



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

Sustainability – Living up to our commitment

Introduction

Meeting for Sufferings holds oversight of our YM-wide commitment to work towards becoming a low-carbon, sustainable community.

Meeting for Sufferings agreed a set of recommended actions in 2017. And, last November Meeting for Sufferings agreed that it will oversee the concern, and some ways for this to happen.

This paper provides a relatively brief update regarding all of these recommendations. We could have made this a longer, more complex document – but that would have needed a lot of staff time, and made things more challenging for representatives.

Instead, we've deliberately kept this short and relevant, with headlines and highlights. There's a lot more information behind each section, so if you would like more detail, please ask committee members, staff, and/or Friends from other AMs.

There are three sections:

- 1. Sustainability – Living up to our commitment in local and area meetings**
A report about work in local and area meetings (from Quaker Stewardship Committee)
- 2. Recommendations for Action – examples of what's been happening**
An update about national work, linked to local Quaker action (from BYM staff)
- 3. Background information**
A set of appendices, to remind us of the journey so far

Having read the following papers there are also questions for you, Friends! How are you (and others) taking these recommendations forward?

At Meeting for Sufferings we will hear about each of these areas of work. We will spend some time in small groups, before coming back to the plenary for further consideration.

The focus appears to be mainly on greening Meeting Houses rather than supporting Friends in making difficult choices in their own lives and lifestyles. This may result from the way in which the questions to meetings were phrased. However, there are exceptions where Friends report on working with local sustainability and climate change groups and on the actions of some individual Friends.

Reporting and tracking measures of energy consumption/ greenhouse gas emission

Only five Area Meetings described action in 2018 to commence reporting and tracking their energy consumption/greenhouse gas emissions. Some Area Meetings questioned the value of this when the use of their buildings varied significantly month to month and between years. However, a significant number of Local Meetings are using electricity from green energy suppliers. Data from Friends House on the national scheme negotiated with Good Energy demonstrates that about 159 Local Meetings are participants with a resulting collective saving to date of about 760 tonnes of carbon emissions.

Activities planned in the future

A number of Area Meetings are planning further activities in the future in relation to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from their buildings. There is little detail about the scope of these plans, however there is a clear intention in a number of Area Meetings to better monitor and report on their energy usage from buildings in 2019.

Reporting in future Annual Reports

Reporting has evidently been a challenge for many Area Meetings. This is almost certainly in part due to the time taken for Friends to act on new requests for information in Annual Reports. Reporting in 2019 Annual Reports will probably be better. However, responses to the questions on deepening Friends spiritual engagement and sense of community around the issue of sustainability may still prove difficult to capture through this route.

Quantitative reporting on energy use and emissions appears to be especially challenging. Allied to this is the question of the value of such reporting on such a small contribution to the carbon emissions from the Society as a whole compared with the impact of the lifestyles of individual Friends.

Whilst reporting on Sustainability as a concern in Annual Reports should continue alongside of reporting on the wider activities of Area Meetings, the approach in and of itself does not offer an adequate perspective on the activity and commitment of Friends responding to climate change. There could be a risk that the Society's true commitment to sustainability is undermined by the limitations of reporting in Area Meeting Trustees' Annual Reports.

Martin Ford
Assistant Clerk
Quaker Stewardship Committee
14 September 2019

Recommendations for Action 2017 – examples of what’s been happening (September 2019)

This paper gives an example of what’s been done to take forward each of the recommendations agreed in 2017.

Eldership: rooting the commitment in our Quaker faith

1. Opportunities in local and area meetings for worship-based explorations where Friends can share how sustainability is part of their faith

In March 2019, General Meeting for Scotland asked ‘How do we liberate ourselves to focus on spiritual growth, community building and witness in the world?’

2. All Quaker bodies (central committees, Quaker Recognised Bodies and others) make opportunities to explore how their work connects sustainability with Quaker faith.

This year’s Swarthmore Lecture titled “On Earth as it is in Heaven: the Kingdom of God and the yearning of Creation” (video available – see below) was followed by discussions with the lecturer Eden Grace at various locations in Britain. The book will be published in October.

www.woodbrooke.org.uk/swarthmore

3. Resources and support for learning and discernment related to sustainability and its basis in Quaker faith.

Woodbrooke has run several courses exploring sustainability issues. (It also offers ‘on-the-road’ events but hasn’t had requests for this type of work from meetings). Courses in 2018/19 include:

- ‘A Quaker Response to Animal Suffering’ (online)
- Faith in Food (exploring food choices)
- Voices of the Earth (exploring our relationships with the world we inhabit through creativity),
- ‘Hope in troubled times’ (how can we be hopeful and live out the change we want to see in the world?)
- Exploring Simplicity’ (What the Quaker testimony of simplicity means to us today) ran at less than half the expected number.

<https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/>

4. Support for ministry in all its forms (publications, art, drama, spirit-led action)

This summer Quaker Arts Network presented an exhibition at Swarthmoor Hall, ‘Seeking Routes’, along with a programme of events

<http://quakerarts.net/2019/05/17/quaker-arts-at-swarthmoor/>

Oversight: strengthening our community

1. Regular and ongoing dialogue involving BYM staff, local meetings and other Quaker organisations

Local meetings share their stories online <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/our-stories>)

BYM has published several blog posts on sustainability www.quaker.org.uk/blog

2. Face-to-face gatherings at least every two years.

BYM will work with Woodbrooke to ensure a face-to-face gathering takes place in 2020 (the last one was in 2018). This may be a national gathering as before, or may take place regionally (so as to be relevant to local Friends and aim for a lower carbon footprint).

3. Regional and national networks to build community and share resources

As just two examples: Friends in Devon and Cornwall are planning a regional 'face-to-face' gathering for next year; Quakers in Yorkshire's quarterly meeting in April 2017 focused on sustainability, and its Easter gathering in 2019 considered alternative economics.

Living faithfully: changing our lifestyles

1. Resources for sustainable living that are revised, updated and in a variety of formats

This year, QPSW staff are offering a new workshop to Quakers who are worried about climate change but don't know what to do. It will touch on how QPSW's work on climate is rooted in the Quaker testimonies, explore what 'climate' and 'justice' have to do with one another, and point to some simple actions Friends can take. www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/sustainability/living-sustainably

2. Group activities to support Friends in deepening dialogue and making lifestyle changes

Yearly Meeting 2019 invited us to examine our own privilege and lack of privilege in relation to climate change and climate justice. One of the sessions focused on 'Looking through the lens of privilege at climate justice and inclusion'. On Saturday evening, young adult Friends from across the country hosted a reflective epilogue that explores themes of sustainability, privilege and faith in action.

Yearly Meeting documents, minutes and videos are available online:

www.quaker.org.uk/ym/documents

3. Opportunities for Friends to connect with each other (e.g. through talks, workshops, blogs, newsletters, talks).

In the last 12 months there have been 9 blog posts on the BYM website about climate and sustainability. The most recent was in August, when the Recording Clerk wrote about 6 ways Quakers can support the global climate strike.

www.quaker.org.uk/blog

Right ordering: Quaker core activity and property

1. Resources to support Quaker bodies in discernment including weighing up the effects of their decisions on a wide variety of issues, and considering creative alternatives.

In our meetings, elders are responsible for upholding spirit-led discernment. There are a range of resources and support for them. 'Patterns and Examples' are one example: events that help elders and overseers to understand and enjoy their roles. Quaker Life and Woodbrooke offer these together, in various locations, and they are all-age gatherings.

www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation

1. A way of monitoring and reviewing progress by local meetings in developing low carbon, sustainable core practices and premises – with the results included in BYM Trustees' Annual Report

Please see the previous paper, which is about this.

2. Encouragement and support for all parts of the Quaker community to ensure investments are consistent with being low- carbon and sustainable, and in particular to disinvest from fossil fuels

QPSW has created a step-by-step guide for Meetings: at the last count almost half of AMs have zero investment in fossil fuel extraction.

www.quaker.org.uk/our-work

Witness: taking political action and promoting systemic change

1. Friends and local meetings use their experience as a foundation for engaging others in their local community, national businesses and politicians; take radical action for change; speak out for systemic change and for climate justice.

In Central England, Quakers are supporting children from different faith backgrounds through the Small Footsteps sustainability programme.

www.quaker.org.uk/our-work

2. Support for the above, from the centrally managed work and other Quaker bodies

More than 100 Quakers from England, Scotland and Wales were among 14,000 people who lobbied their MPs in June 2019. As well as supporting Friends who joined the climate lobby, BYM staff worked with Anya Nanning Ramamurthy who joined other faith leaders on the day of the climate lobby, and was later interviewed on national media.

www.quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news

www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/our-stories

The annual Quaker Activist Gathering is ‘an intergenerational, restorative and invigorating day, focused on how we do social action’. In 2018 it was held in Lancaster; the next one will be in London on 2nd November.

www.quaker.org.uk/events

3. Engagement of and connection with other parts of centrally managed work

Greta Thunberg spoke at Friends House in April 2019: BYM provided the venue for the event which was organised by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Climate Change working with The Guardian. Hospitality staff adapted rotas so that the building could be open on a bank holiday. BYM’s Youth Development Worker (West Region) co-ordinated young Quakers from Bristol to travel to the event, and two of its members, Pearl and Sam, publicly welcomed Greta Thunberg.

www.quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news

4. Stronger connections with work beyond BYM

Legacy funding is enabling Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) to strengthen links between Quakers around the world. We’re all invited to share inspiring stories of ‘living sustainably and sustaining life on earth, and to make the most of the resources available.

<http://fwcc.world/sustainability>

Other

Some developments and actions don't fit neatly into the recommendations – e.g.:

- Many meetings are benefitting from a national scheme with Good Energy (100% renewable energy supply) which was negotiated by BYM.
- Several committees are reviewing their ways of working – for example, Quaker Peace and Social Witness has agreed to meet three times (rather than 4) in 2020.
- BYM staff have been working to monitor and improve the carbon footprint of BYM properties and activities in Friends House and Swarthmoor Hall. The carbon footprint has been reduced by 29% since 2009.
www.friendshouse.co.uk/sustainability-csr

MfS oversight

Reports to MfS from committees

Central and standing committees haven't reported to MfS since last November: they're due to report again in December. However, there is a lot in this paper about relevant work which is overseen by committees.

It's worth noting that central and standing committees aren't formally required to report to MfS, but they do report formally every year to BYM Trustees. BYM Trustees report to MfS following each of their meetings.

Sustainability considered by MfS

This is our 2019 'substantive agenda item about sustainability'. In addition:

- In February, MfS noted that our testimony to truth and integrity underpins everything we do as Quakers and is consciously woven into our corporate work including our concern about sustainability (minute MfS 2019/02/07)
- In July, MfS received minutes from Bristol, West Weald and Southern Marches AMs (minute MfS/19/07/07)

Sustainability Monitoring Group

The Group was appointed in July. Its first meeting was in September, and concentrated on getting to know each other and the task. It will meet again in November. The SMG will be able to introduce themselves and their work in session, and will be happy to speak with Friends during the weekend.

The Group (all members of MfS) are:

- Peter Aviss (Sussex East AM)
- Tina Leonard (Oxford and Swindon AM)
- Maureen Jackson (Hardshaw & Mann AM)

MfS Reporting to Yearly Meeting

The MfS report to YM 2019 noted that sustainability was our agenda at three meetings in 2018. The full report is in the YM 2019 programme:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/ym/documents>

Background information

Canterbury Commitment

The minute of Yearly Meeting 2011 is available here:

www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/sustainability/our-faith-and-sustainability

Recommendations for Action

In February 2017, Meeting for Sufferings agreed a set of recommendations for action. It is in Appendix A.

BYM Sustainability Strategy

Some of the work needs to be done and supported by our national body. Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees have adopted a Sustainability Strategy. The ten high-level objectives are copied below in Appendix B.

Committees' responsibility

Appendix C shows what each committee is doing, to address the work identified in the sustainability strategy.

Meeting for Sufferings minute

The minute of MfS last November, confirming what will be done to oversee this concern, is copied in Appendix D.

Appendix A - Recommendations for Action (Meeting for Sufferings, February 2017)

Becoming a low-carbon, sustainable community: Revised Recommendations for Action

Introduction

Our overall aim is to encourage and support Friends and meetings in implementing the Canterbury Commitment. This paper offers recommendations in five key areas:

1. Eldership: rooting the Commitment in our Quaker faith
2. Oversight: strengthening our community
3. Living faithfully: changing our lifestyles
4. Right ordering: Quaker core activities and property; and
5. Witness: working for systemic and policy change.

Friends and meetings vary in their situations and hence in their priorities, suitable approaches and needs for support. Their needs change over time. We must therefore be responsive, with a wide and evolving range of resources in each of the five areas, and regular communication to bring those resources to Friends' and meetings' attention in a variety of ways. We also need strong networking among Friends and meetings so they can share ideas and good practice and learn from each other's experience.

The following sections identify aims and make broad recommendations in each of the five implementation areas. We have not specified which organisation should take the work forward except in a few cases where this has already been discerned.

Eldership: rooting the commitment in our Quaker faith

The aim

While Friends mostly feel ownership of our corporate sustainability commitment, many understand it in secular or practical terms and find it hard to say what is Quaker about it; others have a clear idea of its spiritual basis for themselves, but may not recognise the relevance of others' spiritual paths and experiences. Our spirituality may relate to sustainability in many ways. It may enable us, for example, to engage with loss and suffering, to celebrate beauty, to connect with others in the work for transformation, and to discern our way forward.

We need to make the commitment real and relevant to Quakers as an expression of our faith. That means:

1. Recognising and being able to articulate how our own spiritual experience and practice relates to sustainability
2. Recognising and being able to acknowledge other Friends' spiritual experiences and practices – both similar to and different from our own – and their relationship with sustainability
3. Recognising all of these as part of our corporate faith and practice

4. Being able to bring Quaker insights, values and practices to bear on sustainability issues in our lives and communities and the wider world.

Recommendations

This section of the Recommendations for Action is essentially about eldership – supporting Friends in their spiritual practice, worship, ministry, learning and discernment as these relate to our sustainability commitment. These need attention at all levels, from individual Friends and local meetings to the Yearly Meeting and other national and international Quaker bodies. In particular:

1. Local and area meetings should provide opportunities for worship-based explorations where Friends can share how sustainability is part of their faith, and how that shapes their lives, relationships and actions.
2. Quaker bodies including central committees, Quaker Recognised Bodies and other organisations, should make opportunities (including for their staff, members and networks) to explore how their work connects sustainability with Quaker faith.
3. Central departments and other Quaker bodies should work together to provide Friends and meetings with resources and support for learning and discernment related to sustainability and its basis in Quaker faith.
4. There is a particular need to support ministry in all its forms, from spoken contributions in meetings for worship to publications, art, drama and spirit-led action.

Oversight: strengthening our community

The aim

Community is fundamental to the Canterbury Commitment and underpins the whole of our recommended approach. In local meetings and in our Yearly Meeting we aim to strengthen our communities, grounded in love and worship. Such communities can be the settings where Friends and meetings engage more fully with the Commitment:

1. Listening to one another, relating constructively, working through pain and loss linked to living in a violent and unsustainable civilisation, as well as the tensions and conflict that arise out of our different responses, and supporting each other in opportunities for insight and growth
2. Strengthening our shared identity and developing a shared understanding of how Quaker faith and practice relates to becoming a low carbon, sustainable community
3. Discerning the way forward in our Commitment, rooted in the Light and following the leadings of the Spirit
4. Supporting one another in implementing the Commitment, sharing learning, insight and celebration
5. Becoming more resilient, able to cope with change and adversity.

Recommendations

The Canterbury Commitment should be owned and implemented by BYM as a whole including individual Friends, local meetings, central committees, Woodbrooke, listed informal groups and other Quaker organisations.

We all have a responsibility for embedding the Commitment in every group and every decision we participate in. Our witness should also be connected to the work of international Quaker organisations, other yearly meetings and non-Quaker organisations.

1. Regular and ongoing dialogue involving Friends House, local meetings and other Quaker organisations is needed to build community and share resources.
2. Face-to-face gatherings are also vital for maintaining and developing our community and our focus on becoming low-carbon and sustainable. We see a need for such events to take place regularly, ideally every year, but at least every two years.
3. Regional and national networks can be ways for Friends and meetings to build community and share resources without relying on paid staff at Friends House. Further networks will be needed.

Living faithfully: changing our lifestyles

The aim

We aim to support Friends in developing low-carbon, sustainable and spiritually enhancing ways of living.

Recommendations

Lifestyle change is about more than carbon reduction, it is about all of our priorities and choices including patterns of family and social life, consumption and work. We recommend ongoing and increased encouragement and support for local meetings to be adventurous in helping Friends to live sustainably – adopting, in doing this, approaches that are sensitive and loving, while also radically transformative. This means sharing the joys we find in a simple lifestyle freely chosen, while offering compassion and support to those who find change difficult.

A wide variety of resources are required to address Friends' different and changing needs. For some, personal climate impact calculators are a vital part of understanding and reducing their carbon emissions; for others it is more important to have opportunities to talk about feelings. Some want simple, practical guides to action; others like to do their own research.

1. Regular revisions are needed in resources for sustainable living such as those included in the QPSW/Living Witness Sustainability Toolkit (footprint guides, guides for practical action, study group session plans). New versions should be brought to Friends' attention in a variety of formats.
2. We hope that Living Witness, QPSW and Quaker Life will continue to work together to support Friends in deepening dialogue and making lifestyle changes, in particular through group activities. A variety of approaches are available.

3. We need to provide opportunities for Friends to connect with each other through talks, workshops, etc. Friends' experience of the practical, social and spiritual aspects of lifestyle change should continue to be shared regularly in a variety of ways, from face-to-face contact and networks to blogs, newsletters, talks and workshops.

Right ordering: Quaker core activity and property

The aim

Our aim is to support Quakers in Britain (including BYM departments and committees, area and local meetings, and other Quaker organisations) in making the Canterbury Commitment a core part of fulfilling their religious and other purposes, in making all of their activities and assets low- carbon and sustainable, and in being patterns and examples for the wider community.

Recommendations

Quaker meetings, organisations and committees may struggle with the complexity of addressing their core purposes in low-carbon, sustainable ways. They may need support to get beyond seeing these as conflicting goals, and they may need technical help with addressing buildings, land, travel, food, waste and use of money. Friends particularly face dilemmas about travelling to meetings and maintaining historic meeting houses, which are seen as vital for maintaining and developing community.

Local meetings, central committees and other Quaker organisations should be encouraged to organise themselves in low-carbon, sustainable ways. This includes looking at how they meet, where and how often.

- a. Resources should be developed to support Quaker bodies in discernment that takes account of the Canterbury Commitment, including weighing up the effects of their decisions on a wide variety of issues, and considering creative alternatives.
- b. A way needs to be agreed to monitor and review progress by local meetings in developing low carbon, sustainable core practices and premises. This might include collection of data such as annual energy use, and a regular questionnaire or survey of local meeting activities. Central committee and staff support would be required. The results should form part of the BYM Trustees' Annual Report.
- c. Encouragement and support should be given to all parts of the Quaker community to follow the example of BYM Trustees in ensuring that our investments are consistent with being low- carbon and sustainable, and in particular to disinvest from fossil fuels.

Witness: taking political action and promoting systemic change

The Aim

To create structures and policies – locally, nationally and globally – which enable people to live low-carbon, sustainable lives; and a transformed economy and society which is low-carbon and just.

Recommendations

We have heard that Friends want to take more political action and to be supported to call for and create systemic change in economics and society. In particular:

1. Friends and local meetings need ongoing support:
 - to use their experience of the joys and challenges of changing their lives and meetings as a foundation for engaging others in their local community, national businesses and politicians
 - to take radical action for change from the current system to be part of building the alternative
 - to speak out for systemic change and for climate justice.
2. This support comes from the centrally managed work (where the lead committee is the QPSW Economics, Sustainability and Peace subgroup) along with other Quaker organisations including Living Witness and Woodbrooke.
3. Many parts of the centrally managed work are engaged, including Turning the Tide, Parliamentary Engagement, Peace Education, and the Peacemaker scheme. A continuing effort is needed to strengthen and connect up the Canterbury Commitment aspects of their activities.
4. British Friends should continue to be supported to connect better with work on climate change and sustainability beyond BYM. There are opportunities to share our experience and contribute to work for change, in particular with international Quaker bodies, other churches and faith organisations, campaigning organisations and movements.

We recommend that Quaker bodies of all kinds continue to speak out publicly on systemic change and climate justice, making the links to traditional Quaker concerns for peace and justice. Advice and other resources are needed to help them to do this. Public statements can help to strengthen our Quaker community and identity, and affirm our shared values.

Appendix B - High-level objectives from the BYM Sustainability Strategy

1. Deepen and articulate the spiritual basis for our Quaker work on sustainability
2. Equip Quaker meetings to become active communities, both calling for change and taking a local lead in creating the change
3. Equip Quaker meetings to become more environmentally sustainable
4. Strengthen community within the Yearly Meeting and build alliances of mutual support with others, including churches, faith groups and Quakers worldwide, to increase courage and resilience
5. Influence the UK government, and government at all levels within and beyond the UK, to take the bold actions needed to limit climate change to a maximum temperature rise of 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels.
6. Influence the private sector and other institutions to shift away from the use of fossil fuels
7. Promote an economic system which operates within the constraints of the Earth's natural capital and ecosystems while increasing equality
8. Promote the concept and practice of a shared human security, with sustainability at its heart
9. Reduce the environmental impact of BYM's property while maintaining high quality work/service.
10. Reduce the environmental impact of BYM's activities while maintaining high quality work/service.

Appendix D – Committees’ responsibilities for current, emerging and proposed BYM work on sustainability

Responsible body	Work in progress	Emerging work and proposed changes of responsibility	Proposed additional work
Meeting for Sufferings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for committees to review progress • Reporting to Yearly Meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for committees to liaise – convening clerks’ consultations
BYM Trustees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall strategy • Resources for decarbonising FMHs, eg Meeting Houses Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Meeting Houses Fund and other grants
Quaker Life Central Committee		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate the spiritual basis of the commitment (including a simple statement of the path we’re following?) (1) • Strengthen Friends’ spiritual discipline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee (with QUNO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influencing governments - national & international (5) • Influencing the private sector (6) • Alternative economic systems (7) • Shared human security (8) • Helping meetings engage in advocacy/campaigning (2) • Supporting broader sustainability activism • Working in alliances/movements (part of 4) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for growth of the ‘in progress’ work

Quaker World Relations Committee (with FWCC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing across the Quaker world (part of 4) 		
Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two-way dialogue with other churches and faith groups 		
Book of Discipline Revision Committee		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qf&p new text – yet to start 	
Quaker Stewardship Committee		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring carbon reduction in meetings – agreed but yet to start 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of carbon reduction data
Hospitality Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BYM's own property (9) BYM's own activities (10) 		
Woodbrooke (as a partner organisation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Already runs some events to galvanise / deepen Quaker activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging collaboration and community among Qs through face-to-face gatherings (run currently by BYMSG) (part of 4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New events to nurture and grow our Quaker sustainability ministry

Notes:

The numbers in brackets refer to the relevant high-level objective in the BYM Trustees' Sustainability Strategy (see Appendix B).

Consideration is still being given to where responsibility should lie for:

- Practical support for meetings to become more sustainable (3)
- Support for individual lifestyle change



Yearly Meeting of the
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Appendix E - Minute of Meeting for Sufferings, November 2018

MfS/18/11/18 Sustainability: living up to our commitment

In October, Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) considered four proposals (paper MfS 2018 10 15) designed to ensure every part of BYM integrates environmental sustainability into its thinking and activity - and sees this as integral to our spiritual and practical witness. The proposals were drawn up after a meeting of committee representatives, held in July, and at the request of Meeting for Sufferings.

We now agree the following recommendations (paper MfS/18/11/18):

- a) Arrangements Group already asks committees in their annual report to indicate to MfS how they are working to take forward our YM commitment to becoming a low-carbon, sustainable community. In future, we should expect committees, and also BYM Trustees and Quaker Stewardship Committee, to report annually on how their work is helping and encouraging Friends to take forward this commitment.
- b) MfS will have a substantive agenda item about Sustainability every year. Sustainability can also be considered at other meetings during the year.
- c) MfS should appoint a small Sustainability Monitoring Group. The group will comprise three members of MfS who will monitor progress. The group will monitor: the receipt of reports from Trustees, committees and area meetings that are sent to MfS; that agreed activities are undertaken; and that MfS pays attention to our sustainability commitment in its meetings.
- d) MfS Arrangements Group will continue in its role of discerning the MfS agendas, and will work closely with the Sustainability Monitoring Group.
- e) MfS will continue to report annually to Yearly Meeting on sustainability.

We ask the Recording Clerk to bring draft terms of reference for the Sustainability Monitoring Group, and our Standing Nominations Group to bring names to our next meeting.

BYM Sustainability Group met on 22nd November and the minutes of their meeting will be forwarded to the monitoring group when it is appointed.

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 thank BYM Sustainability Group for their work and for carrying this concern on our behalf over the past four years. We now lay the group down.