were all related to our theme. We saw an eight- two year old teddy bear made by Friends for Spanish refugee children. There was also a hundred-year old bread roll that was a sample of the bread that Quakers used to feed hungry German children after the First World War.

In the afternoon, Paul Parker, the Recording Clerk, came to visit us and helped us think about the complex nature of privilege. Then we made 'Plosters' (plate posters) as ways of expressing our feelings about the themes.

On Monday morning we put sharing, caring and being looked after into practice by visiting the Fox Cubs and including each other in songs and food.

The weekend was fun, educational and tasty!

Signed in and on behalf of the Spiritual Adventurers

Rose Eccles, Poppy Deighton, Zoe Pittam and Edith Yaxley

Clerks

### **Young People's Programme**

To all Friends everywhere,

From the 24 to the 27 May 2019, 29 young people met at the High Leigh centre in Hoddesdon, to consider the theme: 'Opening our hearts and minds to transform the world'.

Over the weekend we enjoyed numerous sessions from the various speakers which informed us about Quaker outreach projects and various social and economic issues. An opening session run by one of our adult volunteers prompted us to think about how we enact our Quaker ideals in our daily lives and how much our Quaker faith affects what we wear, the music we listen to, the food we eat and our political opinions. Lee Lester, Quaker Youth Development Worker for Sheffield and Yorkshire, ran a thought-provoking worship about privilege. They invited us to consider the ways in which we are privileged, and the ways we are not, in terms of gender, class, ability, age, race, economic status and sexuality.

We filled in identity wheels where we realised which forms of privilege we are most aware of in ourselves, and which ones we overlook; we also took part in an activity where we were given one thousand pounds to 'spend' on various privileges we decided on as a group. The need for representation and diversity in what we see in society became clear through these activities. As Lee reminded us, "our society is only as strong as our least privileged member".

Kirsty Philbrick, the Quaker Youth Development Worker for the West of England, joined us to run a session on climate justice. We were able to choose whether the current climate crisis made us feel mostly fearful, sad, angry or powerless and to talk about how we might use these emotions to empower us and take action. Some of us have recently been involved with the Extinction Rebellion movement, climate marches and school strikes. We were encouraged by Kirsty saying that it only takes 1-2% of the populations getting involved in a movement for it to have real, tangible effects. During a session on diversity and tolerance we all paired up and conducted assumption interviews, wherein we had to guess things like each other's favourite music, food, hobbies, place of birth and languages spoken without talking. It was interesting to explore the preconceptions we had about each other and we enjoyed learning more about our friends in the process. We then discovered how many similarities we share despite our differences by playing Quaker Bingo!

Small groups gathered in chatrooms on Sunday to discuss issues about animals and climate change, gender diversity, and inclusion. We enjoyed this method of hearing different people's opinions and found the atmosphere really open and non-judgemental.

Eden Grace, the Swarthmore lecturer, visited us on Sunday and shared lots of interesting stories about Quakers around the world, especially in Cuba and Palestine. She reminded us that "trying to change the world is an awfully big responsibility to place on ourselves" and acknowledged that this can discourage us from doing anything. However, she emphasised that it is important to remember that we are all a part of something much bigger than just ourselves, and even the smallest actions by just one individual can set off a whole chain of events.

As Eden said, "I don't have to do everything .... just the piece that is authentically mine" – we simply need to turn up and be a part of it!

We met in smaller Base Groups across the weekend, and valued these times of connection, reflection and fun. We met in worship in the mornings and evenings, finding the darkness and quietness of epilogues particularly meaningful. We also had lots of opportunities for fun over the weekend, competing in challenges, quizzes and

whole group activities, such as rounders, Capture the Flag, board games and giant Jenga. A particular fever for the card game “Unable, Unwilling” spread throughout the event! We were also able to entertain each other on Sunday evening and share our many talents, including a perplexing brain teaser, comedy, singing, acting and piano playing.

Over the course of the weekend we have enjoyed opening our hearts to each other and to the issues in our world and feel motivated to open our minds to take action on the issues that we care about, in both public and personal ways.

Signed in and on behalf of the Young People’s Programme

Freya Stoppard English and Benny Froggett

Clerks

### **Minute 45: Epistle of Junior Yearly Meeting**

To all Friends everywhere,

From 12 to 15 April 2019 70 participants and 13 adult team members met at the Frontier Centre in Northamptonshire for a weekend of inward and outward reflection on the theme “Diversity and Inclusivity: how can we use our ideals to change our reality?”

A strong undercurrent of this event has been privilege. Many of our sessions have had elements of examining privilege within them. This has led us to look at our own privilege and how it varies for different aspects of our identity. One of our early theme sessions included choosing different colour beads to represent our privilege.

Alison Mitchel, Libby Adams, Maud Grainger, Sadhya Darr, Teresa Parker and Matt Alton ran workshops that enabled us to look at different aspects of privilege in our society. These discussions have been difficult for some, examining our own privilege is difficult due to our unawareness of it. Our lack of diversity prevents us from sometimes seeing our own privileges, but our denial of its existence doesn’t remove the inequality caused by it.

After discussing Quaker business processes and having a Meeting for Worship for Business, we wrote a minute addressing the question “What is our reality as a Quaker community and how does our privilege affect how we understand it?” In preparation for this, adult team members facilitated sessions that explored this question in different learning styles, allowing everyone to engage in the question in a way that was comfortable to them.

A point was made that if we do not allow for a diverse way of engaging certain topics, we are excluding those who don’t thrive in conventional learning environments.

In addition to theme sessions we have had a multitude of fun social sessions. Base groups (small groups) fostered community and inclusivity throughout the weekend and a quiz on Friday night broke the ice and allowed us to get to know each other better. The Easter Egg Eggstravaganza was a social activity that was for everyone as it had aspects for all to engage in, for example the competitive, sporty, or quiet in us. Our venue had activities on offer, so on Saturday some participants did archery, kayaking or went on the king swing whilst others watched the film Freedom Writers. The Open Mic was a resounding success with so many people signing up that later on in the day

we had Open Mic 2.0. Dress up drama brought much hilarity and allowed us to reinvent classic fairy tales with a spin on different aspects of privilege. A highlight of all recent JYMs is the Ceilidh, with mocktails named with Quaker puns and this year was no different.

We began and ended our days with Meeting for Worship, giving us the opportunity to be calmed, settled and spiritual. Some focuses of these worship sessions were Kenyan Quaker hymns, the ocean and a bonfire. These helped us to centre down, providing some Friends new experiences.

Throughout the weekend, we were joined by several guests. Georgina Bailey, Clare Scott Booth, Iain Law, Max Kirk, Paul Parker and Naomi Major joined us in discussions, worship and games and provided insight to their aspect of Quakerism. Kai Weynberg and James Jenkins joined us as ecumenical guests from the United Reformed Church and the Methodists.

We have had an insightful weekend full of learning experiences and hope to go away and apply our new perspectives in making Quakers as inclusive as possible. We hope that the rest of Yearly Meeting takes the opportunity to listen to the opinions and perspectives of younger Friends, and other minority groups within Quakers and actively absorb our ideas. We ask older Friends to be open to change and differences in experience, recognising the diversity of lived experience within us all, just as we as JYM have been learning to do. We feel that all Quakers, young and old, must use our privilege for the betterment of society. It's encouraging to see young Friends inclusion in national Quaker bodies and we wish for this to continue.

Signed in and on behalf of Junior Yearly Meeting 2019

Anya Nanning-Ramamurthy and Lucy Cox Dodgson

Junior Yearly Meeting Clerks 2019

### **Minute 46: General Epistle**

The General Epistle approved by minute 34 has been read and signed by the clerk on behalf of the meeting. It reads as follows:

Loving greetings to Friends everywhere,

Our themes have encouraged us to look through the lens of privilege at climate justice, and at diversity and inclusion. The opening session was one of tenderness and love. We heard about the need to be a trusting and trusted community, sharing our insights and experience, perhaps bringing to light what has been hidden.

In their introduction, our Clerks acknowledged that we are confronting difficult and potentially alienating topics. There is a risk of becoming mired in introspection and failing to address the challenges presented to us.

Each of us is at a different stage of this journey and has different understandings of the issues involved. The word 'privilege' has been used in two distinct ways this weekend: as a blessing we experience and as the unearned advantages a person can inherit from birth and/or accumulate over time. This has brought some frustrations. Our identities are complex and multifaceted. We need to be aware of the ways in which we can simultaneously have, and lack, privilege.

The words of Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) frame the challenge we face:

“We recognise the exclusion we may create is not intentional but it doesn’t mean we aren’t responsible for it. There is a feeling Quakers are passively inclusive. Our testimony to equality makes us complacent.” (from JYM 2019, Minute 1)

We need to be gentle with Friends who feel uncertain about how to engage whilst moving with a sense of urgency, knowing that these issues are an everyday source of pain for some of us.

Over 1,200 Friends have participated. Our twin themes have been woven together in main sessions, parallel sessions, special interest groups, programmed and unprogrammed worship, across different age groups and in the buzz of our shared spaces. The Children’s programme focused on Caring and Including. Exploring the themes worshipfully through dance and singing has been a gentle way to make friends and build our spiritual community.

During our time together, we’ve shed tears of joy, of emotion and of sadness. We are thankful to Friends who were able to share the riches and vulnerabilities in their life stories. Listening to these stories in the Spirit helps us to reflect on how we need to change.

“There is nothing that age, experience and status can do to pre-judge where and how the Light will appear”. (Quaker faith & practice, 23.32)

We recognise that the Light may not be warm and comfortable but be a spotlight exposing our vulnerability, complicity and fear. It is from such discomfort, even being broken, that spiritual growth can come alive. We want to stay with the struggle and hold the tension.

Guilt and shame emerged as strong themes in our opening worship: guilt for what we’ve done and shame for who we are and for what we’ve inherited. By sitting with overwhelming feelings we have the hope of transformation: anger and fear can become passion and love. Helplessness can trigger us to learn. Accountability and responsibility can guide us to make changes in our lives. In the Swarthmore Lecture, “On earth as it is in heaven; the kingdom of God and the yearning of creation”, we were challenged that the more we give ourselves over, the more we are given.

We have heard how our sense of being ‘Quakerly’ can itself be a barrier. As Quakers, we are not called simply to be good - how instead, in our frailty, are we called to live faithfully?

“Somewhere beyond right and wrong there is a garden. I will meet you there.” (Rumi)

Let us begin to understand what it means to be in unity with others and with the whole of creation, acting out of love rather than duty or fear. It’s all about Love.

Signed in and on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting

Clare Scott Booth

Clerk

### **Minute 48: Concluding Minute**

Keep in the wisdom of God that spreads over all the earth, the wisdom of the creation that is pure. Live in it; that is the word of the Lord God to you all, do not abuse it; and keep down and low; and take heed of the false joys that will change.

Bring all in to the worship of God. Plough up the fallow ground... And none are ploughed up but he who comes to the principle of God in him which he hath transgressed. Then he doth service to God; then the planting and the watering and in increase from God cometh. (*Quaker faith & practice* 19.32)

As we embark on the next stage of our journey of exploration together, we know we cannot do this work in our own power, but only by being faithful to the still small voice.

There being no further business for the Yearly Meeting, we separate, hoping to meet again at the University of Bath, 1-7 August 2020, should nothing occur to prevent.

Clare Scott Booth

Clerk

**Complete minutes could be found at:**

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/yearly-meeting-minutes-2019>

## **Gender diversity**

### **Introduction**

Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM) has sent Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) its minute 2019.2.3 'Trans and non-binary inclusion'. This, in part, responds to Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC)'s initial statement 'Quakers and Gender Diversity. The QLCC initial statement and YFGM's minute and statement are copied below.

### **Background**

In 2017, MfS received a statement adopted by North East Thames AM, concerning the inclusion of transgender and non-binary people in our Quaker communities. MfS responded warmly but many Friends knew very little about the issues. MfS minuted *'We welcome the opportunity to increase our learning about this issue – non-binary people are those who do not identify as either male or female.'* It was forwarded to QLCC for consideration – it was not required to respond. (Minute MfS/17/04/15, Transgender and non-binary inclusion, refers.)

At the same time, the Recording Clerk told MfS that the tabular statement now contains a third column for those choosing not to be listed as male or female.

Since then, QLCC and other Quaker groups as well as local meetings have been considering the issues, including some opportunities during Yearly Meeting this year.

Last November QLCC made an initial statement – copies were given to members of MfS at last December's meeting. QLCC encourages Friends to explore these issues in their meetings. QLCC has invited Quaker meetings, groups and individuals to send any response – so far, it has received about 20 responses.

YFGM has sent a minute to MfS, along with its statement.

### **What is asked of MfS now?**

In planning this agenda, Arrangements Group has been mindful that Friends are in different places with this. While some of us have been living with questions about gender identity for many years, for others of us this is all very new. There is a wide variety of views, sometimes deeply held and deeply felt. Some Friends are finding it hard to hear each other.

Arrangements Group proposes to return to this in October. At today's meeting, the QLCC initial statement and the YFGM minute will be introduced. Representatives are asked to encourage Friends to explore this in our local Quaker communities, perhaps using the resource provided at the end of this paper. Not all meetings will be able to do this before October, but this is just one small phase of our shared journey; there will be time for further reflection in future.

Representatives may find it helpful to be reminded of section 3.04 of Quaker faith and practice: *'We have learned to eschew lobbying and not to set great store by rhetoric or clever argument. The mere gaining of debating points is found to be unhelpful and alien to the spirit of worship which should govern the rightly ordered meeting.'*

## **QLCC initial statement**

**Quaker Life Central Committee, November 2018**

### **Quakers and gender diversity**

#### **Introduction**

This statement by Quaker Life Central Committee has emerged as a response to the shared experiences of Friends throughout Britain Yearly Meeting and the sense that it is our responsibility to lead on this. We commit to this being the start of a discussion for the comfort and discomfort of all Friends, with a focus on listening to where the words come from and upholding one another.

We accept that this is where we are now. There is much more to be done and more discussion to be had and this will be a process of careful thought and prayerfulness. We are aware of the pain and hardship around this topic and hold all Meetings in the Light and in our hearts during this exploration. It is essential to remember that we are Friends with each other and to treat ourselves and this sacred community with gentleness and love as we go forth.

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#### **An Initial Statement on Gender Diversity by Quaker Life Central Committee**

We condemn all forms of bigotry, oppression and discrimination and seek to do all we can to remove such experiences from our Quaker community. Where this is not humanly possible we trust that, with Divine help, we can move forward together in making our Society a truly welcoming place for all. We affirm the right of all to explore their own expressions, non-conformity and identity in matters of gender and sexuality and note that this may involve clarity, decisiveness, doubt and re-thinking in any individual's life. We commit to providing places of worship and community that are welcoming of all on that journey. While we cannot hope to be perfect in attaining this, we seek to try what love can do.

We note, with sadness, that the current expression of gender diversity across our society has been coloured by bad feeling and hurtful language. We denounce such language and action. We exhort all Friends to consider their every word and deed carefully and lovingly and commit our organisation to work with tenderness to all as we work through this new social territory.

We affirm the right of women's organisations to critique and explore the nature of gender identification and respect their right to freedom of speech. We recognise that some Friends will find such organisations supportive and of comfort and respect their right to make their case. We do not accept that the critique of transgender identities in the political sphere is necessarily transphobic. We affirm our welcome to such

organisations to meet publicly or privately on Quaker premises. We will work with all such organisations to address any potential uses of hurtful language.

We affirm the right of organisations that support transgender individuals, and all exploring their gender identity, to all such activities in pursuit of this, and respect their right to freedom of speech. We recognise that some Friends will find such organisations supportive and of comfort and respect their right to make their case. We affirm our welcome to such organisations to meet publicly or privately on Quaker premises. We will work with all such organisations to address any potential uses of hurtful language. As a Quaker community, we respect and uphold the self-expression of all members of and visitors to our community. We commit to using and respecting individuals' current names and pronouns.

In all our work with children and young people in our community, we respect and uphold their self-expressions and seek to offer them nurturing spaces in which to continue to grow and develop. We recognise that such self-expressions may change over time and that exploration of identity and conformity or otherwise to gender norms is a normal part of youth and may continue throughout life. We commit to offering our children and young people affirming activities and spaces which are not gender stereotyped and allow each individual freedom of self-expression that is appropriate for them at that time.

We note that shared spaces such as toilets, changing and sleeping areas can cause anxieties and concerns for people. We believe that no-one should have to use shared spaces which do not feel comfortable to them. In a context of systemic male violence, particularly towards women, we are especially minded to examine the potential adverse impact of any policy on women and girls and to make efforts to remedy this. All Quaker premises and events ought to provide facilities which everyone feels safe and comfortable using. The usage of these facilities must be clearly defined and communicated and must offer choice for the individual.

Throughout our history, Quakers have affirmed the equality of all before God. We profess that 'each one of us is unique, precious, a child of God' (Advices and Queries 22). We commit to continue our work in this matter, continually seeking new solutions to eradicate all forms of exclusion and to create safe space for all within Britain Yearly Meeting.

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### **What next?**

We invite Friends to reflect and discuss the topic together. We also invite Friends across Britain to send personal stories and think-pieces to us – contributions will help us learn, and to consider whether to draw together some form of publication. Notes or minutes of discussions in Quaker communities could also be sent, as this will help us understand more about this exploration, and whether further resources might be helpful.

We're not inviting 'dots and commas' comments on the present text.

Please send any response, with your name, address, and the name of your Area Meeting (or other Quaker community) to us at [gender@quaker.org.uk](mailto:gender@quaker.org.uk), or to Gender responses, Quaker Life, Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ.

This email address will not be monitored regularly and we do not expect to enter into correspondence with those making submissions, but you will be contacted if we wish to publish any response you send.

## **YFGM minute and values statement**

### **Background to the YFGM values statement**

In July 2017, the government announced a public consultation on reforming the way people in the UK can change their legal gender (the Gender Recognition Act). Following this, there has been a rise in public discussion of trans issues. Current law (the Equality Act) allows for organizations and individuals to exclude trans people from single-sex spaces in certain circumstances, and any reforms will not affect this. Legal gender recognition does not affect whether or not a trans person can access single-sex spaces. Furthermore, we are aware that trans people - especially trans women - in current society are at disproportionately high risk of unemployment, discrimination, violence, mental health difficulties, and suicide. Nevertheless, this consultation has resulted in the spread of unfounded fear and misinformation about the presence of trans women in women-only spaces.

There has been dispute within the Society of Friends recently about Quaker Meeting Houses hosting events which promote these views. Many trans Friends and allies feel that this use of Meeting Houses is not in-keeping with Quaker values, or with guidance from Quaker Faith and Practice (particularly 14.27). However, not all Quakers agree. It has become clear that there are different views across the Society regarding trans rights. Within YFGM, we were concerned that this may result in trans people not feeling safe or welcome in Quaker meetings. At YFGM in May 2018, we considered what response we might have to this situation. The depth of the ministry in the business meeting highlighted the need for an opportunity for the YFGM community to explore our response more thoroughly and led to the organisation of a special interest gathering.

A group of around 20 young adult Quakers met at Chester Meeting House from November 16th – 18th 2018. We heard from trans and non-binary Quakers on their experiences and their faith, and discussed our hopes and concerns on this subject. Friends then worked together to consider action we might take as individuals and as an organisation. The gathering suggested practical actions that YFGM could take to make our weekends more trans-inclusive and to engage with the Society of Friends more widely to promote learning around the issues and ease some of the divisions we had become aware of.

The gathering also drafted a values statement which was sent to YFGM and we adopted this at our meeting in February 2019 with minor amendments (YFGM Minute 2019.2.3). At our meeting in May 2019, we set up a working group to carry forward the practical actions we committed to in the minute, and to report back on what else YFGM can do to carry these actions forward.

Since we agreed and promoted our values statement we have received mainly positive feedback from within and outside of the Society of Friends. We were pleased to hear

from a number of newcomers at our May gathering that the statement had encouraged them to come to YFGM, knowing they would be made to feel safe and welcome.

We hope that the time for YFGM to be actively vocal about this will pass and that any trans and/or non-binary person will feel welcome and that they belong in any Quaker meeting.

### **YFGM minute 2019.2.3 Trans and non-binary inclusion**

Further to minutes 2018.16 and 2018.18, we have heard from Jane Booth, about November's special interest gathering on Trans and Non-Binary Inclusion.

We have heard the statement produced by that gathering. We as YFGM adopt this statement with minor amendments (wording in Minute part (b) below). We are joyful as a community to affirm our love and inclusion of all friends of diverse genders within and beyond the gender binary.

We commit to the following practical actions:

- Making our value statement clearly available on the website
- To support Friends in the wider Society of Friends to learn about gender diversity and trans inclusion. This may be by providing education to society as a whole, perhaps as special interest groups at BYM, or fact sheets. This may be new material or existing material which could be publicised on the YFGM website. To support intergenerational conversations on the subject, carefully facilitated; we have heard that this work may be taken on by the engaging young adult Quaker programme.
- Provide supporting evidence for trans friends within the YFGM community while the current gender recognition act requires such submission.
- We would like to take all steps possible to ensure that all our YFGM meetings are held in a trans inclusive spaces. This includes taking our trans friends into consideration when we book meeting houses, providing gender neutral bathrooms and ensuring any gendered spaces are explicitly trans inclusive.

We have heard an introduction by Sam Cooper to the QLCC statement. We agree that we would like to formally respond to this statement as YFGM, urging QLCC to take note of our value statement, and making clear the points at which we believe the two statements contradict. In particular, we note our disagreement with the position that “the critique of transgender identities in the political sphere is not necessarily transphobic”.

We agree to send this minute to Meeting for Sufferings and Quaker Life Central Committee, along with context from the report from the special interest gathering. We thank those Friends who have contributed to bringing this before the community.

### **YFGM Value statement on Trans and non-binary inclusion**

We believe that each person has the right to determine for themselves what gender identities and expressions are most comfortable and authentic for them. We recognize that each member of our community has a unique and deeply personal experience of gender, and that the expression of this is a form of living truthfully and of witness.

As Friends — both trans and cis, binary and non-binary — we affirm that there is no conflict between trans inclusion, feminism, and liberation from gender roles and stereotypes.

We do not support the use of meeting houses to host events which claim otherwise, and we hope that Meetings will decide not to host these events in future.

The Society of Friends should be welcoming and affirming of trans and non-binary people. We commit to fostering change to this effect and to bringing YFGM and the Society of Friends closer to this ideal.

We encourage Friends engaging in this conversation going forwards to consider the message of A&Q#22: “Respect the wide diversity among us in our lives and relationships. Refrain from making prejudiced judgments about the life journeys of others. Do you foster the spirit of mutual understanding and forgiveness which our discipleship asks of us? Remember that each one of us is unique, precious, a child of God.”

## Suggested Workshop



# Quakers are inclusive

A session that Friends with eldership and oversight responsibility can run in their Quaker community

## Background

A session to help Quaker communities explore issues around diversity, inclusion and privilege. Use this as a basis and build upon it to explore the issues it raises more deeply.

## Aims

- To help show that there is diversity within Quaker communities
- To help Quakers connect with how that diversity came about and what was needed for the diversity to flourish
- To help to understand how difficult it can be if your starting point is a place of disprivilege
- To give E&Os some tools to help them facilitate exploration in their Quaker communities (local and area)

## Timetable

The session length is 60 minutes but this could be done over a longer time with additional time for worship, introduction, working agreement, activities and feeding back for groups of different sizes.

Timing (mins)	Activity
0-8	<p>Brief gathering worship and introduction:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Introduce self and other facilitators</li><li>2) Repeat the aims of the session</li><li>3) Agreement on being in the session together</li></ol> <p>It is worthwhile thinking about a working agreement in this time. You may wish to prepare something in advance or ask the group how it will work together. You might wish to include this such as; respect, listening, allowing space, confidentiality(see <a href="http://www.quaker.org.uk/pastoralcare">www.quaker.org.uk/pastoralcare</a>)</p>
8-18	<p>Step (raise your hand) with me:</p> <p>Someone – whenever they feel called – will raise their hand and say, "Step with me if you ..." and then finish the sentence with something true about themselves. So, for example, "Step with me if you are female" or "are Asian" or "speak Spanish fluently" or "feels' scared of this activity"</p>

Timing (mins)	Activity
	<p>The activity helps to show the ways that we are similar and also who isn't the same. The questions can become more revealing as the groups builds trust.</p> <p>Try to do this as inclusively as possible so that people don't need to stand etc.</p>
18-33	<p>In pairs:</p> <p>Have a conversation about a time that you felt excluded?</p> <p>What was the context of this experience? Was it a one off? Is it something that happens often enough that you have become used to it.</p> <p>Invite the group to imagine if that experience had formed the prevailing narrative in your life</p>
33-48	<p>In groups of about 6:</p> <p>Think together about things that could be exclusive in your Quaker community.</p> <p>What small change could you make to reverse that barrier?</p>
48-58	<p>Feedback from the group:</p> <p>Invite people to share anything that has come to them for the first time during this session.</p> <p>This could just be done from the floor or if you have time you can go around each group and asking for reflections.</p>
58-60	Closing worship

**Contact Quaker Life**

**Oliver Waterhouse** - 020 7663 1007 - [oliverw@quaker.org.uk](mailto:oliverw@quaker.org.uk)

**General** - 020 7663 1143 - [qlnetwork@quaker.org.uk](mailto:qlnetwork@quaker.org.uk)

**Meeting for Sufferings 2019 04 06 – AM minutes received**

**Sustainability**

Bristol AM (date not provided)

West Weald AM held on 12 May 2019

Southern Marches AM held 11 May 2019

**Sanctuary Everywhere**

Staffordshire AM (date not provided)

**Britain's withdrawal from the European Union**

South Wales AM held on 11 May 2019

## Sustainability

### Introduction

MfS Arrangements Group planned to make substantial agenda time in the October meeting to consider our commitment to sustainability. However, three AMs have sent minutes this time:

- a) Bristol AM has been considering its support for Extinction Rebellion; and
- b) West Weald AM has forwarded a statement made from a Meeting for Worship held during Extinction Rebellion action over Easter.
- c) Southern Marches AM has sent a minute asking Britain Yearly Meeting to give more attention to climate breakdown by directing more resources and organisational capabilities available within centrally managed work towards leading and coordinating the Quaker response across all AMs, and better enabling Quakers to participate in the activities of other organisations.

We're aware of similar consideration in other meetings. The 'court and prison register' item on this agenda includes names of some Friends involved in Extinction Rebellion actions.

There isn't one Quaker body responsible for the work of taking forward our commitment – we all are, not only individually but within our local and area meetings, and through central and standing committees, BYM Trustees and staff. These bodies are expected to report to MfS, and we'll be hearing from them later in the year. It's Meeting for Sufferings' job to monitor work and progress on sustainability – helped by our Sustainability Monitoring Group which has recently been appointed.

Arrangements Group hopes MfS will be keen to receive and note these three minutes; to forward them to BYM Trustees and to central and standing committees; to share them within AMs; and to be prepared for further work in October.

## **Bristol AM**

### **Minute 19.40 Extinction Rebellion.**

We have received the following minute from Redland Meeting:

"We wish to support the XR concern, through building support within our Local Meeting and Bristol Area Meeting. We will bring our concern about climate change to Area Meeting in connection with reports from the recent BYM Sustainability Conference and Meeting for Sufferings. We are mindful of the importance of being well-informed and linking our concern with the wider work of Britain Yearly Meeting."

Mark Smalley has also written more about Extinction Rebellion in our newsletter.

The basic demands of Extinction Rebellion are that; "Government must tell the truth by declaring a climate and ecological emergency, working with other institutions to communicate the urgency for change. Government must act now to halt biodiversity loss and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2025. Government must create and be led by the decisions of a Citizens' Assembly on climate and ecological justice."

We share the sense of urgency of Extinction Rebellion in recognising the climate emergency and the loss of biodiversity and the need for a radical new approach by government as well as individual personal action. We also recognise the caring and compassionate structure for their actions. We also understand that many Friends will be lead to support or take nonviolent action in the face of government intransigence. We hope to support them in acting on their concern.

However we may not always share Extinction Rebellions specific demands or solutions to the problems or support their specific actions. We encourage those Friends who wish to join and develop their witness within Extinction Rebellion.

We may be able to help Extinction Rebellion to develop their peaceful forms of protest. Other Friends may wish to put their energy into other campaigns towards the same end. We are happy for Extinction Rebellion to use our Meeting Houses for public and private meetings and for training sessions.

Where they wish local meetings may reduce hire charges in line with those for charities they wish to support but further advice from our Trustees may be helpful.

We ask that this minute be sent to Meeting for Sufferings for them to consider.

Barney Smith, Clerk

## **West Weald AM held on 12 May 2019**

Minute 19/28 Statement from the Extinction Rebellion Camp at Marble Arch London

Dorking Meeting was impressed by the statement issued on Easter Sunday, 21st April, from the Meeting for Worship held at the Extinction Rebellion camp at Marble Arch. This has been circulated to Friends in West Weald Area Meeting and we think it should be given wider publicity and this would be helped if it was endorsed by Meeting for Sufferings. We are therefore sending the statement to meeting for Sufferings and asking them if they would agree to endorse it.

The statement is attached.

The background to this is that a member of Dorking Meeting was involved in the writing of the statement and drew it to the attention of Dorking Friends. Dorking Friends offered it to the local paper and it is due to come out today. The Dorking Extinction Rebellion Group plan to send it to various contacts but Dorking Friends felt it deserved national coverage, so took it to Area Meeting in the hopes that Friends there would agree with their suggestion that we ask Meeting for Sufferings to endorse it.

In Friendship,

Anne Brewer (AM Assistant Clerk) on behalf of Roger Baker (AM Clerk)

## **West Weald AM Statement from the Quaker Meeting for Worship held at the Extinction Rebellion camp at Marble Arch, Easter Sunday, 21st April 2019.**

We are called here in a spirit of Peace, Love and Truth to bear witness to the pain of our planet. We must take heed of the warning of science, which is clear. Those children being born into the world today face a world of catastrophe, social collapse and mass extinction. This is a Truth we can discern ourselves: we see floods and wildfires, we see famines and wars and the displacement of peoples, we see the loss of glaciers and ice caps. We grieve at the loss of so many species and habitats. We uphold the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, who are at the forefront of the struggle for Climate Justice. All over the world, the poorest are bearing the brunt, but all of us will suffer. The next generation may be the last.

This is not our world to burn. "Where were you when I laid the Foundations of the Earth?" (Job 38:4). Where shall we be if we render it uninhabitable through greed and recklessness? This heedless destruction of the natural world must be halted. "We do not own the world, and its riches are not ours to dispose of at will. Show a loving consideration for all creatures and seek to maintain the beauty and variety of the world. Work to ensure increasing power over nature is used responsibly, with reverence for life." (Advices & Queries 42).

As Quakers we remember and hold true to our traditions of non-violent resistance. From the start our testimony has been one of peace, of freedom of worship, and opposition to oppression and injustice.

People have come together, in grief and in anguish, because the time to change is running out. We pay tribute to the commitment and bravery of Extinction Rebellion and the School Strikes for Climate. We are with you and part of you. To all those arrested, we hold you in the Light.

To governments and businesses, we urge you to act with urgency and vigour. Acknowledge the truth: this is an emergency. Act at once to reduce carbon emissions to net zero. Establish Citizens' Assemblies to guide your actions

To Quakers across the world, and to all churches and all faiths, we share this call for action and prayer. We all live under one sun. In the face of imminent global cataclysmic events, the time to act as one is now. As Ghandi said, "Be the change that you wish to see in the world."

## **Southern Marches AM held on 11 May 2019**

### **Minute 19/54 Climate Breakdown**

We have received the following minute from Clun Valley LM:

2019/18 CVQ Climate Group

Steve has read us a report of the inaugural meeting of this group whose aims are:

- to connect with and support local and national groups
- to refer its concern to Area Meeting and beyond to ask for a coordinated and urgent response to the threat of climate breakdown.

We agree that the situation is indeed urgent, and to forward this minute through whatever channels are available to us, including Area Meeting, QLRC and Friends House.

Other friends are invited to join the group and we ask Steve to keep us updated on its activities by sending out reports in our newsletter.

We note the following clarification, received from Clun Friends:

"We are simply asking AM, if it agrees with the minute, to raise an AM minute to go to MfS.

In simple terms, the phrase 'coordinated and urgent' can be broken down. 'Urgent' ... needs no explanation so it comes down to what is meant by coordinated.

"Our request is for BYM to prioritise Climate Breakdown above all other concerns and to use their organisational capabilities to lead and coordinate Quaker actions across all AMs. This should be started by better communication between BYM and individual members."

We have also received minutes and written contributions from the following local meetings: Abergavenny, Brecon, Hereford, Llandrindod, and Ross-on-Wye, all of which are broadly supportive of Clun Valley LM's request.

A background paper has been circulated setting out relevant past minutes from AM and Meeting for Sufferings, together with the minute from the Quaker meeting for worship held during the Extinction Rebellion protest in London in April.

We are pleased to learn of the formation of the Clun Valley Quakers Climate Group. We have heard of a number of other actions by Friends around the AM in response to climate breakdown, and have been encouraged by the declaration of a climate emergency by county councils within our area, and also by the Welsh Assembly and the UK Parliament. We hope to see these declarations realised by timely action.

We have heard that 'a sustainable, peaceful world' was one of the three priorities BYM Trustees identified last year, and we also note that in November 2018 Meeting for Sufferings minuted: "We have been reminded of the importance of understanding the nature of a YM concern and ensuring that our testimony to sustainability, in particular, remains central in our personal and corporate lives." We are conscious of the pressures and financial constraints on the centrally managed work.

However, we are not convinced that the new arrangements for overseeing BYM's sustainability commitment (set out in Minute MfS18/11/18) reflect the sense of urgency that the climate emergency now demands.

We are aware that the concern has been around for many years within BYM; yet progress has been slow. A number of Quakers have persisted in regarding sustainability as a 'special interest'. But without a planetary system capable of sustaining life, there can be no peace, no economic justice and no equality. We have heard of the way climate breakdown causes mass migration, and how rich countries are closing their doors to the desperate.

Recognising that our testimony on climate justice is inseparable from our testimony to truth, peace, simplicity and equality, we unite with Clun Friends in highlighting the need for Britain Yearly Meeting to give more attention to climate breakdown and to direct more of the resources and organisational capabilities available within the centrally managed work towards leading and coordinating the Quaker response across all AMs, and better enabling Quakers to participate in the activities of other organisations. We suggest that the first step should be better communication between BYM and Friends in their localities. A comprehensive list of other organisations involved in this work would be helpful to all Friends in accessing information and discerning a course of action. A checklist of issues that we need to address would also be helpful; we are well aware of the issues that we ourselves need to address in relation to energy, transport and other matters.

Greta Thunberg has spoken of the need to engage in 'cathedral building'. We cannot afford to despair; we need to act as if our actions will make a difference.

Stevie Krayner, Clerk

## Sanctuary Everywhere

Staffordshire AM (date not provided)

### Minute 3 Sanctuary Everywhere Funding and Future Work

a) In response to the minute we sent QPSW we have received a response from Oliver Robinson welcoming our interest in the Sanctuary Everywhere programme and asking if meetings would be interested in contributing financially to this programme. We agree to offer £ 1,000 to support the programme but we consider that the programme, which requires roughly £75,000 is more appropriately funded centrally. (See section c below)

b) We have received the following minutes:

Minute 2biii of Lichfield LM's MfWfB on 28th April:

" We were made aware of the urgent funding requirement for the continuation of the Sanctuary Everywhere Programme. We heard read out the Minute from Area Meeting to Oliver Robinson and Oliver's reply. We appreciate the importance and value of the Sanctuary Everywhere Programme and would wish it to continue beyond December 2019. We ask our Treasurer to consider whether we can make a specific donation for the work. We also ask Area Meeting to consider making a donation. As more information regarding future plans becomes available we will consider a further response."

Stafford LM Minute 4 LM 12.5.19

We have received a draft minute from Anthony Wilson about Sanctuary Everywhere. This will be presented to Area Meeting on Sunday 19th May. We support this minute and hope that it will be forwarded to the Recording Clerks' office. On the 2nd of June 2019, following Meeting for Worship, we will discuss the prospect of Stafford becoming a Sanctuary Meeting.

c) Following AM Minute 15 of our meeting held 7 April 2019, Friends endorse the concern around the uncertain future of the Sanctuary Everywhere programme expressed in our clerk's correspondence with Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) staff and on the general Area Meeting clerks' website, where our concern found some support. At present, the programme is financed from the central legacy fund and expires on 31 December 2019. There is no provision for its continued support from central funds.

We see the present situation around asylum - the effects of climate chaos, and the nationalistic and exclusionary responses of the wealthier countries including our own - as presenting a challenge to Friends on a similar scale to the situation of Jews in Germany in the 1930s. Our testimonies to searching for and then speaking the truth, combined with the wide and deep implications of our commitment to equality towards all, lead us to envisage our Sanctuary programme as one which calls for address by the entire Society at Central, Area and Local level: not only by those 97 meetings which have committed themselves to the specific Sanctuary Everywhere programme, or Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network members, or QPSW which is currently administering it and has no funding in hand for its continuation after 2019.

Friends are by no means alone in our concern for a just asylum policy in this country. However, the broad political expression of this concern calls for the additional spiritual commitment which the Society can bring, drawing on insights which reach beyond a pragmatic welfare response.

Accordingly, we invite Meeting for Sufferings to give urgent attention to the future of work with refugees and asylum seekers in time for a new witness to emerge in 2020. We hope this witness in accordance with the Sanctuary Everywhere Manifesto approved by Meeting for Sufferings Dec 2017, (attached) would continue over the years to come as our world enters a prolonged period of instability with growing impacts on the most vulnerable people.

Berry Dicker

Clerk

*Background note from BYM staff*

MfS has been sent minutes from AMs about refugee and asylum issues for several years. Some of these minutes were prompted by members of the Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network (QARN – [www.qarn.org.uk](http://www.qarn.org.uk)) who were keen for BYM to speak out on issues of concern.

Until 2016 QPSWCC took the view that it was best to encourage Friends to act through other organisations – locally and nationally – which provide practical support to refugees and asylum seekers, and/or advocate for legislative change. Some of these organisations have been set up by Quakers, working with other partners.

In 2016, responding to calls from AMs, QPSWCC began to consider whether to develop specific Quaker responses. Its initial suggestions were rejected by MfS. In 2017, QPSWCC decided to develop 'Sanctuary Everywhere' work. This was reported to MfS in October 2017 (17/10/17). At the same time, QPSWCC also proposed a 'Sanctuary Everywhere Manifesto' which, after some amendments, was agreed by MfS in December 2017 (MfS/17/12/15).

The Sanctuary Everywhere project has been funded through the legacy-funding scheme, designed to support the development of short-term projects, but with the expectation that after project funding ends the work is either laid down or 'mainstreamed'.

The three-year project is now half-way through the third year. An external evaluation tells us it's been very successful in that a lot more meetings than expected have agreed to become 'Sanctuary Meetings' – which has been demanding for staff.

The project is funded until December 2019. In February, QPSWCC minuted strong support for the work, and agreed to fundraise, acknowledging it can only continue with extra funding or by laying down other work. At its June meeting, QPSWCC reiterated its commitment to fundraising for this project.

The original plan was for this work to stop at the end of this year.

However, many Friends have asked us to keep the programme running for a little longer so we can continue to provide support, resources and advice for the vital work that Sanctuary Meetings are doing. We also want to develop more infrastructure, tools and resources so that our Sanctuary Everywhere network can become more sustainable.

Running the programme for an additional year will cost in the region of £75,000. As well as applications to external funders, we are asking Sanctuary Meetings to help by making an additional financial gift or by organising a special fundraising activity to support this work.

The issue we're grappling with is how to find the money to make this happen, not whether it's a good idea in principle.

## **Britain's withdrawal from the European Union**

### **South Wales AM**

#### **Minute 19:05:06 Minutes from Local Meetings**

(ii) Further to SWAM minute 19:03:05(i), we have heard read to us minute 19.4.6.c from Milford Haven LM regarding Gill and Alistair Nelson's letter about the European Union.

We have not received any other minutes from Local Meetings regarding this matter.

We are pleased to note that at their meeting on 06.04.19, Meeting for Sufferings united with the statement sent by Meeting of Friends in Wales which refers to Gill and Alistair's letter. (minute MfS19/04/09)

We would also want to note that the institutions of the European Union underpinned the Northern Ireland peace settlement. We are aware of the fears of some people regarding the return of a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic and the divisions over Brexit more widely.

We send this minute to Meeting for Sufferings.

Carolyn Sansom, Frances Rutter, Co-Clerks

#### *Note from MfS Arrangements Group:*

In April, MfS received a minute from Meeting of Friends in Wales containing a statement about Britain's withdrawal from the EU. The statement draws attention to the importance of peace within Europe and in the UK and shares distress about the degree of inequality that is evident in our society today. MfS united with the statement. (MfS/19/04/09).

The statement has already been agreed; but Friends who are engaging with these issues may find it helpful to refer to the additional points made by South Wales AM.

#### *A draft minute might read:*

Further to our minute MfS 19/04/09, we receive and note minute 19/05/06 of South Wales AM reflecting further on the statement on Britain's withdrawal from the EU, and in particular the impact on the Northern Ireland peace settlement.

## **Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group terms of reference**

### **Introduction and draft minute**

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group terms of reference adopted by Meeting for Sufferings on 05/04/2014 require the continuation of the group and its terms of reference to be reviewed after five years. This review is now due. Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group recommends Meeting for Sufferings asks Central Nominations Committee to nominate a review group of three Friends for this purpose.

The Group's current terms of reference follow for information.

*A draft minute might read*

### **MfS 2019/07/10**

We ask Central Nominations Committee to bring forward nominations for a review group of three Friends to be appointed by Meeting for Sufferings to review the continuation and terms of reference of the Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group.

## **Terms of Reference**

### **1. Summary of reference**

The role of the Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group (MSAG) is one of service to the Meeting. It works to facilitate and simplify the work of Meeting for Sufferings.

MSAG comprises the Meeting for Sufferings clerks and three additional Friends, with the Recording Clerk/Deputy Recording Clerk and others as invited, in attendance. The group's decisions will be discerned by the whole group.

### **2. Membership**

**2.1.** MSAG, appointed by Meeting for Sufferings in session, shall be composed of five members, as follows:

- a) The clerk and assistant clerk of Meeting for Sufferings.
- b) Three members of Meeting for Sufferings (representatives or alternates).

These members of MfSAG will be appointed by Meeting for Sufferings, on the nomination of Central Nominations Committee, to serve for three years from the second Meeting for Sufferings of the triennium (to give Nominations Committee time to approach appointed members of Meeting for Sufferings) until and including the first Meeting for Sufferings of the next triennium or until a replacement has been appointed.

**2.2.** Also in attendance may be:

- a) The Recording Clerk and/or Deputy Recording Clerk ex officio and, by invitation, any other member of staff with designated responsibility within the Recording Clerk's Office for Meeting for Sufferings;

- b) Other members of staff asked to attend by invitation of the Clerk(s) for agenda items which include their area(s) of responsibility;
- c) Other Friends or specialists asked to attend by invitation of the Clerk(s) for particular sessions or particular items.

**2.3.** The MSAG Clerk shall normally be the Meeting for Sufferings Assistant Clerk.

### **3. Frequency of meetings**

**3.1.** MSAG shall meet as frequently as necessary for discernment, accountability and completion of its tasks. It is expected that normally one meeting will be held between meetings of Meeting for Sufferings.

**3.2.** The between meetings decision making process shall be consultation between the MSAG Clerk and the Meeting for Sufferings Clerk, consulting other MSAG members as appropriate.

### **4. Duties**

The role of the Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group (MSAG) is one of service to the Meeting. It works to facilitate and simplify the work of Meeting for Sufferings.

#### **MfSAG 2019 05 07**

**4.1.** MSAG's main duty is the discernment of recommendations for the annual calendar and agenda for Meeting for Sufferings, and oversight of the implementation of all the arrangements for Meeting for Sufferings undertaken either by groups of the Meeting for Sufferings or by staff.

**4.2.** MSAG shall be able to initiate items for the Meeting for Sufferings agenda.

**4.3.** Decisions on the final content of the agenda to be offered to Meeting for Sufferings shall be for the Meeting for Sufferings Clerks, and decisions on its acceptance shall be for Meeting for Sufferings itself.

**4.4.** MSAG shall:

- a) Keep under review the ways in which information is presented to Meeting for Sufferings and recommend any changes to the guidelines which would improve clarity of presentation,
- b) monitor progress in implementing Meeting for Sufferings' decisions,
- c) co-ordinate the timing of formal consultations with meetings.

**4.5.** In relation to Meeting for Sufferings' business, MSAG shall facilitate communication with and between committees, working groups, other bodies of Britain Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings.

**4.6.** MSAG shall:

- a) ensure the provision of necessary and appropriate advice and guidance for those who undertake work in preparing sessions or papers,
- b) collaborate with the Meeting for Sufferings Support Group to ensure the smooth running of the meeting,
- c) liaise with Quaker Life to identify needs and opportunities for creation of an inclusive Meeting for Sufferings,

d) liaise with Quaker Communication and Services to identify needs and opportunities for external publicity and communications.

**4.7.** MSAG, apart from the Meeting for Sufferings Clerks, shall constitute a standing link with the Committee on Clerks, which has the responsibility for the nomination of the Meeting for Sufferings Clerks.

## **5. Powers and responsibilities**

**5.1.** MSAG may delegate appropriate tasks to working groups, individuals or other committees and groups, subject to available resources and budget approval, and may advise Meeting for Sufferings on setting up other working groups on matters outside MSAG's terms of reference.

**5.2.** MSAG may liaise and consult as appropriate (acting through the Recording Clerk/Deputy Recording Clerk) with the clerks of BYM Trustees, General, Area and Local Meetings; other standing committees and departments; partner and associated organisations such as FWCC and Woodbrooke.

**5.3.** MSAG may recommend and take appropriate action between Meetings for Sufferings when minutes are received from Area Meetings, and may meet such other needs as the clerks may identify.

**5.4.** The Recording Clerk's Office shall be the department responsible for provision of the main staff support for MSAG and for necessary liaison between Friends House departments in administrative provision.

**5.5.** MSAG shall have a budget allocated from within that agreed for Meeting for Sufferings. The budget will be managed through the Recording Clerk's Office.

**5.6.** MSAG shall agree on the fee for any specialist external contributor or speaker for Meeting for Sufferings, subject to budget approval.

## **6. Authority and accountability**

**6.1.** MSAG is accountable to Meeting for Sufferings.

**6.2.** MSAG shall work within these Terms of Reference, under the authority of minute MfS 2014 04 06 of Meeting for Sufferings. These terms of reference, and the continuation of the group, shall be reviewed after five years.

Approved by Meeting for Sufferings held 05/04/2014

## BYM Trustees report

### Introduction

At this MfS we will:

- a) Receive and note the minutes of BYMT held 5 April 2019 and 7-9 June 2019
- b) Note the Trustees' annual report and accounts. We were told about the *annual report* in April, and since then Yearly Meeting has received and accepted it. The report (and also the 2018 annual review) can be read in full online: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/our-structures/britain-yearly-meeting-trustees>
- c) Hear from the clerk of BYM Trustees, including in relation to *support for meetings – beyond the Vibrancy project* (paper MfS 2019 07 11b)

Trustees will be available for discussion over lunchtime.

## **Minutes of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees held Friday 5 April at Friends House**

**Present:** Georgina Bailey, Linda Batten (Treasurer), Alison Breadon, Sarah Donaldson, Nick Eyre, Ellie Harding, Carolyn Hayman, Caroline Nursey (Clerk), David Olver (Assistant Clerk), Alastair Reid, Hazel Shellens, Graham Torr, Frances Voelcker.

**Prevented:** Chris Willmore.

**In attendance:** Paul Grey, Head of Operations; Paul Parker, Recording Clerk; Juliet Prager, Deputy Recording Clerk; Oliver Robertson, Head of Witness & Worship.

### **BYMT-2019-04-01 Worship**

In our opening worship, we had read paragraph 2.11 from *Quaker faith & practice*.

### **BYMT-2019-04-02 Trustees' annual report and financial statements 2018**

We receive the draft Trustees' annual report and financial statements for 2018 and BYMT Finance & Property Committee minute FP19/14. We approve the annual report and financial statements, subject to any proofreading corrections required and authorise the Clerk and Treasurer to sign them on our behalf. We send them to Meeting for Sufferings for information, and to Yearly Meeting so that it may accept them. They will then be filed with the Charity Commission.

We authorise the Treasurer to sign the letter of representation to the auditors.

We thank staff and others for their work in producing these documents.

### **BYMT-2019-04-03 Appointment – Lead trustee for safeguarding**

Further to minute BYMT-2019-02-14, we record the between-meeting appointment of Sarah Donaldson as lead trustee for safeguarding. The initial period of service is until 31 December 2019.

Caroline Nursey  
Clerk

## **Minutes of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees held Friday 7 June to Sunday 9 June 2019 at Woodbrooke**

**Present:** Georgina Bailey, Linda Batten (Treasurer), Alison Breadon, Sarah Donaldson, Nick Eyre, Ellie Harding, Carolyn Hayman, Caroline Nursey (Clerk), David Olver (Assistant Clerk), Alastair Reid, Hazel Shellens, Graham Torr, Frances Voelcker, Danielle Walker Palmour (minutes BYMT-2019-06-06 to 08), Chris Willmore.

**In attendance:** Sandra Berry, Director of Woodbrooke, (minute BYMT-2019-06-05); Val Brittin, Clerk Quiet Company, (minutes BYMT-2019-06-08 to 10); Paul Grey, Head of Operations, (except minutes BYMT-2019-06-15 to 16); Suzanne Ismail, Head of Networking and Engagement Quaker Peace & Social Witness, (minutes BYMT-2019-06-06 to 07); Lisa Kiew, Head of Finance & Resources, (except minutes BYMT-2019-06-15 to 16); Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, (except minute 2019-06-05 and 16); Juliet Prager, Deputy Recording Clerk, (except minutes BYMT-2019-06-15 to 16); Oliver Robertson, Head of Witness & Worship, (except minutes BYMT-2019-06-15 to 16).

### **BYMT-2019-06-01 Welcome, agenda check, conflicts of interest check, minutes of last meeting**

The minutes of the meetings held 15-16 February 2019 and 5 April 2019 have been signed by the Clerk.

The following conflicts of interest are recorded:

- Sarah Donaldson has declared a potential conflict of interest as an employee of Manchester and Warrington Area Meeting.
- Daniel Walker Palmour is a Director of Woodbrooke Quaker Centre Limited.
- Some Trustees act as Associate Tutors on Woodbrooke courses.

We confirm our agenda.

On Saturday, we will be welcoming Danielle Walker Palmour who was appointed as Trustee from the rise of Yearly Meeting 2019.

We will be welcoming Val Brittin, Clerk of Quiet Company, and Suzanne Ismail, Head of Networking & Engagement, Quaker Peace & Social Witness for parts of our meeting.

During our worship, we have heard read part of paragraph 15.02 from Quaker faith & practice.

### **BYMT-2019-06-02 Minutes received**

We receive the following minutes

- Continuing minutes (BYMT-2019-06-02a).
- Quaker World Relations Committee 1-3 March 2019 (BYMT-2019-06-02b).
- Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee 8-10 February 2019 (BYMT-2019-06-02c).

- Friends House (London) Hospitality Ltd 28 February 2019 and Quiet Company 9 May 2019 (BYMT-2019-06-02di,ii).
- Quaker Life Central Committee 22-24 February 2019 and 10-12 May 2019 (BYMT-2019-06-02ei,ii).
- BYMT Audit Committee 14 March 2019 (BYMT-2019-06-02f)

### **BYMT-2019-06-03 Items to be taken on draft minute**

#### **(a) Safeguarding annual report and action plan**

We receive the annual safeguarding report 2018-19 and the plan to take forward the recommendations from the recent external review (BYMT-2019-06-03a).

We have considered whether there should be a review of historic cases.

We agree that a review should be commissioned of safeguarding-related documents held in the Library. The review should be carried out by an external individual or agency, who can advise us on whether further action is appropriate. We ask the Deputy Recording Clerk to take this forward, liaising with our lead safeguarding Trustee, and to report as soon as practicable.

We re-affirm that the BYM Safeguarding Policy, approved in June 2017, is up to date.

#### **(b) Nominations and appointments**

Our Nominations Group has brought forward the following names for appointment (BYMT-2019-06-03b):

##### **Engaging with the review of the ToR of BYM Trustees and QSC (2 trustees)**

David Olver, Sarah Donaldson.

##### **Property Development Steering Group**

Release: Elizabeth Redfern (Quiet Company).

Replacement: Matt Baker (Quiet Company).

##### **Trustee Annual Report for years ending 2019 and 2020**

Georgina Bailey.

We thank the Friend released from service and agree to the appointments.

#### **BYMT Finance and Property Committee – 1 non-Trustee**

The Finance and Property Committee have indicated that at this time they do not see a need for a further committee member. We agree that one non-Trustee member is adequate for Finance and Property Committee at this time, but ask Nominations Group to keep the role under review.

## **Giving and Fundraising Development Group**

The Nominations Group have informed us of plans for finding Friends for the Giving and Fundraising Development Group which includes advertising the role. We welcome the initiative and ask all trustees to forward any suggested names to the Nominations Group.

### **(c) Meeting the auditors**

By convention BYM Trustees take an annual decision as to whether they wish to meet with the Society's auditors (BYMT-2019-06-03c).

We agree not to invite the outgoing auditors to a meeting this year. It may be appropriate next year to meet with the new auditors.

### **(d) Risk Register**

We receive the Risk Register for the biannual review (BYMT-2019-06-03e).

We have reviewed the risks and welcome the care with which managers are keeping the Risk Register under continuous review.

We have commented on some risks and re-affirm our minute last year that the Risk Register might be pruned by removing lower risks.

### **(e) Audit Committee annual report**

We receive the annual report of the Audit Committee (BYMT-2019-06-03f) which covers membership and the business undertaken last year. They also include progress with the internal audit plan for 2017-2019.

We are grateful for the work of the Audit Committee. We are pleased that they will consider how our Strategic Priorities should be incorporated into the audit review process.

We note that their Terms of Reference are due to be reviewed in 2020. We look forward to receiving any recommendations for changes from the Committee.

## **BYMT-2019-06-04 Finance**

### **(a) BYMT Finance and Property Committee minutes**

We receive the minutes of the meetings of BYMT Finance and Property Committee held on 14 March and 16 May 2019 (BYMT-2019-06-04ai,ii).

#### **i) Leslie Harris Trust**

We receive minute FP19/31 Leslie Harris Trust (BYMT-2019-06-04aiii). We delegate authority to the Head of Finance & Resources to settle within the range of outcomes using a mediation and negotiation strategy agreed in advance with the BYMT Finance and Property Committee Clerk and the BYM Treasurer. We note legal advisors will be retained during the mediation.

## **ii) Property: Swarthmoor Hall Farm**

We receive minute FP19/29 Property: Swarthmoor Hall Farm (BYMT-2019-06-04aiv) regarding the transfer of a small parcel of land close to the water pumping station as part of a deal with the tenant which includes surrender of the Field Barn and adjacent field from the tenancy. The deal is intended to be cost neutral and deliver operational flexibility to the future operations at the Hall. In line with Charity Commission requirements, a qualified surveyor's report will be obtained to certify the correct valuation of land and that the terms for this disposal are the best value that can be achieved in the deal. We agree to this transfer, subject to obtaining a satisfactory surveyor's report, and delegate the signing of legal documents to any two Trustees available at the time of contract.

## **(b) BYMT Employment Committee minutes**

We receive minutes of the meeting of BYMT Employment Committee held 15 February 2015 (BYMT-2019-06-04b)

## **(c) Quarterly Finance Report**

We receive the Quarterly Finance Report for the period to 31 March 2019 (BYMT-2019-06-04c).

## **(d) Young Adult Friends Funding**

We receive a proposal from the Engaging Young Adult Quakers (EYAQ) project for the creation of a central designated fund for grants to support and develop young adult Quakers (BYMT-2016-06-04d). We also receive minute 19.10 from Quaker Life Central Committee.

We support the principle of such a Fund - to provide grants for Quaker learning, hardship grants and grants for living adventurously. The proposal fits with our Strategic Priorities. We ask Finance and Property Committee to consider how such grants should operate.

We send this minute to the Engaging Young Adult Quakers Steering Group.

## **BYMT-2018-06-05 The current landscape for Woodbrooke**

Sandra Berry, Director of Woodbrooke, has updated us on the current landscape for Woodbrooke. Paul Parker is giving Woodbrooke Trustees an update on BYM in a parallel session.

## **BYMT-2019-06-06 Support for meetings – beyond the Vibrancy pilot: Possible mode and options**

BYMT Trustees and Woodbrooke Trustees met together to consider how our organisations could work jointly to support Quaker meetings and communities. We receive paper BYMT-2019-06-06 on Support for Meetings beyond the Vibrancy pilot.

We have had discussions in mixed groups with Woodbrooke Trustees.

## **BYMT-2019-06-07 Support for meetings – beyond the Vibrancy pilot: Implications for BYM**

We receive paper BYMT-2019-06-08 giving implications and next steps for BYM implementing the proposal in BYMT-2019-06-06. We receive minute 19/4 from Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee and minute 19.13 from Quaker Life Central Committee.

## **BYMT-2019-06-08 Quiet Company annual report**

We are joined by Val Brittin, Clerk to Quiet Company Board of Directors for this item.

We have received the annual report of the Quiet Company (Friends House (London) Hospitality Ltd) prepared by Val Brittin and the vision for Swarthmoor Hall (BYMT-2019-06-10).

Val has shared with us the many successes of the Quiet Company and the challenges still faced.

We endorse the Vision for Swarthmoor Hall which should help focus on the key charitable aims, while operating as efficiently as possible.

We note the need for us to share our direction with the Quiet Company as early as possible so that they can plan effectively.

We look forward to reviewing the Lettings Policy for Friends House, later this year.

We are very proud of everything that is being done – including the valuable Gift Aid income. We thank all the staff of the Quiet Company for their work.

We send this minute to the Quiet Company Board of Directors.

## **BYMT-2019-06-09 Recording Clerk's report to Trustees**

We have received the Recording Clerk's report to Trustees (BYMT-2019-06-11) covering:

- Recording Clerk: Change; External Relations: Quaker groups and organisations (Visits to meetings, The Retreat, Heads of Quaker-led organisations); External Relations: Other churches & faiths (Interfaith Network for the UK, Commemorating nuclear weapons at Westminster Abbey, Ecumenical relations); External relations: third sector; Yearly Meeting; Governance effectiveness (Governance reviews, Clerks' awayday, Simpler local structures, Lobbying Act).
- Deputy Recording Clerk: Impact; Communications (Website, Social media, Communication with Quakers, Media coverage, Advocacy); Visits
- Witness and Worship: Sustainability; All age community and Junior Yearly Meeting; Witness work; Support for Meetings; Library
- Finance and resources: Data protection and Management; Employment; Finance; Procurement; Property Management; Fundraising

- Operations: Operational overview; Customer feedback; Hospitality and Facilities Staff Conference; Restaurant and new meeting space; Facilities (Long term maintenance, Carbon Reduction Plan 2018-2019); Health and safety; Committee Services and Events (BYM events, BYM committees; Databases, Online travel bookings, Young Friends General Meeting)

The appendices to the report were (1) Strategic priorities and plans for change, (2) Staff report.

We have received Management Meeting minutes for meetings held on 26 February, 12 March, 9 and 23 April, 14 and 21 May 2019.

### **BYMT-2019-06-10 Trustees' news**

We receive a report of the activities of trustees since our last meeting (BYMT-2019-06-12).

### **BYMT-2019-06-11 Support for meetings – a new meeting-centred approach**

BYM Trustees and Woodbrooke Trustees met together and then separately.

#### **(a) Statement of Intent**

Together, we make the following statement of intent on how we hope to support Quaker meetings and communities in the future.

At a shared meeting of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees and Woodbrooke Trustees held 7 - 9 June 2019

#### **Statement of intent – beyond the Vibrancy in Meetings pilot**

Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community? From Advices and queries 27.

Our Faith in the Future - discerned and agreed by Meeting for Sufferings – is a vision of what Quakers in Britain would like the Society to be like in the future. But achieving that vision is threatened by the demographic, cultural, climate and financial changes that face Quakerism today in a turbulent world.

Meeting for Worship is the bedrock of living as a Quaker in thriving Quaker communities. Yet we know that many Meetings are struggling to maintain those communities and their worship. The Vibrancy in Meetings pilot project has shown that a meeting-centred approach to providing support can deepen our worship and transform our communities.

We can see that both Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) and Woodbrooke need to change to ensure that Quaker communities receive the support that they need. We want to do more than just manage decline and to build a Society that is attractive to new people and fulfils its purpose to the world. In a world facing climate breakdown, we must reduce our carbon footprint and strengthen local resilience.

We are thus committed as BYM and Woodbrooke Trustees to changing radically the ways that we operate and to working together, as two organisations serving the same community, to support Friends in building the thriving Meetings that they want.

Each body of Trustees will work out their part in achieving this, in close communication with each other. Collectively, the two organisations offer Friends a richness of accompaniment, advice, learning, information, support and inspiration. The work we do in supporting the needs of Friends and Meetings is not discrete, but complementary and by working together we reduce the risk of both duplication of effort and in gaps occurring.

We share the aspiration to:

- a) extend and expand the current model of Locally Based Development workers so that there is a local development worker within reach of every Meeting in Britain within 5 years.
- b) work rapidly towards more local support for Meetings and begin to experiment with new regional bases, hubs or clusters.

Change is both exciting and frightening. As Trustees we must think both as local Quakers and as BYM-wide Friends. We will work through our Quaker structures and communities to respond flexibly to their needs. We see the need to move quickly yet there are risks that we must recognise, mitigate and manage for each organisation, and for the Yearly Meeting as a whole. The pattern of staffing in both BYM and Woodbrooke will change and that may affect people who have given much to Quakers.

Some work that is close to our hearts may have to be laid down to fund the investment in meeting-centred support. And, we must get the balance right in retaining skills BYM-wide as well as providing support as near communities as possible.

Now is the time. We go forward with hope and realism, committed to evaluating the difference we make, adapting as we learn what works and knowing that in a changing world the structures that are suitable at one time will not last for ever.

### **(b) Implications and next steps for BYM**

The Vibrancy Project will come to an end on 31 December 2019.

We thank the Vibrancy in Meetings staff team and the Steering Group for their inspiring work and for enabling the testing of new ways of working.

As BYM Trustees, we recognise that a great deal of work will be necessary to move fully to the meeting-centred model of support for Meetings that we have agreed to enable worship and witness to thrive in all our Quaker communities. We must support Management Meeting with the cultural and structural changes required including by allocating agenda time to monitor the change process.

We ask Management Meeting to work on transition planning for BYM's infrastructure and organisational culture, and to report regularly to us. As part of this, Management Meeting will work on changes to staffing structures within the budgets that we agree.

We ask Management Meeting to review risks in light of our consideration and to include a strategic level risk for the overall process on the Risk Register. We also ask them to prepare operating budgets for 2020 and beyond as part of the normal annual cycle to reflect the level of transitional investment required to bring about the changes we have agreed this weekend. Through reports from Management Meeting, we will continue to monitor progress in moving towards reducing the structural deficit through savings in the central work and additional income generation. Through Finance and Property Committee, we will oversee financial resource planning, review forecasts and the financial implications of decisions. Any financial issues, or risks, which need wider consideration should be brought to us.

We recognise that reducing our carbon footprint needs to be an important element of these developments.

We agree to engage with Meeting for Sufferings and other parts of the BYM structure to communicate this decision. Specifically, we agree:

- To work with Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC) to develop a Joint Support for Meetings Strategy with Woodbrooke and to re-examine the QLCC Strategy and Plan in the light of decisions taken this weekend.
- To work with QLCC and staff to develop indicators of success for this work, including the success of hubs, clusters or remote teams.
- To communicate clearly with Central Committees about the need for savings and efficiencies to be found in existing work over the coming years to allow the re-prioritisation of resources to align with our Strategic Priorities, including these proposals.
- To continue to raise awareness and take soundings, through Meeting for Sufferings, about Friends' hopes and fears for this work.
- In due course, to revise the Memorandum of Understanding between BYM and Woodbrooke to reflect new developments.
- In due course, to review the terms of reference of QLCC to reflect new developments.
- To feed new thinking about support for Meetings and role-holders into the review of Quaker Stewardship Committee; two Trustees have already been appointed to engage with this review.
- To ask Audit Committee to schedule periodic reviews (in discussion with Management Meeting) of risk management for these changes.
- We send this minute to Woodbrooke Trustees, Meeting for Sufferings, Quaker Life Central Committee, Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee, Quaker Stewardship Committee, Finance and Property Committee and Audit Committee.

### **BYMT-2019-06-12 Yearly Meeting reflection**

We have reflected on the Yearly Meeting held at Friends House 24-27 May 2019 and we were deeply impressed by the work of the Quiet Company and of all BYM staff.

We are very pleased that young people were integrated so effectively and we look forward to visiting them as Trustees at Yearly Meeting Gathering next year.

We think that the theme of Yearly Meeting and the vulnerability expressed by the Introducers, made it possible for Friends to raise problematic issues with us individually that are likely to return to us at some point.

We note the interest in Simpler Meetings and the wide range of Special Interest Meetings. The BYM Trustees Special Interest Session attracted only a small number of Friends - who were satisfied with what we are doing. We feel that our presentations of the annual report and accounts went well and are grateful for the support from Friends for the work.

### **BYMT-2019-06-13 Meeting for Sufferings: Preparation**

We have considered our involvement in the next Meeting for Sufferings on 6 July 2019.

### **BMT-2019-06-14 Reviewing the meeting**

We have reviewed the meeting.

Having the residential trustee meeting so soon after yearly meeting was not ideal.

We found the time with Woodbrooke Trustees illuminating and the pattern of sessions with them and without them, worked well. We recognise that we will need time with them in the future.

### **BYMT-2019-06-15 Time with the Recording Clerk**

We have spent time with the Recording Clerk.

### **BYMT-2019-06-16 Time without staff**

We have spent time without staff.

We part, hoping to meet again on 6-7 September 2019 at Friends House.

Caroline Nursey

Clerk

## **Support for Meetings – beyond the Vibrancy pilot**

### **Background**

BYM Trustees' minute 11, Support for Meetings – a new meeting-centred approach, records decisions taken by BYM Trustees when they met jointly with Woodbrooke Trustees in June (see paper MfS 2019 07 11, pages 8-10).

Caroline Nursey, clerk to BYM Trustees, will speak to this minute. The paper considered by Trustees, prepared by Sandra Berry, Director of Woodbrooke and Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, is copied below.

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### **Paper to meeting of BYM and Woodbrooke Trustees, 7-9 June**

#### **Part 1: Introduction and concept**

##### **A new vision**

Fundamentally this weekend's decision is part of a wider process of reshaping both BYM and Woodbrooke to fit the new realities – demographic, cultural, financial, internal and external – facing Quakerism in Britain in the 3<sup>rd</sup> decade of the twenty-first century.

We hope that over the course of this meeting, we will reach a statement of intent that clearly articulates the direction of travel for how our organisations work together to support Quaker meetings and communities.

To do this, over the course of the next few years, both BYM and Woodbrooke need to undergo a transformation.

For BYM, this means moving resources to fit the strategic priorities identified by Trustees – to create a simple church supported by a simple charity to reinvigorate Quakerism. It means moving to a 'meeting-centred' approach, so that the organisation can respond fully to what Quaker communities need to thrive and accompany them through change. It means moving resources closer to where Friends are and to what they want to see. It will mean refocusing the organisation to 'do more of less', and to make the best use of the resources we have. We have a few years' time in which we can afford to invest reserves in change, but need, at the end of that period, to reach a sustainable 'steady state'. This will mean looking hard at our existing work and practices and reducing core costs, in order to have more to spend on the organisation's priorities. It will also mean working with Woodbrooke under a single strategy for Support for Meetings across both organisations. At the same time there will need to be investment in additional fundraising (as is already planned) to enable us to generate the voluntary income we need.

For Woodbrooke, it means responding to the changing needs of friends as highlighted in the recent learning survey and being realistic about how the learning being asked for can be made affordable and accessible. It means working with BYM in an integrated way that goes beyond partnership working.

It means prioritising our learning strategy around support for Quaker communities so that we work under a single strategy for Support for Meetings across both organisations. Whilst there will be some part of Woodbrooke's work that falls outside this strategy, such as support for individuals and Quaker communities outside of BYM, we will need to be clear about how this is funded in a sustainable way. Woodbrooke's operating model for learning has been performing unsustainably for a number of years with the need to draw heavily on reserves, therefore the timescales needed for change are shorter than for BYM.

In order to achieve BYM Trustee (BYMT) strategic priorities and Woodbrooke Trustee (WBT) Strategic Goals we therefore need to

- a) radically change the way we support meetings (and other Quaker communities) and the individuals who are part of those communities.
- b) work together in an integrated way that goes beyond just 'partnership' working

We hope trustees will be ready to agree these aspirations.

If so, then we are seeking the approval of Trustees to:

- a) extend and expand the current model of locally based development workers so that there is a local development worker within reach of every meeting in Britain within 5 years.
- b) work rapidly towards more local support for meetings and begin to experiment with new bases, hubs or clusters across the yearly meeting.

There is more information about these strands of development in part 2 of this paper.

## **Part 2: Implementation**

### **2.1 Vision and rationale for joint working**

*Our Faith In the Future* was discerned and agreed by Meeting for Sufferings. It sets aspirations and guides the activities of all Quaker meetings and organisations in Britain. Both Britain Yearly Meeting and Woodbrooke serve the community of Friends within the Yearly Meeting and have a crucial role in supporting work towards these aspirations.

BYMT have agreed strategic priorities, which identify three strands of work and three criteria for work being sustained or developed. These have the overall aim of "A simple church supported by a simple charity, to reinvigorate Quakerism". Woodbrooke's mission is "fostering a vital Friends ministry" and trustees are in the process of agreeing a new strategy for Woodbrooke's learning programme which places the focus on priorities for work and outcomes which support the aspirations expressed in *Our Faith in the Future*.

Support for meetings and other Quaker communities is a central strand of the strategic priorities of both BYMT and WBT:

**Thriving Quaker Communities:** supporting Quaker meetings and other groups to be diverse, to thrive and grow (BYMT strategic priorities)

**Strengthening Quaker communities** (Woodbrooke draft learning strategy)

Local development work coupled with localised delivery of other support for meetings services, will enable the effective implementation of these strategic priorities.

Collectively, the two organisations offer Friends a richness of accompaniment, advice, learning, information, support and inspiration. The work we do in supporting the needs of Friends and Meetings is not discrete but complementary, and by working together we reduce the risk of both duplication of effort and in gaps occurring.

Woodbrooke and Britain Yearly Meeting staff have worked to a greater or lesser extent in partnership on an operational level on several areas of support for meetings work (e.g. eldership and oversight, mental health, conflict, all age community) over a number of years. The current proposal is a strategic development and extension of that partnership. Support for Meetings goes beyond advice and training for role holders. It includes all aspects of community development and includes accompaniment and advice, training and learning, and the provision of printed and digital resources. However there is no simple or clear distinction between ‘advice’ and ‘learning’ or between ‘training’ and ‘resources’.

Given this and despite the successes of the pilot programme there is still a sense of disconnection between local and area meetings and Yearly Meeting level work (whether this is delivered by BYM or by Woodbrooke), and a lack of clarity about where to go to for different aspects of support for meeting and who should provide it. There remains a duplication of thinking and of effort by staff, volunteers and committees – especially at a strategic level.

There is a need for a joined up approach to the strategic planning and delivery of support for meetings functions across the Yearly Meeting and, given the evidence of the Vibrancy evaluation report and the Woodbrooke learning survey, for this to be delivered as far as practicable at a local level.

## **2.2 Where are we now?**

The Vibrancy in Meetings (ViM) pilot programme is exploring whether having locally-based staff can help meetings to thrive as communities with a vital Quaker ministry, becoming stronger, more connected, confident, engaged, and sustainable. The project was set up as one response to some of the challenges faced by the yearly meeting including declining and aging membership patterns, reports of the growing demand placed on (and difficulty in finding) role holders at local and area meeting level and research indicating a disconnect between some aspects of local and national work.

The pilot is staffed by a national coordinator and four Local Development Workers (LDWs) who are based in: Devon, Cornwall and West Somerset, the North West of England, Wales and Southern Marches, Sussex, Surrey and Kent. The pilot runs until December 2019.<sup>1</sup>

The programme is being externally evaluated by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) Charities Evaluation Service. Key findings from their most recent report included:<sup>2</sup>

- Extremely high satisfaction rates for the programme (96% of the 130 Friends surveyed rated support as “good” or “excellent”, with 90% reporting it met local or area meeting needs.
- Improved outcomes for meetings: over half of the meetings which took part in the evaluation reported that they had made – or were in the process of making changes – for example trying new ways of running meeting for worship, making meetings more accessible, improved provision for children and young people, increased opportunities for social time or to reduce the demands on role holders.
- Improved outcomes for Friends. For example 10 out of 16 roleholders interviewed reported that support given by LDWs made their work had helped them to enjoy the role more. A further four suggested that that although it had not made the role more enjoyable, it had helped them to feel better about the role in another way – for example by making it easier.
- Support given by LDWs was seen as different – but often complemented – that given at a ‘Yearly Meeting-wide’ level by Woodbrooke and BYM.
- Friends who had received Vibrancy support particularly appreciated long term support from someone who was accessible and knew the local context. The ability to build personal, trusting relationships with the same person over time was felt to be particularly important.
- The pilot is bringing about some changes to the way BYM and Woodbrooke support Friends at a yearly meeting – wide level so that they better reflect Friends’ and meetings’ needs. For example feedback from local development workers has led to changes in the charging structures for Woodbrooke-on-the-road courses, was instrumental in setting up the ‘simpler meetings project and is contributing to reviews of support provided on conflict and children and young people’s work in Quaker Life. However the evaluation also noted that the nature of the pilot limited what was possible in this respect.
- There are also intended outcomes where so far there is inconclusive evidence: significant increase in membership levels, national level participation and giving levels.

In the autumn of 2018 Woodbrooke undertook an extensive survey of individuals and meetings who are current, past or potential users of Woodbrooke’s learning.

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<sup>1</sup> More detailed information about how the programme works was shared with Sufferings in September 2019 and can be found at [www.woodbrooke.org.uk/vibrancy](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/vibrancy)

<sup>2</sup> The full report *NCVO CES Vibrancy main evaluation report (March 2019)* can be downloaded at <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/learn/about/vibrancy-in-meetings/#mainreport>

This resulted in six recommendations which focus on ways to widen access to Woodbrooke learning, maintaining and improving the quality of participant experiences, and monitor progress on this. Extending the provision of local work both in terms of development work and the delivery of learning will help to meet three of these recommendations specifically:

- Developing other ways of running more accessible and all-age events in more locations.
- Building stronger and mutually supportive links with other Quaker bodies, including yearly, area, monthly, and local meetings. This includes strengthening what exists, and looking for appropriate new ways of creating formal or informal partnerships.
- Linking the future of Woodbrooke's learning with the future of the Religious Society of Friends/Quakerism as a whole.

BYM and Woodbrooke Trustees met in February and March 2019 to consider the evaluation findings and options for the future. Sessions have also been held with Quaker Life and Quaker Peace & Social Witness central committees.

Although the ViM pilot has had excellent outcomes, there have been some limitations to the pilot model including, isolation of local development workers, difficulties in managing 'peaks and troughs' in requests for support and challenges in exploiting synergies between locally delivered support for meetings and that delivered on a yearly meeting wide level. These suggest that we shouldn't simply replicate the pilot on a larger scale but adapt it in an attempt to overcome these weaknesses whilst retaining the positive elements of the pilot.

### **2.3 Future direction**

Following the evaluation of the pilot programme, Woodbrooke's learning survey, consultation with Meeting for Sufferings, Central Committees and Trustees, there is a clear sense that it is important to build on the pilot so that the benefits of a more 'meeting-centred' approach can be accessed by the whole Yearly Meeting.

Staff have undertaken organisational and financial modelling and now propose the following future direction of travel. This has been developed and refined from a range of options which have been shared with Trustees previously:

The outline of these proposals was in the paper considered by both BYM and Woodbrooke Trustees in February/March, it has also been shared with Meeting for Sufferings and at Quaker Life Representative Council where there was enthusiasm both for continuing the Vibrancy programme and for a decentralised approach to other work undertaken by BYM and Woodbrooke to support meetings.

### **2.4 Proposal**

We now propose:

- i) Building up the number of LDWs to place one within reach of every meeting. This would be under a single support for meetings strategy. This support for meetings team consisting largely of local development staff, would incorporate some centralised expertise, within BYM and Woodbrooke.

- ii) Experimenting with hubs, clusters and remote teams. As well as helping to address the disconnect between BYM/Woodbrooke and local Quaker communities, this contributes to making this vision affordable.

Although there are two distinct elements to this proposal, we are asking Trustees to consider them as a single package rather than two options to choose from. While the drivers may be different, the two elements are mutually supportive, enhancing the viability of each other. Piloting hubs, clusters and remote teams will enable Woodbrooke and BYM to support localised delivery of support for meetings services, continue to address the disconnect between national organisations and local Quaker communities and gives the possibility of recruiting and retaining staff from a wider pool by removing the need to be based in London or Birmingham. This will also help to counter some of the weaknesses identified by the ViM pilot (isolation of workers, difficulties in managing peaks and troughs in workload etc) and support localised delivery of support for meetings services while also increasing financial viability of change through increased letting space at Friends House/WB and - in the long term - reduced staffing costs. Similarly, more LDWs will help to ensure hubs/centres are viable by ensuring a critical mass of staff working out of them.

## **2.5 Getting there from here**

### 2.5.1 Building up the number of Local Development Workers in the Support for Meetings team

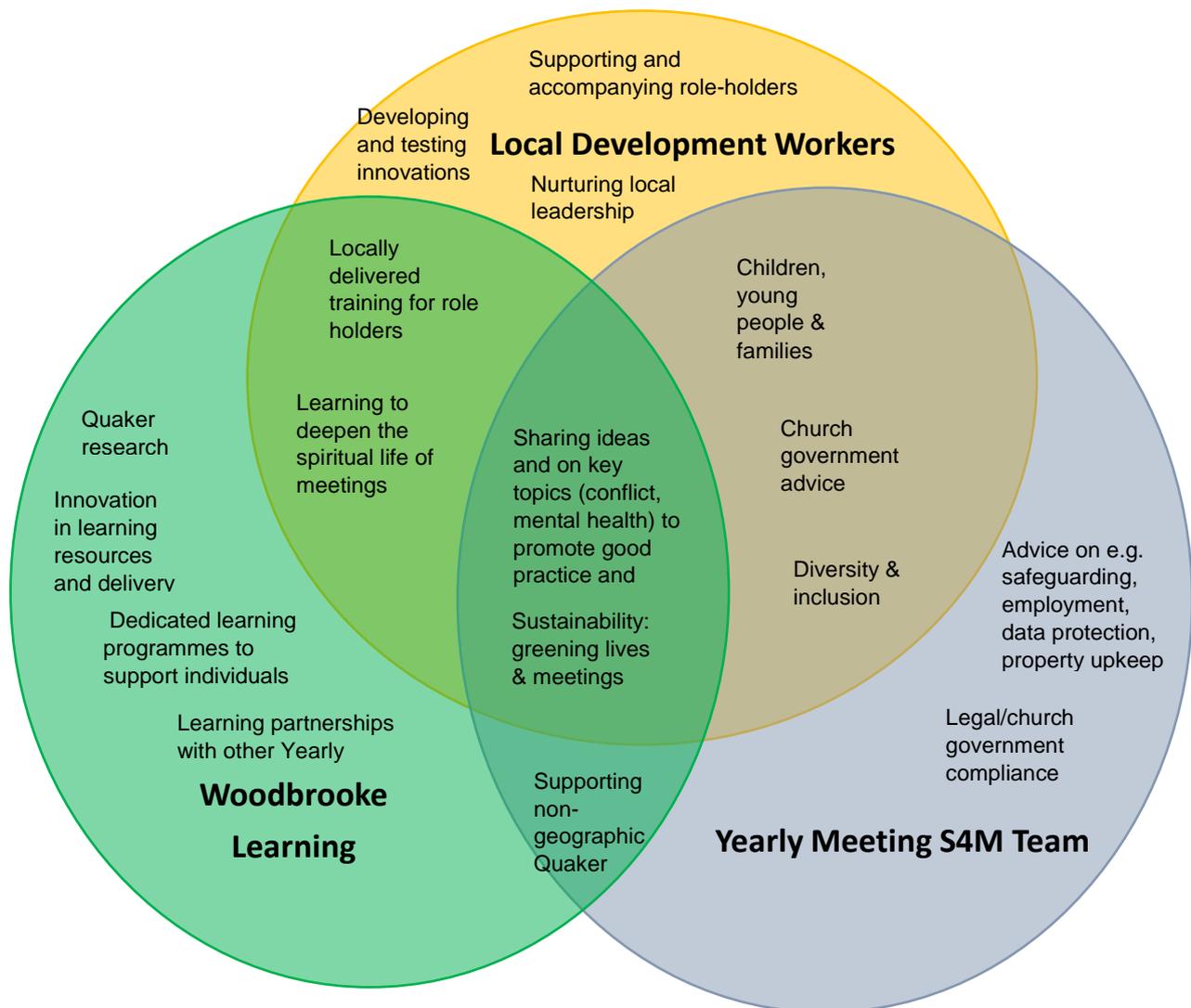
The success of the pilot and the positive response from Friends in pilot areas and beyond suggest we can move ahead with this strand relatively quickly so that all parts of the Yearly Meeting could have access to a Local Development Worker within a 5 year period. This would involve the recruitment of between 12 and 20 Local Development Workers. The pace and scale of roll out will be determined by affordability, rate of change in other areas of both organisations, size of the patch LDWs can cover / choice of locations, capacity for managing change, and opportunity.

We see an integrated, cross-organisational support for meetings strategy as essential to the proposal. This would include a theory of change, and would build on the existing Vibrancy pilot theory of change, the BYM support for meetings strategy and Woodbrooke's learning strategy. We envisage that this high level strategy would cover 5 years with 3 year and 1 year operational plans beneath the strategy. These operational plans would also be developed collaboratively so that there is clarity on the priorities being worked to, the approaches to be used and which teams are responsible for their delivery. Assuming Trustees support this proposal, this strategy would be developed over the next few months with the aim of having this in place in 2020.

LDWs would become the primary vehicle for delivering support for meetings services. These staff will be specialists in facilitation and supporting meetings and individuals as part of those communities. They would have generalist knowledge and experience in relation to support for meetings to enable the correct identification of needs. The work of LDWs will be integrated with topic/delivery expertise from both Woodbrooke and BYM, responsible for specialist support for meetings services centred on the needs of meetings and developed collaboratively with local development workers. Areas of specialism might include safeguarding, governance/compliance, training etc.

These services would be coordinated across the Yearly Meeting with some locally based and some YM wide delivery.

It is important to recognise that ‘support for meetings’ does not represent the totality of the work of either organisation.



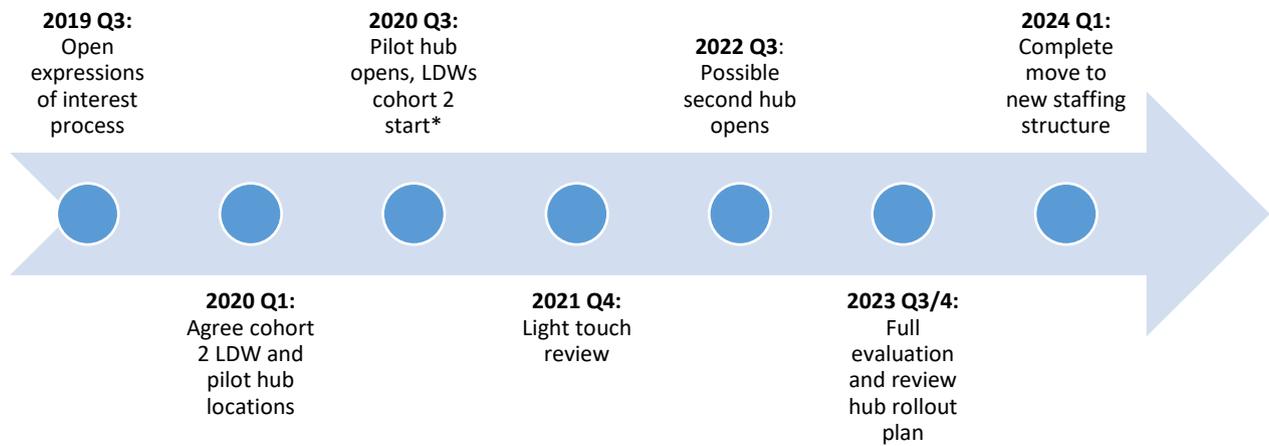
**Fig 1.** Diagram showing integrated and collaborative Support for Meetings service delivery

### 2.5.2 Experimenting with hubs, clusters and remote teams

Although hubs, clusters or remote teams may bring benefits across the Yearly Meeting and to the provision of support for meetings, it will be important to properly test this way of working before making widespread changes. We are therefore proposing that this strand of change is developed and rolled out over a longer period than the introduction of local development workers.

A major transition of this type will also require flexibility in order to respond to opportunities or slow/pause the pace of change. We therefore expect there to be a period of experiment to test this way of working with regular review points which are likely to result in the project plan evolving significantly over time. This means that as far as possible new infrastructure will also need to be designed allow us to be agile.

We expect to be able to move forward with both strands simultaneously as shown for illustrative purposes in figure 2 below.



*\*subject to review, future cohorts start annually thereafter*

**Fig 2:** illustrative timeline for combined rollout

New local development workers would be brought on board in a series of cohorts, to give time to experiment with models for hubs/clusters<sup>3</sup>. An indicative illustration of how local development staff headcount could grow over this period is set out in figure 3.

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<sup>3</sup> To recruit new LDWs for the planned September 2020 start, it will be necessary to agree new local development areas and at least one possible hub location by the end of March 2020. Assuming Trustees support this proposal, we will develop a mechanism for meetings, groups of meetings or individual Friends to express interest in this. This would allow us to develop an indication of need, levels of enthusiasm and energy to engage with and support either an LDW or an experimental hub. We are not proposing a formal bidding process. Staff would then work with local Friends and existing structures to explore the feasibility and shape of delivering services locally.

Decisions about location will need to be pragmatic and respond to both needs and opportunities. We will need to manage the tension between the need for advance planning of where to locate workers next (to plan recruitment and staffing) and being responsive to expressions of interest and need. At the same time it will be important to make sure we don't just respond to the Friends and meetings with the 'loudest voices'.

	Year-1	Year-2	Year-3	Year-4	Year-5	Year-6
Local-Development-Workers	7-8	10-12	12-16	12-20	12-20	12-20
Team-leaders	2	3	3-4	3-5	3-5	3-5
Implementation-Manager	1	1	1	1*		
Admin-Support	1	1	1	1	1	1
Hubs/Clusters	1	1	2*	2*	3*	3*

→ \*Subject-to-review

**Fig 3:** Indicative illustration of how local development staff headcount could grow over time

## 2.6 Infrastructure and culture change

A meeting centred approach will transform two London and Birmingham centric organisations into ones where a much larger proportion of activity happens on a decentralised basis.

Experience of other organisations that have made this kind of transition show there can be huge benefits, but that the capacity and infrastructure needed to manage change well should not be underestimated. An initial gap analysis between current and anticipated ways of working has identified a significant number of changes that will need to be made to our organisational, infrastructures, ways of working and internal services. This will include reviewing human resource, facilities management and finance practices to ensure they are able and sufficiently resourced to support a meeting centred approach. Some of the biggest challenges (and highest risks) will involve upgrading IT infrastructure and evolving our organizational cultures. Both of these areas will require significant investment – of time and money - to support a future where what is currently seen as “remote working” becomes simply “the way we work”.

## 2.7 Financial implications

These will need to be explored separately for each organisation.

## 2.8 Evaluation

Evaluation of the local development element of this proposal would be lighter touch than the ViM pilot evaluation but would draw heavily on its methodology to ensure continued ‘quality’ of local development support. Where (as we expect) local development support continues in the ViM pilot areas, there will be added value in tracking how Friends’ support needs and the added value of local development work change over an extended period.

Evaluation of the pilot hub would focus on testing a new way of working so that by the end of the pilot a clear decision could be made about whether or not to pursue this model. This would be more intensive process than the local development evaluation. It would consider impact/change from a number of different directions including the experience of Friends and meetings, effectiveness of the work (both that delivered out of the hub and any change in the work that continues to be delivered from

Birmingham/ London) as well as staff perspectives. We would expect to start to see meaningful data from around the 2 year point.

Evaluation will be supported by existing BYM projects to improve the way we measure impact and to upgrade our contacts database. We anticipate being able to do more of the evaluation in house than we were able to do with the ViM pilot, though there may still be need for some external support – particularly at the set-up stage.

Sandra Berry, Director, Woodbrooke  
Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, Britain Yearly Meeting  
May 2019

## **Young people's participation**

### **Introduction**

Kendal and Sedbergh AM has sent the following minute regarding the interpretation of advice for including young people in the annual tabular statement particularly where young people's participation in the life of the Society may not primarily be through a Local or Area Meeting.

The minute notes the annual guidance for completing the tabular statement, sent to AMs from the Recording Clerk, which advises the *Quaker faith & practice* definition of an attender should be interpreted to include those who play an active part in the meeting. It should be noted that potential difficulties over deciding on who plays an active part in meetings is not limited to young people. For example, anyone who finds it difficult to attend in person, perhaps through being less mobile, could still play an active part in the life of meeting through maintaining links with Friends in a meeting, joining worship in spirit and through contributing financial or other support.

Overseers need to exercise sensible judgement in these cases.

Young people's participation does however raise additional matters as their worship and witness may not have a strong geographical basis. With the current focus on considering how we can be more diverse and inclusive, it is reasonable to give thought to the annual advice for completing the tabular statement and whether it should be reconsidered.

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group felt it would be helpful to hear and reflect on experiences from Friends to better understand the variety of young people's participation in the Society.

## **Kendal and Sedbergh AM held on 16 March 2019**

### **Minute 19.03.07 Tabular Statement for 2018 (19.01.04 refers)**

Jenny Pearman, who prepares the tabular statement, and Chris Bullard, our MfS representative have drawn up a draft minute for us to send to Meeting for Sufferings. This explains how we defined the inclusion of 16 to 18 year olds when completing the tabular statement for 2018. This is a broader interpretation than the guidelines give. We are interested to know if other AM's have made similar adjustments. We wanted to reflect the changing lifestyle of young people and the way they participate in and interact with Quaker activities. We ask Meeting for Sufferings to consider whether it would it be helpful to adopt this broader definition of attenders in this age group. We adopt the minute, below, and send it to Meeting for Sufferings.

"Kendal and Sedbergh AM welcome the greater emphasis being placed nationally on the participation of young people aged 18 years plus in a range of activities and we recognise that, at this age, young people may not be attending a specific local Quaker meeting.

We wish to know if Friends are giving similar consideration to the Quaker activity of 16-18 year olds. Our interest in this age group was brought into focus by exploration of the attendance which is necessary to complete the Tabular Statement. Flexibility in recording attendance for this age group is made more difficult to achieve by following the guidance which accompanies this record. We wonder how other Area Meetings are experiencing this and what approaches to it they are making?

The guidance on attendance from Qf&p 11.38 is “one who not being a member frequently attends a specific meeting for worship”. The guidance in the notes accompanying the Tabular Statement defines attenders as “those who have taken an active part in the meeting over the past year”. We have taken a broad interpretation of this in defining taking “active part”.

In Kendal and Sedbergh Area Meeting we counted young people who spanned some of the following categories.

- If they attended the three Quaker Family Weekends held annually at Rookhow Meeting House
- Participated in the “Ride for Equality and the Common Good from Swarthmoor Hall to London, where a number of young people accompanied their parents in following a concern, attending Meetings for Worship across the country in the Meeting Houses that they visited.
- Participated in regional and national young people’s events.

We counted these 16-18 year olds as attenders, even if they did not attend the specific meeting for worship with which their parents are associated. We recognise the pressures on young people and their families such as exams, weekend sporting activities and sometimes by the necessities of split family life. If we only count 16-18 year olds who actually attend meetings for worship in the conventional way we feel that we fail to capture the sense of their age appropriate Quaker activity.

We consider this involvement may provide a bridge to later more traditional attendance. In doing this we hope we have followed the spirit rather than the letter of the requirements.”

Jo Jaffray, Clerk

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## **Extract from advice sent to AMs for completion of tabular statement**

### **Attenders**

Qf&p 11.38 defines an attender as “one who, not being a member, frequently attends a specific meeting for worship.” Overseers need to decide whom to include. Include all attenders and children not in membership. This does not need to contain all those on a meeting’s list. Rather, it should include those who have taken an active part in the meeting over the past year. Include all children not in membership, who are associated with the meeting, whether they attend regularly or not.

## **Groups applying to become Quaker recognised bodies**

### **Introduction**

This paper gives details of applications for registration as Quaker recognised bodies. Staff have looked at the documentation provided by each of the organisations and consider that the criteria for listing them as Quaker recognised bodies have been met.

### **Background**

In 2015, Meeting for Sufferings agreed a new way for BYM to relate to other Quaker bodies (minute MfS 2015/12/17).

- The guidelines for groups that would like to be a QRB are also on the BYM Website [www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/quaker-groups](http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/quaker-groups)
- Paper MfS 2018/07/15 gives a full introduction to Quaker recognised bodies.

A Quaker recognised body (QRB) is an independent group where concerned Friends explore a common interest, seek affirmation, or carry out witness. It wishes to be recognised as a Quaker body because its Quaker roots are an important part of its identity or constitution.

The process aims to clarify benefits and responsibilities for QRBs and BYM. It's also a way to strengthen links between centrally-managed work and the wide range of exciting Quaker work being done by other groups, helping build a vibrant Society of Friends.

So far, Meeting for Sufferings has registered 61 Quaker recognised bodies.

### **Request for registration**

The following organisations have applied to become Quaker recognised bodies.

#### **1. Sibford School**

This organisation appeared in the 2016 Book of Meetings in the list of schools.

#### **2. The Francis Camfield Trust**

This organisation dates back to 1706 and is a grant-making trust.

Meeting for Sufferings is asked to approve these organisations as Quaker recognised bodies.

Chloe Scaling,  
Recording Clerk's Office

## 1 Sibford School

**Aims:** Sibford School educates children and young people aged 4-18 and operates in accordance with the principle of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain. The School aims to provide an environment where each child is encouraged to fulfil their individual potential and contribute to the wider community. The talents of all pupils are nurtured and the School has been particularly successful in helping students with dyslexia.

**Governance:** 20-24 Governors, including up to 16 appointed by Sibford General Meeting through their nominations committee.

**Constitution:** Charity no. 1068256

**Type of Group:** External

**Foundation:** 1842

**Publications and activities:** Education of children and young people aged 4-18, with a strong focus on outdoor education, creative and performing arts. Publications include the 'Sibfordian' – the annual school magazine and the 'Rocket' – the Old Scholars annual publication. The school hosts many Quaker events such as Friends School Council meetings, the southern Young Friends annual gathering, Sibford General Meeting events and others. The school has a specialism in educating children for whom English is a second language and school facilities are also used by local groups for creative arts, sport and leisure.

**Membership:** There are currently 420 pupils on roll and the school employs 150 full and part time staff.

**Finance:** Self-funding, independent organisation with an annual turnover of approximately £6m – largely generated by school fees.

**Winding up:** If the School is wound up or dissolved and after all its debts and liabilities have been satisfied there remains any property it shall not be paid to or distributed among the members of the School, but shall be applied for charitable purposes by or at the direction of Sibford General Meeting (as defined in the Articles of Association of the School).

**Archives:** Held at School

**Current contact details:** Toby Spence, Head, Sibford School, Sibford Ferris, nr. Banbury, OX15 5QL

**Email:** [tspence@sibfordschool.co.uk](mailto:tspence@sibfordschool.co.uk)

**Tel:** 01295 781200

**Website:** [www.sibfordschool.co.uk](http://www.sibfordschool.co.uk)

**Staff link:** Recording Clerk, Paul Parker

## 2 Francis Camfield's Trust

**Aims:** The Trust aims “principally to support individual Friends in need engaged in witnessing to Christian and Quaker Testimonies”. This is usually interpreted by trustees to mean help with travel and other costs incurred by Friends in the course of their ministry rather than education or training costs.

**Governance:** Six trustees

**Constitution:** Trust deed: deeds of lease and release dated respectively the 28th and 29th July 1693, deed poll dated 7th February 1706. Charity no.229959.

**Type of Group:** External

**Foundation:** 1706

**Publications and activities:** Grant-making

**Finance:** The endowment is a farm of 86 hectares on grade 1 soils, with farmhouse and buildings in Lincolnshire; the majority of the income is rental on this property, currently £16,000 pa.

**Winding up:** In the likelihood of not finding sufficient trustees to serve, the trust would be passed to Friends Trust Ltd. to administer the endowment and to make surplus money available to Quaker Life, with disbursement based on the charitable giving set out in the documents.

**Archives:** Held in Friends House Library

**Current contact details:** Gillian Waddilove, co-clerk

The Francis Camfield Trust, The Hollies, Priory Road, Wolston, Coventry, CV8 3FX

**Email:** [francis.camfield.trust@gmail.com](mailto:francis.camfield.trust@gmail.com)

**Staff link:** Grants and Contributions Manager, Vicky Torrance

A draft minute might read:

MfS/19/07/XX Quaker Recognised Bodies

Further to minute MfS/15/12/1, we receive paper MfS 2017/10/14 recommending groups for registration as Quaker Recognised Bodies. We agree to register the following groups for five years, with registration to be reviewed by July 2024:

External

Sibford School

Francis Camfield's Trust