

Follow up Letter



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

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

28 November 2018

Meeting for Sufferings 23-25 November 2018

Dear Friends,

I hope you agree that we had an extremely worthwhile meeting at Woodbrooke and it has helped deepen our understanding of our working together and has helped us to be able to give better service as the national representative body which we are. There was also a benefit in strengthening our relationships, one with another, as we got to know each other better – in all ways, both practical and ‘in the things that are eternal’.

We were not able to feedback to the whole group the suggestions and issues that had come from our home group meetings on Saturday – please do email to sufferings@quaker.org.uk if you have any specific matters you wish Arrangements Group to hear or that could be shared with the Meeting more widely.

Our business was full and varied and I suggest that, for your Area meeting, you pick out what was most important to you personally and what you think local friends would most like to hear about. Key items were:

1. Increasing our understanding of the work of central and standing committees and the key issues that concern them at present. We heard from Quaker Committee for Interfaith Relations, QCCIR and about their study on the [changing face of faith](#); Quaker Life Central Committee, QLCC (the life of local meetings including outreach, eldership and oversight and current work on gender diversity. Their new paper will be available [online](#) shortly. Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee, QPSW (their new leaflet should be available [here](#), shortly) and Quaker World Relations Committee, QWRC (we were inspired by the reports from other European yearly meetings and we also heard about the video made by FWCC [about the effects of climate change on Quakers in other parts of the world](#)

2. We were able to hear further from BYM Trustees and enthusiastically endorse the strategic priorities that they have put forward. Do share these with your local meeting or local trustees, using that section of our agenda papers.
3. The Speaking Out session on Saturday evening reminded us of how much is in the public domain from our busy media relations and senior staff. You might like to share the recent story and if you wish to receive media releases then please let Anne van Staveren know – annev@quaker.org.uk
4. We spent time over the weekend on nominations both hearing about current work by Central Nominations Committee but also considering the role of nominations and in particular for clerks of Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings. Our minute is long but contains many generic points that might be usefully considered by all nominations groups – this is a particular way of working, peculiar to our faith.
5. Finally we agreed on the way forward for monitoring our sustainability work (and this minute builds on those that have come previously this year).

You are not too late to respond to our annual report if you have any further suggestions before it is finalised in January.

We were reminded briefly that Meeting for Sufferings was asked to take forward our work to examine diversity and make sure all parts of our structures and communities are inclusive. To help that work, please encourage all Friends to complete the [online survey](#) or Friends can request paper copies by emailing Edwina Peart, edwinap@quaker.org.uk. Please also encourage Friends to participate in the national gathering at Woodbrooke 18th-20 January, '[Answering that of God in everyone](#)'.

Thank you Friends, for all your commitment and work in Sufferings and we send special prayers of gratitude for the service of those Friends whose terms of service end with the turn of the calendar year. We rejoice at seeing that of God in each other and look forward to meeting again in February.

Peace be with you all,



Anne Ullathorne
Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings

The following papers are included in this mailing:

- Minutes of the Meeting held 23-25 November 2018
- Meeting for Sufferings: functions list (November 2018)

At a meeting of Meeting for Sufferings

Held at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, Birmingham on Friday 23 – Sunday 25 November 2018

MfS/18/11/01 Opening Worship

During opening worship we have heard *Quaker faith & practice* 20.17 read.

MfS/18/11/02 Agenda

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

MfS/18/11/03 Apologies

We receive apologies from Leicester, North London and Surrey & Hampshire Border Area Meetings, which have not been able to send a representative on this occasion.

MfS/18/11/04 Membership

Since our last meeting we have received the following nominations for Meeting for Sufferings until the rise of Yearly Meeting 2021:

Ros Morley - North Wales AM alternate

Trevor Evans - QPSWCC representatives

Ruth Tod and Ann Bettys - QPSWCC alternates if required

We appoint the Friends named.

Visitors invited to represent area meetings/committees in the absence of the appointed representative or alternate:

Samuel Cooper – Young Friends General Meeting

Other visitors:

Jocelyn Bell Burnell – Quaker Life Central Committee co-clerk

Lis Burch – BYM Sustainability Group convenor

Ann Floyd – Quaker World Relations Committee clerk

Rhiannon Grant – Committee on Clerks convenor

Laurie Michaelis – Secretary to BYM Sustainability Group

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

Anne van Staveren – BYM staff, Media Relations Officer

Mark Tod – Church Government Advisory Group convenor

MfS/18/11/05 Appeal to Meeting for Sufferings

We receive paper MfS/18/11/06 Appeal to Meeting for Sufferings explaining that an appeal has been sent to the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings. Between meetings, the clerks have agreed that an appeal group should be established. Central Nominations Committee has been asked to bring names for service on the group as soon as they are able.

MfS/18/11/06 Revisions to *Quaker faith & practice*

We receive paper MfS/18/11/07 and Mark Tod, convenor of Church Government Advisory Group (CGAG), has spoken to it.

a) *Quaker faith & practice* sections 4.23-4.26

Further to our minute MfS/18/04/05, CGAG has brought forward proposed changes to *Quaker faith & practice* sections 4.23-26, currently headed 'Disputes among Friends'. We agree to these

changes, with two minor alterations made in this meeting, and forward the draft text to Yearly Meeting.

b) *Quaker faith & practice* sections 6.21 and 6.22

Further to our minute MfS/15/12/10 and minute 28 of Yearly Meeting 2016, CGAG has brought forward proposed changes to *Quaker faith & practice* section 6.21, Central Nominations Committee and 6.22, Yearly Meeting Nominating Group. We agree to these changes and forward the draft text to Yearly Meeting.

c) Necessary revisions to church government while a new book of discipline is being prepared

Yearly Meeting 2018 agreed to a complete revision of *Quaker faith & practice*, and the Recording Clerk has explained that this will take some years to complete. During that time, the current constitutional text in the church government chapters is likely to become out of date. We agree that Meeting for Sufferings should be ready to take on the responsibility for keeping up-to-date the current Church Government text included in *Quaker faith & practice*.

We forward this minute to Yearly Meeting.

MfS/18/11/07 Children and Young People's Work Advocates

We receive paper MfS/18/11/08 from Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC) regarding Children and Young People's (CYP) Work Advocates. There are currently 60 Advocates in area meetings, whose role is to speak up for the need to include children and young people in the life of local and area meetings, and to help them develop and support their work with children and young people. These Friends are supported by the Children's Work Officer (BYM staff).

At present there are also 12 Advocate Supports; QLCC is laying down this role, so that support can be provided in other and more diverse ways.

QLCC recommends that area meetings appoint CYP Work Advocates, and that the role should be added to the list of recommended roles in *Quaker faith & practice* 4.04.

We agree to this recommendation. We send this minute to Yearly Meeting and to Church Government Advisory Group, asking it to draft appropriate text for *Quaker faith & practice*.

MfS/18/11/08 Quaker Recognised Bodies

Further to minute MfS/15/12/17, we receive paper MfS/18/11/09 recommending twelve groups for registration as Quaker Recognised Bodies.

We agree to register the following groups for five years, with registration to be reviewed by the end of 2023:

External

Ackworth School
Bootham School
Breckenbrough School
Leighton Park School
Sidcot School
Quaker International Educational Trust
Quaker Social Action
William Penn School

Free-standing

Friends Schools Council

Quaker Arts Network

Quaker Campers

Quaker Gender and Sexual Diversity Community

MfS/18/11/09 Meeting for Sufferings annual report to Yearly Meeting

We have considered the draft annual report of Meeting for Sufferings to Yearly Meeting 2019, and offered suggestions to the clerks, asking them to bring a final draft to us in February next year.

MfS/18/11/10 Central and Standing Committees

We have welcomed the opportunity to receive written reports from the four central and standing committees at one meeting (paper MfS/18/11/11) and to hear more about the wide range of work undertaken for Quakers. Each report was followed by lively questioning and discussion, and we came to better appreciate the connections and interrelationships between different parts of the centrally managed work.

We thank Stephanie Grant, MfS representative of Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR); Jocelyn Bell Burnell, co-clerk of Quaker Life Central Committee; Jeff Beatty, Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee's (QPSWCC) representative to MfS, and co-clerk nominate; and Ann Floyd, clerk of Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC), for presenting the reports today.

MfS/18/11/11 Reports from Other European Yearly Meetings

We receive paper MfS/18/11/12 with written reports and epistles from representatives to other European Yearly Meetings:

Belgium and Luxembourg Yearly Meeting – Ruth Homer

France Yearly Meeting – Lesley Grahame

German Yearly Meeting – Annette Duensing

Ireland Yearly Meeting – Ruth Clements McQuaid & Marie McCusker

Netherlands Yearly Meeting – Silas Price

Norway Yearly Meeting – Ingrid Greenhow

Sweden Yearly Meeting – Gisela Creed

Switzerland Yearly Meeting – Harry Albright

Meetings within Europe and Middle East Section (EMES) of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) vary in size from less than 100 to several thousand members. In times of concern about travel and sustainability we are reminded that mainland Europe is our near neighbour and we can visit, to support and learn from Friends there. We wish to value their strengths and appreciate their needs. We hold members of the smaller European meetings in the Light.

We thank the Friends concerned for visiting on our behalf, and for their reports.

MfS/18/11/12 Appointments

Before making appointments today, we have heard from David Beale and Gill Reid, co-Clerks of Central Nominations Committee about the work of their committee.

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

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

Nominated to serve from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2021

Felicity Breet – Northumbria AM (1st term)

Tracey Martin – Leeds AM (1st term)

Church Government Advisory Group

Nominated to serve from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2020

Finn Pollard – Lincolnshire AM (1st term)

Nominated to serve from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2021

Peter Parr – Sussex East AM (1st term)

Release with immediate effect:

Michael Long – Northumbria AM

Quaker Council for European Affairs

Nominated serve from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2021

Stephen Clement – Mid-Thames AM (1st term)

Quaker Housing Trust

Nominated to serve from Annual Retirement Meeting (ARM) 2019 until the end of Annual Retirement Meeting (ARM) 2022

Karima Brooke – Oxford & Swindon AM (2nd term)

Peter Ranken – North East Thames AM (2nd term)

Mark Bitel – South East Scotland AM (1st term)

Oli Griffiths – Kingston & Wandsworth AM (1st term)

Quaker Life Central Committee

Nominated to serve from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2021

Jennifer Hampton – Pendle Hill AM (1st term)

Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee

Nominated to serve from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2021

Adam Drury – South East London AM (2nd term, 1st from May – Dec. 2018)

Elize Sakamoto – North West London AM (2nd term, 1st from May – Dec. 2018)

Nominated to serve from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2020

Mike Coote – Sussex East AM (1st term)

Release with immediate effect:

Peter Duckworth – Central England AM

Release by 31 December 2018:

Andrée Ryan – London West AM

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee

Nominated to serve with immediate effect until the end of Yearly Meeting 2019

Noël Staples – Cambridgeshire AM (1st term)

Release with immediate effect:

Roger Bartlett – Southern Marches AM

Pendle Hill – Friends in Residence

Nominated to serve between September and December 2019

Katrina McCrea – South East Scotland AM (1st term)

Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations

Nominated to serve from 1 May 2019 to 30 April 2022

Sue Beardon – Sheffield & Balby AM (2nd term, 1st term started May 2017)

Claire Bowman – Central England AM (2nd term, 1st term started July 2018)

Evelyn Shire – Craven & Keighley AM (2nd term, 1st term started May 2017)

Representatives to European Yearly Meetings

To serve as representative to the following Yearly Meetings in 2019, should BYM receive invitation:

Ireland YM (25-28 April)

Re-nominated:

Marie McCusker – Lancashire Central & North AM (2nd term)

Netherlands YM

Re-nominated:

Silas Price, Norfolk & Waveney AM (2nd term)

Norway YM

Re-nominated:

Ingrid Greenhow, Chilterns AM (2nd term)

Meeting for Sufferings Appeals Group

To serve with immediate effect until the matter is resolved

Nominated:

Anne Bennett – Lincolnshire AM

Jeffrey Dean – Manchester & Warrington AM

Jonathan Fox – Leeds AM

Joseph Fuller – Gloucestershire AM

Patricia Jaggard - Hampshire & Islands AM

Yearly Meeting Nominating Group

Release with immediate effect:

Joseph Fuller – Gloucestershire AM and Young Friends General Meeting

Nicholas Watts – Young Friends General Meeting

Book of Discipline Revision Committee

Co-clerks:

Rosie Carnall Sheffield & Balby AM

Catherine Brewer Northumbria AM

We appoint the Friends named accordingly and release those who have requested

MfS/18/11/13 BYM Trustees

We receive papers MfS/18/11/14a and MfS/18/11/14b, which were before us at our last meeting. Ingrid Greenhow, clerk of BYM Trustees, has spoken further about Trustees' work, and she and the Recording Clerk have explained more fully about the BYM strategic priorities developed by Trustees.

We are glad that the Trustees have developed such a clear set of priorities for the centrally managed work, taking into account the decisions and recommendations of Meeting for Sufferings and we enthusiastically endorse these priorities.

We thank the Trustees and staff for their work on this matter and for the clear exposition given today.

MfS/18/11/14 Home Groups: Understanding centrally managed work

Friends divided into groups, based on their geographical areas, to reflect together on reports from central and standing committees, and from BYM Trustees, considering how their work has strengthened the life of Quakers in Britain. We have questioned how we can balance so many shared concerns and whether we have any guidance for committees or Trustees.

MfS/18/11/15 Speaking Out

In 2014, MfS adopted the 'Speaking Out' policy (MfS/14/02/05) which guides how, and on what issues, BYM, local and area meetings speak out. For this meeting, staff have compiled a list of relevant activities since Yearly Meeting 2018 (the start of our current MfS triennium). It covers a broad range of activities, including print and broadcast media; online activities; responding to consultations; and some private meetings and correspondence. Anne van Staveren (BYM Media Officer) has given us a contemporary example of this work, in relation to Trustees' recent decision about investments. We thank our staff and all those involved.

MfS/18/11/16 Home Groups

We spent time together explaining and sharing about specific activities in our own area meetings.

MfS/18/11/17 Committee on Clerks

Further to minute 23 of Yearly Meeting 2017, last year Meeting for Sufferings set up a group to review Committee on Clerks (our minutes MfS/17/10/21 refers). Today we have received the report of the Review Group (paper MfS/18/11/17) and one of its members, Rhiannon Grant, has spoken to it.

Rhiannon Grant has reported that the Group consulted carefully with Friends who have experience of Committee on Clerks and beyond. It found that lots of good work is done within the current system, but also identified a number of issues around transparency, simplicity, communication, and the unequal distribution of power.

We note that the review found that specific strengths of the current system were in the care and attention given by Committee on Clerks and the benefits of giving time and space to specific nominations work.

However we are reminded that Quakers today are wanting to simplify procedures, to break down barriers to participation and to make space for the workings of the Spirit by improving understanding and communication.

The report has made eight recommendations:

- 1: The nominations for the different roles currently handled by Committee on Clerks should no longer be handled by a single body.
- 2: BYM Trustees should nominate their own clerk and the BYM treasurer, for appointment by Yearly Meeting.
- 3: Friends should be appointed to serve for three years in each of these roles.
- 4: BYM Trustees are empowered to appoint an assistant clerk directly if they so wish.

5: The names of clerks for Yearly Meeting should be found by Central Nominations Committee and appointed by Yearly Meeting.

6: The names of clerks for Meeting for Sufferings should be found by Central Nominations Committee and appointed by Meeting for Sufferings.

7: Central Nominations Committee should be strengthened by increasing its membership.

8: Committee on Clerks should be laid down.

We accept the first four recommendations, noting that BYM Trustees would be able to nominate their clerk and treasurer not necessarily from within the body of Trustees.

We share concerns about the right-holding of nominations work and the importance of the work of the Spirit. We need to be more radical and to consider how we care for the nominations process.

We are not ready to change the system until we are sure that Central Nominations Committee (CNC) has the capacity to carry out the work and there are no unintended consequences. It has been said that 'nominations is the holiest thing we do'. The problems are how to make discreet work more transparent, and there is an issue in how we nurture Friends before and during service.

We look forward to a review of CNC's terms of reference due in 2019 to make specific recommendations that ensure CNC has sufficient resources to carry out its work. We therefore ask CNC to do this review on its terms of reference (and consider its ways of working) as soon as is practical, in the anticipation of some of the changes recommended in this review group's report.

We expect to return to this matter in 2019, including the implementation of recommendations 1-4.

We lay down the Review Group, thanking them for their work.

We send this minute to Committee on Clerks and CNC.

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.

MfS/18/11/19 Closing minute

We closed our time together with worship.

Anne Ullathorne
Clerk

Meeting for Sufferings: are we addressing our functions?

Quaker faith & practice 7.02 sets out 19 functions of MfS (a-s). We're monitoring how the agenda items enable us to address these functions. Business at this meeting related to 11 of the functions. (Function i) *to foster communication throughout the yearly meeting* is also addressed by representatives before and after every meeting.)

- a) To set the priorities for the centrally managed work ... taking into account the detailed aspirations and plans of the central and other standing committees
 - MfS/18/11/10 Central and Standing Committees
 - MfS/18/11/14 Home Groups: Understanding centrally managed work
- c) To receive regular interim reports from BYM trustees
 - MfS/18/11/13 BYM Trustees
 - MfS/18/11/15/Speaking Out
- e) To make a report on its own activities to Yearly Meeting each year;
 - MfS/18/11/09 Meeting for Sufferings annual report to Yearly Meeting
- g) To deliberate on how best to support the spiritual life of the yearly meeting and to further the development of its visionary and prophetic role
 - MfS/18/11/13 BYM Trustees
 - MfS/18/11/10 Central and Standing Committees
 - MfS/18/11/14 Home Groups: Understanding centrally managed work
- i) To foster communication throughout the Yearly Meeting
 - MfS/18/11/07 Children and Young People's Work Advocate
 - MfS/18/11/08 Quaker Recognised Bodies
 - MfS/18/11/10 Central and Standing Committees
 - MfS/18/11/16 Home Groups
- l) To appoint representatives to attend other Yearly Meetings
 - MfS/18/11/11 Reports from Other European Yearly Meetings
 - MfS/18/11/12 Appointments
- p) To hear appeals against area meeting decisions
MfS/18/11/05 Appeal to Meeting for Sufferings
- r) To authorise action and minute as required under other sections of Quaker Faith and Practice
 - MfS/18/11/08 Quaker Recognised Bodies
 - MfS/18/11/17 Committee on Clerks
 - MfS/18/11/18 Sustainability: living up to our commitment