**Convenors’ Reflections April 2021**

**Juliette Chandler:**

We began this rep council from a place of empathy, which I feel has held and supported us as we have engaged in sometimes challenging but essential discussions today.

Edwina began her session by encouraging us to move from a safe space to a space that is brave and learning, asking what love requires of us in order to work against the institutional racism present throughout British history and within Britain today. What came out of our home group discussions, for me, was that instead of asking whether we should act, we need to ask how we should act and be prepared to listen to what is needed, not to decide what we think those most affected by colonialism should need.

Yvonne began and ended her talk by reminding us that there are Quakers who are transgender and there are transgender people who would find a spiritual home here. Even if we do not yet feel we understand another person’s experience, it is essential that we accept them as equal and endeavour to provide support, care and an empathetic welcome.

**Lynden’s Easterbrook**

Safe. Welcomed. Valued. Respected.

These words, given to us by Yvonne, sum up my sense of how as Quakers we want others – and ourselves – to feel in the world.

Yesterday evening we gathered to share and to listen, and I felt we welcomed each other with respect, and helped each other to feel safe and valued. I had tears in my eyes when after the Epilogue Friends said goodnight to each other as though we were together in the same place, perhaps at Woodbrooke.

Today, we’ve heard from Edwina Peart and Yvonne Wood who have kindly, patiently and clearly encouraged us to widen our welcome to include people we might otherwise ignore, or overlook, or who we do not understand.

I am left with an urge, or urgency, to play my part, and I don’t think I’m alone in this. A Friend spoke of being stunned and silenced by the immensity of the damage that was done during and after slavery, and that damage continues until we make fundamental changes. And damage is also being done to Trans and Non-Binary people when we fail to make them welcome.

I feel Rep Council has made a start. I hope we and our Quaker communities continue the process. I hope we carry on learning.

I hope we make brave choices.