

Calling Letter



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

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

10 September 2017

Dear Friends,

Our next meeting will be at Friends Meeting House, 6, Mount Street, Manchester on Saturday 7th October, starting as usual at 10am – and almost all of you have already registered! Those representatives who are in Manchester on the Friday evening before are warmly invited to food and fellowship with local friends at the Meeting House from about 6pm to 8pm. There will be various displays there (on Friday and Saturday) about local Quaker work including Quaker Social Justice, LGBT/Pride, and Quaker Congo Partnership. There will be Friends present from each of the four local Area Meetings - Manchester and Warrington, Hardshaw and Mann, East Cheshire and Pendle Hill.

However our meeting on Saturday will be in the usual format as you will see from the attached agenda. The key items this time are:

- receipt of various minutes
- consideration of the phrase 'Quakers in Britain' and of communication more generally
- consideration of Yearly Meeting Gathering 2017 (and in particular receipt and consideration of the minutes of Yearly Meeting)
- engagement with Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC). Information from the central committees enables us to learn directly from them about their discernment on issues relating to the nature of the work undertaken by Britain Yearly Meeting and enables us to respond directly to any queries, whilst furthering the work towards the vision encapsulated in 'Our faith in the future'.

Included in this mailing are the minutes from Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group and I draw your attention to the reflection on our last meeting. In connection with the reading out of the names of deceased members of Sufferings, Arrangements Group suggests that we limit the practice to Friends who have served over the preceding three triennia.

Our minute last time, MfS/17/06/17 Central decision-making processes in Britain Yearly Meeting asked Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group to consider this further and report back to us. Arrangements Group have several ideas on how to progress this and we are likely to return to it at Meeting for Sufferings in 2018.

I am looking forward to seeing you again and to a different experience of Sufferings in Manchester – as I hope you are too. As ever, do not hesitate to contact me via sufferings@quaker.org.uk if you have any queries about anything in the papers. Peace be with you

Anne Ullathorne

May peace be with you.



Anne Ullathorne,
Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings

Papers enclosed with this mailing

Agenda

MfS Forward Agenda

MfSAG April 2017 meeting minutes

MfS 2017 10 05	Court and Prison Register
MfS 2017 10 06a	Minutes received from Area Meetings
MfS 2017 10 06b	Minutes received from Central Committees
MfS 2017 10 06c	Other correspondence received
MfS 2017 10 07	Meeting of Friends in Wales - anniversary
MfS 2017 10 08	BYM Trustees minutes
MfS 2017 10 09	Use of the phrase 'Quakers in Britain'
MfS 2017 10 10	BYM Communications and Speaking Out
MfS 2017 10 12	Yearly Meeting Gathering 2017
MfS 2017 10 13	QPSWCC annual Report
MfS 2017 10 14	Quaker Recognised Bodies
MfS 2017 10 15	Dates of Meeting for Sufferings

n.b. the following paper/s will be available on the day of the meeting:

MfS 2017 10 03	Membership
MfS 2017 10 11	Appointments



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

Agenda information

Meeting for Sufferings 7 October 2017

Manchester Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount St, Manchester M2 5NS

	Item	Paper
09.00	Arrivals	
10.00	Session starts	
1	Opening worship	
2	Welcome and introductions	
3	Membership (Tabled paper)	MfS 2017 10 03 (to note)
4	Agenda Adoption and acceptance of the agenda.	
5	Court and Prison Register	MfS 2017 10 05
6	Minutes received from AMs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> West Kent AM: concerns over the 'Our faith' section of the BYM website. Minutes received from CCs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quaker Stewardship Committee: reporting to Meeting for Sufferings. Quaker World Relations Committee: Conference of European Churches (CEC) draft Open Letter on the future of Europe. Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations: revised paper on the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. Other correspondence and minutes received <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ackworth General Meeting re: governance of Ackworth School Appeal Group report 	MfS 2017 10 06a (for information) MfS 2017 10 06b MfS 2017 10 06c
7	Meeting of Friends in Wales – anniversary greetings	MfS 2017 10 07 (to agree)
	Break <i>please hold the silence in the meeting room</i>	

8	BYM Trustees report Ingrid Greenhow, clerk of BYM Trustees, will update MfS and speak to the minutes of their June meeting.	MfS 2017 10 08 (for information)
9	Use of the phrase 'Quakers in Britain' / BYM Communications To receive BYMT minute and accompanying notes.	MfS 2017 10 09 (to receive and note)
10	BYM Communications and Speaking Out Jane Dawson, Head of External Communications will speak to the BYM Communications Speaking Out policy.	MfS 2017 10 10 (for consideration)
12.45 - 14:00	Lunch Informal lunchtime opportunities to meet with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends from local AMs • QPSWCC representative • Jane Dawson, Head of External Communications • BYM Trustees 	
11	Appointments (Tabled paper)	MfS 2017 10 11 (for approval)
12	Yearly Meeting Gathering 2017 Reflections and follow up; including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minute 23 - Review of Committee on Clerks • Minute 38 - Diversity 	MfS 2017 10 12 (for consideration)
	Break <i>please hold the silence in the meeting room</i>	
13	Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee annual report Jeff Beatty of Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee, will speak to their annual report to Meeting for Sufferings. With minute QPSWCC 17/29	MfS 2017 10 13 (for consideration) (for consideration)
14	Quaker Recognised Bodies To register some further Quaker Recognised Bodies.	MfS 2017 10 14 (for approval)
15	Meeting for Sufferings dates 2019 To approve future dates of Meeting for Sufferings.	MfS 2017 10 15 (for approval)
15.45	Closing worship	
16.00	Close. Tea, coffee and departures	

MEETING FOR SUFFERINGS FORWARD AGENDA – Sept 2017

The following items are currently proposed or being considered by Arrangements Group for our final meeting in 2017. These plans may change.

Dec '17	<p>Young People's Participation Day</p> <p>QLCC annual report, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pastoral and spiritual support to people not able to regularly attend local meetings (sent to QLCC Feb 2015) <p>Book of Discipline: receipt of the report from the Book of Discipline review group</p> <p>Meeting of Friends in Wales report General Meeting for Scotland report</p> <p>MfS Annual Report to Yearly Meeting 2018</p> <p>Reports on other European YMs in the last year (from QWRC)</p> <p>Operational plan and budget headlines (from Trustees)</p>
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Plans for 2018 have not yet been confirmed. During the year we can expect to receive reports from:

- Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee
- Quaker Life Central Committee
- Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations
- Quaker World Relations Committee

Matters expected to return in due course:

- **Gender Equality and the Tabular Statement** – sent to Recording Clerk March 2015
- **Review of the Appeal process** – report from the review group
- **Government sponsorship of Cadet Forces in Scottish State Schools** – forwarded to QPSWCC in October 2016
- **Integrity, accountability and truth in public affairs** – QPSWCC has indicated it is considering this and may wish to come back
- **Review of BYM Sustainability Group**
- **Central decision-making processes in BYM** – sent to MfS Arrangements Group in July 2017



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

At a meeting of Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group

Held at Friends House, Ada Salter 1

4 September 2017

Present: Margaret Bryan, Ursula Fuller, Sue Goodson, James Johnson, Juliet Prager and Anne Ullathorne

Prevented: Jane Pearn

Reflections on the last MfS

We reflected on the last meeting, held 4 June 2017.

Feedback has been received from the support group and several members of MfS. Responses have been forwarded where relevant to QCCIR and YFGM. We have received the responses to our query about announcement of deaths at MfS (**MfSAG 2017 09 02b**) and would like to suggest that we limit the practice to Friends who have served over the preceding three triennia.

Kingston & Wandsworth Area Meeting concern

Further to minute MfS 17/06/17: in looking at when to return to this matter we consider that the agendas for our next two meetings are already full. While we decide when it seems right to bring the matter back we will continue to look carefully at how we structure the committee reporting sessions to enable reps to better engage with the centrally managed work and the committee's priorities. Our clerk will continue to discuss this with the clerks of BYM Trustees and Yearly Meeting to explore ways forward. We ask our secretary to send this minute to Kingston & Wandsworth.

Forward agenda

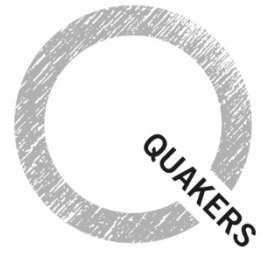
We have considered the forward agenda, which informs our planning.

Agenda planning 1

We have planned the agenda for our 7 October meeting.

Agenda planning 2

We have looked ahead to our meeting in December which includes the Young People's Participation Day. We ask our secretary to liaise with Children & Young People's Committee over this.



Yearly Meeting of the Religious
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Britain

Dates of MfS in 2019

We have considered the dates of MfS in 2019.

2 February 2019

6 April 2019

6 July 2019

5 October 2019 (residential)

7 December (YPP)

Date and time of MfSAG in 2017-2018

We have considered and agreed our upcoming meeting date and considered dates of MfSAG meetings to the end of the triennium.

Monday 8 January 2018

Friday 2 March 2018

Monday 21 May 2018

Court & 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.

There are three sets of information to bring to this meeting.

- a) Sam Donaldson, an attender at Hull meeting (Pickering and Hull AM) was arrested alongside four others at Faslane naval base on 13 July 2017, during a protest against the UK's Trident weapons system seeking to highlight the UN nuclear ban treaty adopted in early July. They were charged with breach of the peace and Sam Donaldson will appear in court on 12 October.

In relation to the following, Friends may find it helpful to be reminded that last year Meeting for Sufferings recorded Friends' concern about UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia, particularly in light of violent conflict in Syria and Yemen (MfS/16/07/13).

- b) In February, MfS heard that Sam Walton of South London AM had been arrested after entering BAE Systems' Warton site in order to disarm warplanes bound for Saudi Arabia; and released on bail pending charges (minute MfS/17/02/04). Sam and his co-accused, Daniel Woodhouse (a Methodist minister), have been charged with criminal damage and are preparing for a trial to begin on 23 October 2017.
- c) DSEI (Defence & Security Equipment International) held an arms fair at the ExCel exhibition centre in London Docklands from 11-15 September 2018. There were many protests in the run-up to and during the event. Over 100 people were arrested.

Eight Friends were arrested on 5th September 2017, during a 'No faith in war' day. Six were arrested during a Meeting for worship, and charged with wilful obstruction of the highway: David Amos, Hank Eynattan and Paul Milling of Kingston and Wandsworth AM; Susan Clarkson of Brighouse West Yorkshire AM; Chris Gwyntopher of North East Thames AM; and Richard Levitt of Leeds AM. They have been charged with wilful obstruction of the highway and will appear in court on 19 September.

Jo Frew, an attender at Tottenham meeting, North London AM and Sam Donaldson, an attender at Hull meeting, Pickering and Hull AM, were arrested on the same day, during actions taken with other groups.

Jo Frew has also been charged with obstruction of the highway and will appear in court on 19 September.

Sam Donaldson has been charged with breach of the peace and his trial has been scheduled for 12 Oct.

Meeting for Sufferings may wish to make further entries in the Register.

Meeting for Sufferings 2017 10 07 – AM minutes received

West Kent AM minute 2 from the AM held on 14 May 2017 regarding concerns over the 'Our faith' section of the BYM website.

West Kent AM held 14 May 2017

Minute 2. A concern from Sevenoaks Meeting

Sevenoaks Friends have sent us the following minute

The national website, quaker.org.uk, offers a very simple statement of what Quakers believe which has raised a concern locally. We would like this to be brought to Area Meeting (Qf&p 13.06) at the next opportunity for consideration and discernment with the possibility of its being taken further. We are aware that this has been discussed by West Kent Elders & Overseers in October 2016 which recommended further consideration by Sevenoaks local meeting (Qf&p 13.13). After discussion on several occasions, we agree that we find the website section under "Our faith" to be inadequate in representing honestly the diversity of Quaker experience as a non-creedal organisation with regard to 'Quakers believe...'

Signed
Elizabeth Dwinell
5th February 2017

We have considered the minute from Sevenoaks Meeting which says as follows

'...we find the website section under "Our faith" to be inadequate in representing honestly the diversity of Quaker experience as a non-creedal organisation with regard to "Quakers believe....'

We agree that we would like the web site to say more comprehensively what unites Quakers while also reflecting the diversity and freedom of our Faith and Practice. What unites us is our experience that there is a creative force for good within the universe, whether described as God or in other terms, such as the Spirit within or the Inner Light and as Quakers we are called to respond to that power.

We understand that the power works in different ways in each of us.

We ask our Clerk to send copies of this minute to Meeting for Sufferings and to Gill Sewell of Quaker Life at Friends House with copies to Local Meeting Clerks in East and West Kent.

The Area Meeting Clerk will be pleased to receive minutes from Local Meetings with any further reflections on this subject.

(It was suggested that the Clerk could when sending the minute also append a section of the Maidstone Local Meeting leaflet which is recorded below as an example of a more acceptable form of words.)

We do share values and practices that are important to us; in particular our religious practice based on waiting in stillness; listening to each other and to what we call the inner light. We seek to respond to that of God in everyone, although we may have widely differing understandings of what "God" means.

Quakers also share a commitment to our testimony to peace, truth, equality, simplicity and sustainability.

Quaker testimony is not just about holding these values to be important, it is about a way of living our lives and of acting in the world

John Clarke AM Clerk
Richard Wadey Assistant AM Clerk

Further notes:

Arrangements Group was heartened to see that Friends in West Kent are considering how Quaker faith and practice can best be communicated to others. The AM minute indicates that consideration is ongoing. Meeting for Sufferings may wish to encourage Friends in the AM in its exploration, and perhaps to link up with other Meetings with regard to their own websites, leaflets, noticeboards and so on.

Regarding the specific text on the BYM website, West Kent Area Meeting has also been in touch with the BYM communications team. Staff have explained that the current text was intended as a 'stop-gap'; a new version is being prepared and will be online by October, with a link to a new page including different expressions of Quaker faith. The page highlighted by West Kent AM is intended as a very brief introduction, aimed at people who are extremely new to Quakers – but with links to explore further and learn more.

It is the responsibility of BYM Trustees to oversee this sort of operational matter; Trustees and staff always value feedback from Friends. The BYM website was designed to develop over time, in response to feedback, so conversations with the AM have been useful.

The current text from the 'Our Faith' page of the website
www.quaker.org.uk/about-quakers/our-faith

'Quakers' is the name often used for the Religious Society of Friends. Although we have our roots in Christianity, we also find meaning and value in the teachings and insights of other faiths and traditions.

- Quakers believe there is something of God in everyone. Find out more about what Quakers believe and how Quakers worship.
- Quakers believe our faith is lived through action. We work positively and creatively with others to build a more just and peaceful world. Learn more about what we do.
- Quakers are committed to equality. We share responsibility for our work and worship and our life together without traditional structures or paid clergy. Learn more about how we are organised.

If you are interested in joining us, please do get in touch. Everyone is welcome. Find a meeting near you to learn about our experience of worship and the ways in which it enriches, shapes and transforms our lives.

Meeting for Sufferings 2017 10 07 – CC and other bodies minutes received

Quaker Stewardship Committee minute QSC-2017-04-04 2017 regarding reporting to Meeting for Sufferings.

Quaker World Relations Committee minute QWRC 2017/05/07 regarding the Response to the Conference of European Churches (CEC) draft Open Letter on the future of Europe (with the Open Letter and the FWCC-EMES response).

Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations minute QCCIR/17/48 regarding a paper on the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation (with a copy of the paper).

Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee minute QPSWCC 17/54 regarding receipt of the annual report from QCEA. Also attached is a copy of the report.

Quaker Stewardship Committee

Held 24 April 2017

QSC-2017-04-04 Committee matters

(a) Report to Meeting for Sufferings (part)

Further to minute QSC-2017-02-04(c) we have received the QSC report to Meeting for Sufferings on 1 April (QSC-2017-04-04a(i)), verbal reports from members who were present at the meeting, Minute MfS/17/04/07 Quaker Stewardship Committee (QSC-2017-04-04a(ii)), and various responses from individual representatives and area meetings to our Report to Meeting for Sufferings.

We note that

1. Friends would welcome QSC members visiting them in their area meetings. We encourage link Friends to offer this when appropriate. We recognise that time to do this is limited and there are geographical constraints. There are other ways to maintain personal links, for example through the Trustees Conference and through Britain Yearly Meeting staff.
2. Asking for trustees' annual reports to provide information about, for example, sustainability, would require clear guidelines to enable consistency. We ask our TARs working group to liaise with the Meeting for Sufferings Sustainability Group to find a way in which this can be done effectively and sensitively.
3. That the limits to Friends' ability and willingness to sustain the work of governance is a serious risk to area meetings and Britain Yearly Meeting.
4. Meeting for Sufferings plans to return to these matters at a future meeting. We thank Meeting for Sufferings for its discernment and look forward to continuing dialogue with it.

Ursula Fuller
Clerk

To: Meeting for Sufferings

Quaker World Relations Committee

13 May 2017

QWRC/2017/05/07 Update on intervisitation with Friends worldwide (Part Minute)

Response to the Conference of European Churches (CEC) draft Open Letter on the future of Europe: EMES considered and wholeheartedly endorsed the draft response prepared by the EMES Executive Secretary, Elaine Green and Eduard Dommen. This response will now be sent: we were clear that the Quaker voice, as a 'peace church' had much to contribute and should be heard.

We minute our complete agreement with this. EMES also asked all present to commend the response to our own meetings.

We therefore send this minute, the draft Open Letter and the EMES response, to QCCIR and to the arrangements committee for Meeting for Sufferings, for consideration.

Ann Floyd
Clerk

What future for Europe?

Reaffirming the European project as building a community of values

An open letter of CEC to churches and partner organisations in Europe and an invitation to dialogue and consultation.

Summary

Fifteen years ago, the historic Charta Oecumenica, brought together the churches of the Conference of European Churches and CCEE in a bold pronouncement in support of the European project. Here they proclaimed, “without common values, unity cannot endure.” Today, less than a generation later, such a call to common values and unity seems alien and rare in European societies. Political and economic disintegration seem the new norm. Europeans are losing confidence in the European project, mistrust of politicians and the structures they serve is growing, and policies are reduced to national interests. In this open letter, CEC returns to the fundamental question of common values and how these are expressed in Europe today. The existence and flourishing of the European Union is central to this discussion, but we will also look beyond its borders. The text elaborates on the overall context of and historical perspectives on European development. It takes into account the achievements of Europe, especially those that go beyond economic cooperation and the common market. These include, support for solidarity mechanisms, free travel under the Schengen agreement, and the student exchange programme Erasmus. At the same time, the text raises concern about the multiple and interrelated crises facing Europe today. The influx of migrants and refugees, violent conflicts and terrorist attacks, economic crises and growing Euroscepticism all threaten the European project and development of common values. By way of response, this open letter elaborates a theological perspective to these issues, including reflection on koinonia and diaconia, and encourages churches to make a positive contribution in building a common European home.

In evaluating Europe’s current challenges as part of our efforts leading to the next CEC Assembly, which will take place in 2018, the CEC Governing Board:

- Issues this open letter to churches in Europe on the situation in the continent, which outlines its vision of Europe with regard to the EU and shares its concerns about the future of this historical European project in the present circumstances;
- Reaffirms its understanding of the EU as a community of values pursuing human dignity, peace, reconciliation, justice, the rule of law, democracy, the respect for human rights, solidarity and sustainability;
- Encourages CEC Member Churches and all Christians in Europe to step up efforts in making such Christian virtues as respect for others, solidarity, diaconia and building up a community more visible in public life;
- Calls churches in Europe to an intensive discussion on the future of our continent, the role of the European Union and our vision of shared values;
- Invites CEC Member Churches and partner organisations to react to this letter in considering the specific situation in different parts of the continent and in contributing to a consultative and participatory process leading to the next CEC Assembly.

I. Introduction

“On the basis of our Christian faith, we work towards a humane, socially conscious Europe, in which human rights and the basic values of peace, justice, freedom, tolerance, participation and solidarity prevail.”

Charta Oecumenica

In 2001 the churches in Europe jointly and boldly pronounced in Charta Oecumenica a support for a process destined to bring Europe closer together. Churches in the same document stated that

*“without common values, unity cannot endure.”*¹ Now, 15 years later, we find ourselves in a situation in which increasingly vocal political parties and groupings argue against further political and economic integration on our continent.

What seemed a logical position 15 years ago seems less evident today. Rather, we see a growing body of opinion that has lost faith in the promise of a united Europe, that distrusts political elites, and that would like to renationalise policies.

In this paper, CEC makes an effort to analyse recent developments in Europe in relation to the question how these affect jointly held basic values. The focus will be on the European Union, and the deep challenges facing the EU today. At the same time, it is obvious that development in the EU cannot be considered in isolation. The broader picture of Europe as a whole, which includes both EU as well as countries outside of the Union has to be taken into account. Fragmentation of Europe becomes an increasingly serious challenge for the continent.

In this historic moment the European Union, which covers the major part of the continent and is responsible for developments that have considerable impact on other parts of the continent, is at a crossroads. We must work together to foster hope and cultivate constructive solutions to our common problems. This open letter is a call to join in this process, to outline a new vision for Europe – a home for all of us, building on the past and looking to the future with renewed hope.

II. Context

“Respect for human dignity, peace, justice, freedom, tolerance, participation and solidarity can be maintained in times of change”

Problems arising in an increasingly globalised and interdependent world need global and international approaches to be effective. Climate change and pollution, for example, do not stop at national borders. International crime and terrorism need international responses. Global economic problems need globally coordinated solutions.

It is clear that individual countries are less effective in tackling their problems when they act on their own than when they coordinate with other countries. They need partnerships and networks to amplify their voice and strengthen their influence.

More and more people disagree with the view that global issues can best be addressed through global approaches. They point to the fact that only small groups of people have reaped the benefits of globalisation and that the majority of the population bears the brunt of the negative outcomes of this process. Almost everywhere in the world, globalisation has been accompanied by growing inequalities and eroding prospects for the middle and lower class. In addition, many feel that they are subject to global forces that they cannot control and threaten their identities. Therefore, it is not surprising that the ideal of sovereign independence retains—and even regains—an important appeal. Many people have become suspicious of globalisation and have come to view those who argue for economic and political integration as out-of-touch elites which promote their own agenda while neglecting the people’s agenda. As a consequence, we see a growing emphasis on national identity, sovereignty, and a renationalisation of policies. A key question in this context is how the obvious need for international cooperation and joint policy making can be reconciled with the legitimate desire of many people to own and control policies that affect their daily lives.

It is clear that within the churches and between Christians different opinions exist on detailed policy questions and on how to organise ourselves in Europe. Also on bigger issues such as to stay in or leave the European Union, Christians find themselves on different sides of the divide. Such differences are perfectly legitimate.

For the Conference of European Churches (CEC) the key question is how we can make sure that the fundamental values that should guide political processes on our continent— respect for

human dignity, peace, justice, freedom, tolerance, participation, solidarity, and sustainability—can be maintained in times of change. CEC holds that no compromises can be made with regard to these basic values. Even if policy choices may differ, unity in Europe is rooted in these values.

III. Historical Perspective

“Pray for, dream of, and proclaim the possibility of a better way.”

After the Second World War, our continent was reeling from multiple crises. Food shortages were endemic, there were vast flows of displaced people—not just prisoners of war and concentration camp victims—trying to find their way home, to reunite with family, or to find a new home because their pre-War house was no longer there. Major and costly reconstruction was needed for most of the great cities on the continent.

Virtually every national economy was in need of a financial bailout. Germany alone had half of its national debt written off. Soon after the War, the continent was split along ideological lines, East and West, and a Cold War developed.

It was in this febrile atmosphere in the mid-twentieth century that a small multinational group of devout Christian statesmen came together and dared to pray for, dream of, and proclaim the possibility of a better way—a way for the diverse peoples of Europe to live and prosper together in peace. This hope could only be realised if people and nations were prepared to accept common values emerging from the cultural, religious, and humanist inheritance of Europe; values that are also at the heart of the Gospel message. Love your enemies, forgive others as you are forgiven, be in solidarity with the poor and the down-trodden, and share with your neighbour. It is to this heritage we turn as we continue our efforts for reconciliation and solidarity in Europe today. So when French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman made his famous declaration on 9 May 1950 in favour of European cooperation, it was met with a positive response from German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, Italian Premier Alcide de Gasperi, Belgian Foreign Minister Paul Henri Spaak and many others. At its heart was a message of forgiveness on behalf of France and the offering of an olive branch to Germany. This was in the form of a new multinational entity to conduct the affairs of Europe in which the two long time protagonist nations stand together as equal partners. This early model still reminds us of the power of dialogue in resolving tensions. The Coal and Steel Community was established in 1951 and brought together the coal and steel sectors of previous enemies, thereby making hidden rearmament impossible. This initial Community transformed first into the European Economic Community (1957) and later into the European Union (1993). From the initial six core Member States, it succeeded in enlarging with other countries.² The institutions and structures originally devised for the six nations were revised with occasional treaty adaptation with the Treaties of Rome (1957), Maastricht (1993) and Lisbon (2007). These adaptations served to contain disagreements between nations in the negotiating room and away from the battlefield and entrenching respect for the rule of law, democracy and human rights across the continent. All this happened in the context of mutual dependence between the EU and the Council of Europe, which provides among other things underpinning for activities of the Union in several areas. Council of Europe also offers a platform for cooperation and sharing in a much broader geographical area and provides an image of a much broader Europe than the EU. Cooperation with the Council of Europe and its European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg is essential for the EU.

IV. Achievements

“The European project, in its various manifestations, stands as an example of what can be done through reconciliation, stability and prosperity.”

In the history of Europe, people living on our continent have had devastating experiences with ideologies claiming to set clearly defined cultural, ethnic and religious or pseudoreligious

standards which apply to everybody. Therefore, the unification of most of Europe in peace and freedom since the Second World War and for the first time since the Middle Ages, is a major historical achievement. Also in the area of human rights, progress has been made. The European Convention on Human Rights, the European Court of Human Rights, the European Social Charter and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights are all milestones for Europe. The European project, in its various manifestations, stands as an example of what can be done through reconciliation, stability and prosperity.

The European Union with its undergirding values and framework for cooperation and common action was a key factor in overcoming undemocratic and totalitarian political regimes, which ruled for a substantial part of the 20th century in the east and south of the continent. The EU was also a key factor in integrating countries from these parts of the continent into the new model of collaboration and sharing.

On its own territory, the EU has promoted solidarity between rich and poor regions through cohesion policies and the accompanying funds (such as the European Social Fund). A number of EU financial instruments helped in the development of most disadvantaged and poor regions. Solidarity between urban and rural areas has been promoted through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), however imperfect the CAP may be. The social *acquis* of the EU in fields such as equality between women and men, health and safety at work, social security for mobile workers within the EU, is considerable.

The twinning of towns and villages across the EU and student exchange programmes such as Erasmus, as well as free movement of persons in the Schengen zone are among the most appreciated successes of the EU. Universities from 28 EU Member States, plus Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein, as well as candidate countries FYROM and Turkey, participate in the Erasmus programme. From its beginning in 1987 the programme has supported more than 3 million students. The Schengen agreement includes EU Member States (except Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland, Romania, and the UK) and non- EU states Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein. Projects like these have brought people in participating countries together, promoted mutual understanding, and gave meaning to the European cooperation at the grassroots level.

At a global level, the EU runs the world's biggest emergency humanitarian aid budget (ECHO) while the EU and its Member States are also major players in the area of development cooperation (particularly through its development budgets and the European Development Fund). Regarding climate change and nature protection the EU plays a leadership role. Last, but not least the EU has led several peacekeeping operations in different parts of the world. In general the EU provides the institutional contexts where problems that matter to citizens that Member States cannot readily tackle on their own, are addressed. This is often in a spirit which is mindful of the fact that more can be achieved together than as individual countries which act on their own. Through regular and transparent dialogue with these institutions, we work to address the challenges facing Europe democratically and openly.

V. Europe at a crossroads: Reimagine Europe and reaffirm core values

"We are at a crossroads in European history. The very future of developing common EU policies based on interdependence and on reconciled diversity is at stake."

By establishing the European Union as a supranational entity, the founders of the EU wanted to overcome the trap of nationalism that twice in half a century led Europe to disastrous wars. The integration of Europe, as the European Union, was a visionary project. It went beyond reconciling states and aspired to unite the peoples of Europe around the notion of a "community of shared values." In 1990, the then President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, even called

upon churches and religions to actively contribute to creating 'the heart and soul of Europe.' In more recent documents such as the Charter on Fundamental Rights (proclaimed in 2000) and the Treaty of Lisbon (2009), the shared values on which the Union is built were re-emphasised.

Lately, however, EU political leaders and many citizens have ceased to proclaim, and are even contradicting values that underpin the EU. For many people the European Union has become a mechanistic, technocratic institution, a bureaucratic project, remote from daily concerns of citizens. Something impenetrable, cumbersome, and costly. Popular support for the EU is rapidly declining. This has been aggravated when national leaders in a number of occasions refer to EU institutions as being responsible for all that is going wrong, and fail to attribute to the EU what is going well. If there is joint policy making in the EU nowadays, it seems that it is based less on a joint vision and more on a simple cost-benefit analysis of individual Member States.

Many of the values which are seen as having contributed to the shaping of Europe during the past sixty years or so, such as solidarity with the weak and respect for human rights, seem to evaporate under the pressure of multiple crises. The churches in Europe must seek to uphold these values as an indispensable basis for justice and peace on our continent.

We are at a crossroads in European history. The very future of developing common EU policies based on interdependence and on reconciled diversity is at stake. This idea has, over the years, contributed to a Europe which has largely lived in peace, and which pursues a growing degree of economic integration and social justice.

Facing such a situation, we need to reimagine Europe as a whole and the EU in particular, reaffirm the core values of the historic project and reassess these in view of the developments which have taken place during the past sixty years. What are the values that should be at the core of European identity? How do we handle the tensions that exist between the desire for sovereignty and homogeneity on the one hand, and European cooperation and cultural diversity on the other hand? What does this mean for the future of the European Union and for the future of the continent as a whole? What kind of Europe and European Union are necessary to live up to the common values which the churches identified in the Charta Oecumenica?

VI. Multiple and interacting crises

Europe in general and the European Union in particular is facing multiple crises. Some are global (such as the economic down turn) and geopolitical in nature (such as the wars in Syria and Iraq, and the 'frozen conflict' in eastern Ukraine). Other crises are due to issues that are more directly related to EU policies, (such as the Euro crisis) and the lack of an effective EU-wide policy on refugees who want to enter the EU. These simultaneously occurring crises impact the continent in a dramatic way. For the first time in decades, some of the fundamental achievements and tenets of the EU are under threat. Rather than rising to the challenges, the EU is cracking under the strain. A sense of crisis mounting, distrust growing, and the EU unable to respond effectively, countries are increasingly inclined to act unilaterally.

Violent conflicts and terrorist attacks

The first crisis with which Europe is confronted is violent geopolitical conflicts, including those in Syria and Iraq, and in Ukraine. The implications of these conflicts in the European Union is a rising numbers of refugees and recent terror attacks across Europe. As a result, one would expect that the European Union would try to play a major role in ending or even preventing these conflicts. This could be achieved by continuous and intensified diplomatic initiatives and by making sure that arms exports do not fuel the conflicts even further. Instead, the European Union has adopted a rather passive attitude. Regarding the conflict in the Ukraine the EU has been more active, but it failed to prevent difficulties that have led to tensions between the Union and Russia.

This situation illustrates the weakness of the EU in developing coherent common foreign policies (through the European External Action Service).

Besides the violence of wars, Europe has also been struck by the violence of several recent terrorist attacks in Spain, the United Kingdom, France, and Belgium. Although it will probably never be possible to eradicate terrorism altogether, it is clear that effective cross border cooperation between intelligence and police services are a prerequisite to counter terrorism in an age of globalisation. It is clear that these developments deeply challenge the EU as an organisation that has peace-making as one of its fundamental values.

Migration

The biggest challenge currently facing the EU is how to respond to the high numbers of refugees, mostly arriving in the southern European countries that were hardest hit by the economic crisis since 2008. This is mainly, but not exclusively, a result of violent conflicts in Europe's neighbourhood. It appears to be very difficult to find a common response to this challenge. International law requires Member States to examine every asylum application lodged on EU territory. Rather than sharing the responsibility and investing in the Common European Asylum System, EU Member States are blaming each other for creating pull factors, as was the case for Italy with the Search and Rescue Operation Mare Nostrum, or Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel for welcoming all refugees. The European Commission's proposals for sharing the responsibility and addressing issues of refugee reception, while requiring negotiations, were dismissed by a considerable number of Member States. In order to reduce numbers of arrivals, the EU and Turkey adopted a deal in March 2016. According to this agreement all newly arriving irregular migrants crossing from Turkey to the Greek islands will be returned to Turkey; and for every Syrian returned to Turkey from the Greek islands, another Syrian will be resettled from Turkey to the EU. This deal has been seriously criticised by the United Nations, international and national NGOs and churches for being incompatible with international law.

Churches have advocated for safe passages into Europe—including more resettlement of refugees from countries of first asylum, such as Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey; as well as more generous family reunification, humanitarian visas or lifting of visa requirements. This could—combined with legal labour migration opportunities—drastically reduce the loss of human lives at the EU's borders and contribute to more orderly migration. Detailed proposals were elaborated ecumenically by Christian organisations already in 2014.

While the European Commission has proposed to change the Dublin Regulation, there appears to be unwillingness in many Member States to modify the Dublin Regulation's underlying principle requiring that asylum claims be registered in the first EU state entered. This puts a heavy burden on southern states bordering the Mediterranean, which are the first point of arrival from North Africa and the Middle East. Although international law demands that Europe offers protection to those in need and therefore grants the possibility for every person arriving in Europe to ask for asylum, harsh deterrents adopted by some countries may even become the norm. Europe's politics face a clash of values. On the one hand the moral and legal obligation to offer protection to those in need, and on the other the political task of ensuring orderly movement and procedures to and in the EU. With anti-immigrant sentiments currently growing, this clash is likely to intensify in the near future.

Efforts to try to find a common response have led to bitter disputes and tensions between and within EU Member States. The Schengen agreement, permitting passport-free travel across much of the EU and other participating countries, as one of the most visible manifestations of European unity, has been put under pressure. Border controls have already been imposed unilaterally between some Member States. In spite of all its human, economic as well as symbolic importance, the future of Schengen is now in doubt. While this is attributed to the continuing

arrivals of refugees and migrants from the Middle East and North Africa, it also shows a considerable degree of mistrust among EU Member States. If EU leaders are to save Schengen, they must demonstrate a degree of unity and political will that has hitherto been lacking. They would need to agree to common procedures, and promote trust among Member States and assist each other.

The present situation is extremely urgent. It does immeasurable harm to the soul of Europe to ward off victims of violence and terror by fire-arms at border fences, or let people drown in the Mediterranean. Solidarity with refugees is a consequence of Christian faith and our commitment to working towards a just and compassionate society. Therefore, the present predicament of refugees and migrants is a matter of grave concern for CEC.

Economic developments and Euro crisis

The third crisis to list in the catalogue of Europe's current woes is the economic recession triggered by the banking collapse which started in the USA in 2008. This resulted in large parts of the EU remaining sunk in a semi-depression with high unemployment and unsustainable public finances, resulting in severe austerity measures that hit people experiencing poverty the most. In addition, the EU faces a monetary crisis that has already lasted for more than seven years. The brinkmanship policies characterising negotiations with Greece in the course of 2015 are an indication of the volatility of the Eurozone. Rather than uniting the countries of the Eurozone, the Euro is causing tensions between countries and a permanent solution to these is not yet in sight. On the contrary, Greece's decision to accept yet another austerity package has made the Eurozone look increasingly like a trap rather than a promising perspective for prospective members of the zone. The Greeks are faced with a serious dilemma: if the situation in their country shows that "there is no alternative" but to obey the rules of a monetary union, it means that democratic choices for voters are limited. This does not bode well and it is not a sustainable situation. The Eurozone cannot indefinitely survive as a half-completed project—a monetary without an economic union. There is, therefore, a real risk of a return of a Euro crisis in the not too distant future. This would again intensify the strain between democratic sovereignty on the one hand, and joint economic and monetary policies on the other hand. It would also again be a challenge to the principle of solidarity between countries and people in the EU.

Euroscepticism

In several EU Member States, Euroscepticism is on the rise. In some countries this has given rise to political parties and groupings which argue for their country to leave the Union. Several EU Member States (e.g., Greece, the Netherlands, and Hungary) have decided to use the instrument of referenda to consult their citizens on issues related to the European Union. The most far-reaching referendum has been called by the UK government, due to take place on 23 June 2016, on whether the UK should stay in or leave the Union.

A key word in these debates is sovereignty. Those who argue for their country to leave the EU, say that they would like to regain national sovereignty, whereas those who would like to remain in the EU argue that more sovereignty will lead to less influence on European and world affairs. The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby calls in this regard for an in-depth public debate, in which Christian faith should play a role:

How can we revitalise ideas such as sovereignty and subsidiarity—ideals formed out of Christian faith whose political dimensions capture their meaning only in part—and help encourage a clearly values-based approach to Britain's future relationship with the EU; one that includes, but does not end with, economic and political perspectives? We are going to try and make . . . a helpful contribution to that debate.

The dilemma between sovereignty and interdependence will, most likely, continue to be discussed in the EU for some time to come. It is clear that if a country puts the full weight on sovereignty and decides to leave the EU, this could plunge the EU into a deeper crisis.

Democratic deficit

Several EU Member States are witnessing an emerging divide between the views of the political elite, who are broadly in favour of (further) European integration, and the views of a growing number of groups in society who have lost their trust in this elite. They perceive the latter as technocratic Eurocrats who have lost touch with the realities in which most people in Europe live and have become alienated from the ideals which motivated the founders of the European project.

The gap between citizens and the establishment is not a phenomenon confined to the EU and its institutions. It can also be found at the level of the individual Member States and even beyond Europe. In many EU Member States political groupings are emerging that question the legitimacy of the governing elite, both in their own country and, even more so, with regard to the European Union. The EU is losing its appeal. For sizeable groups of citizens, the EU is seen as a distant power that cannot be influenced and is driven by its own dynamics. Moreover, the EU is perceived as infringing on national sovereignty and undermining citizens' power. Politicians who have, in the course of time, blamed the EU for many problems that were not the EU's responsibility, have contributed to this alienation between the EU institutions and its citizens. The process of growing alienation between EU citizens and EU institutions has been going on for a number of years. It is one of the reasons why the Lisbon Treaty (2007) gave a more prominent role to the European Parliament in EU decision making processes. It was hoped that this would enhance a sense of ownership by European voters of the EU. At the same time, the role of the European Council was significantly upgraded, giving heads of state and governments of individual Member States a greater say in EU affairs. These efforts recognise that collaboration at the Union level and subsidiarity are closely linked. The legitimate desire for subsidiarity must be reconciled with the need for collaboration among sovereign states. This will help cultivate a sense of ownership of the EU among its citizens. Collaboration at the EU level should be limited to issues and areas of work where cooperation is absolutely necessary for the promotion of the common good.

The changes resulting from the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, however, did not have the desired result of creating a greater sense of trust among EU citizens. In fact, the European Union, originally a visionary project, is facing increasing doubts and frustration. The perceived democratic deficit coupled with the economic difficulties, leads to a situation where more and more people question the legitimacy of the EU and its institutions.

VII. EU losing its appeal?

"Where there is no vision, the people perish. (Proverbs 29:18)"

The current multitude of challenges facing the EU leads to a situation where the fundamental achievements and tenets of the Union are under threat. These include the single currency, open internal borders, access to welfare systems for EU citizens in the country where they live, and the EU as a peace project. The impression one gets is of an EU characterised by division, infighting, and the inability to frame effective responses to common problems. Rather than being perceived as part of the solution, the EU is seen by many as part of the problem. Never before in its history have tensions and divisions been so severe. A full-scale collapse of the Union is still unlikely but a partial unravelling and marginalisation of the EU currently looks like a distinct possibility. Looking at it from a distance, the multiplicity of crises becomes part of a broader picture. For example, if

you create a monetary union without shared economic institutions, fiscal policies and legal systems, you are bound to hit the wall eventually.

Likewise, a passport-free travel zone without a joint coastguard and border controls cannot last forever. The pattern emerges of an EU which has an innate tendency towards indecisive compromises and fair-weather constructions. Such an EU can unravel when pressures become too high.

The EU, with its complex systems of checks and balances, double-majority voting rules on some legislation and unanimity on others, was not constructed to deal with the emerging geopolitical and global economic crises. It was originally designed to deal with issues like negotiating trade agreements, implementing fair competition policy, conducting a Common Agricultural Policy, and disbursing structural funds. At present, the EU seems to be overwhelmed by the effects of global and regional military conflicts, the difficulties of effectively co-ordinating macroeconomic policy and addressing humanitarian emergencies within its own borders. Add to this recent terror attacks in Paris and Belgium, a (frozen) war in Ukraine, rows of people in front of soup kitchens in Athens, the body of a dead refugee child washed ashore on the Turkish coast, widespread anti-Islam and anti-immigrant sentiments, and large scale youth unemployment, and we see why the EU has lost its appeal to many of its citizens, and why the urge to re-nationalise policies and the call for more national sovereignty is gaining strength.

Today's Europe is characterised by a lack of vision and hope, and by growing fear. Fear of unemployment, decreasing future pension payments, climate change, terrorism, conflicts at the borders, migrants and refugees, loss of identity and loss of culture play an increasingly dominant role in daily thoughts. Many people see themselves as powerless and as victims of the processes over which they have no control. The present situation and prevailing mood presents a threat to the values on which the EU was built: peace, solidarity, unity in diversity, democracy, justice, the rule of law, human rights, freedom of religion and ecological sustainability. If the EU were to unravel, the common values on which it is based could be endangered as well. Therefore, it is not going too far to consider the present fundamental challenges to the European cooperation project as a Kairos moment—a crucial moment of truth—for the future of the Europe.

VIII. **EU at crossroads**

Kairos moments and crises present dangers but also offer possibilities for choosing new ways forward. The present situation in the EU is serious but also offers an opportunity to re-imagine the Union. In this context, it is very important to listen carefully to the concerns and grievances that many people have about the EU. There is no future for the EU if no account is taken of the growing perception that developing common policies in the EU is hard to reconcile with the wish for national sovereignty. If people cannot be convinced that giving up some sovereignty can lead to more effective policies in confronting global issues, the EU will not survive. If people cannot be convinced that in an increasingly globalising world even the big European states are too small to be able to influence developments regarding the economy, social, and ecological sustainability and effectively stand up for human rights and human dignity, the EU as we presently know it has no future. If it cannot be clearly demonstrated that, on the whole, people are better off, materially and immaterially, in a body like the EU, the Union will lose its *raison d'être*. If the EU does not manage to enhance transparency in its decision making processes, the Union will continue to be vulnerable to accusations of being undemocratic. If people in the EU do not feel consulted or empowered by common EU policies, the Union will continue to lack the necessary appeal for its citizens. If people do not feel enough ownership of the EU, they will ultimately disown the Union.

The present crises offer an opportunity to readjust European decision-making mechanisms. Not everything needs to be handled by 'Brussels' but what is decided there requires democratic

legitimacy. What matters, both at European and national levels, is finding ways of listening to what people are actually saying. It seems clear that, irrespective of political point scoring, there is widespread public concern about the workings of the EU. People cannot understand how it works, voters do not feel consulted or empowered, and the results are therefore vulnerable to charges of being inadequate.

Transparency and listening to citizens are of crucial importance for the future of the EU. Another important issue is recognition of and respect for diversity. Throughout its history, there was never a homogenous (Christian) Europe, and the Europe of the future will also be pluralist. In the past, Islam has helped shape culture, especially in the Iberian Peninsula and parts of the Balkans, and during the past few decades waves of immigration have brought Islam and other religions to many parts of Europe. At the same time, we see a trend of growing secularisation, especially in the western and northern part of Europe. While parts of Europe have been moving towards greater unity, diversity remains a characteristic of the continent's identity. This diversity of cultures, traditions and religious identities must be respected, cultivated and even celebrated for the EU to have a future. The Union as a "super state" is, certainly in the foreseeable future, not feasible, if it would be desirable at all. However, a Europe characterised by, and based on multiple identities would be a good basis for developing joint policies towards common issues, and for a win-win situation for all those involved. Within the EU there appears to be growing disenchantment with the way the EU has evolved in recent years, resulting in a revival of national and regional sentiment as a counterbalance. However, outside its current borders the appeal of a community of peace, relative prosperity, human rights, and rule of law is more popular than ever. There seems to be a popularity paradox: while the EU has lost its charm for its own citizens, those outside are literally dying to join. From the protesters in Maidan Square in Kiev in 2014 who died in a hail of bullets wearing EU twelve star armbands, to the many refugees taking to unseaworthy boats to cross the sea to reach our shores and taking a gamble that they or their close kin may only reach us in a shroud, and those camped out in cold and unsanitary conditions at the (for the moment temporarily) closed internal borders of Schengen. The level of devotion to, and desperation for reaching Europe or joining the EU is at an all-time high.

IX. A community of values and a soul searching project

Believe me; we will not succeed with Europe solely on the basis of legal expertise or economic ability. If we do not succeed in giving Europe a soul . . . give it a spirit and a meaning, then we failed.

Jacques Delors

In 1990, the then president of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, felt that Europe needed a soul. Since then, churches on the continent have reflected on what this might mean and how they could contribute to this quest. Some 25 years later, the statement of Jacques Delors is very relevant again. Europe, and especially the EU, is faced with a number of interacting crises which pose serious challenges to the Union as a "community of values." Together, the values on which the EU is built—peace, solidarity, equality, unity in diversity, democracy, justice, the rule of law, human rights, freedom and ecological sustainability—could be seen as parts of a European soul. The Lisbon Treaty, signed in 2007, also clearly states that the European Union is based on shared values. Member Churches of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) have always seen it as part of their task to promote values like those mentioned above in the public space, both at the European and national levels.

Whereas CEC acknowledges that much can and should be done to improve the functioning of the European Union, we do not consider this a reason to disavow joint European cooperation, coordination and policy making as such. We are also convinced that the solution to the problems of the EU is not to draw up our bridges and hide behind our national borders. Europe tried that in the past, with disastrous consequences. Rather, the way forward is to search for ways to make

the EU function better on the basis of the common values mentioned above. A community is not only based on laws and on rules but is also undergirded by values. In the case of the European Union these values are not exclusively Christian but they are deeply rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition. The emphasis on values was one of the reasons why CEC and a number of individual churches in Europe appreciated the Lisbon Treaty. Shared vision, objectives and values that go beyond the sphere of economics are of substantial importance. A search for common European values is indeed the road leading to goals that cannot be reached merely by economic growth, increased competition and institutional reforms. Jointly owned values can bring enthusiasm, trust, spirit, and vision to the European project. At the same time they can bring the Union closer to its citizens while also promoting a sense of identity.

Another way to bring the Union closer to its citizens is through vigorous application of the concept of subsidiarity. Subsidiarity—to make decisions at levels as closely as possible to citizens—is not the opposite of solidarity. On the contrary: subsidiarity relies on the idea that every institutional level within the Union should do what it does best and on the basis of solidarity. Only such an approach could enhance accountability and legitimacy; two concepts that, according to many people, are short in supply in the EU today.

X. The role of churches and of CEC in Europe

“The intrinsic value of each individual human being is of fundamental importance for the churches.”

In discussing which values should underpin society at large in Europe, churches should apply a certain degree of modesty, being mindful of the ambiguous role religion has played in Europe during the past 2000 years. This role cannot be discussed in any detail here but some keywords to keep in mind are: crusades, wars over and between religions, inquisition, patriarchal structures, persecutions of witches, colonisation, slave trade and slavery, racism and fascism.

At the same time, it should not be forgotten that churches, in the course of history, have also played a positive role in European society, for example through their pastoral and diaconal work, setting up and running healthcare systems, hospitals, schools and universities. At times, churches and Christians have also played a prophetic role, such as in the case of issuing the Barmen Confession in 1934 against the Nazi regime and its attempt to implement the *Führerprinzip* (leader principle) in the protestant church in Germany. Churches have also often been in the forefront of the fight against racism and militarism, in caring for refugees and asylum seekers, the struggle against poverty and exclusion and more recently, in the quest for ecological sustainability. The intrinsic value of each individual human being is of fundamental importance for the churches. This reflects the understanding of the human being as made in the image of God and as a counterpart to God (Genesis 1:27).

From their own experience, churches recognise the tensions and conflicts that can accompany diversity. In their best moments, churches have overcome such conflicts because the sense of belonging was stronger than striving for disunity. In those instances, they put more emphasis on what unites than on what separates the churches. It is on the basis of this experience and conviction that churches united in the Conference of European Churches dare to address issues related to unity in diversity on the continent of Europe. At the same time we are aware that Europe builds its identity in relation with other parts of the world. In this view, cooperation of churches with the World Council of Churches and developing of relations with regional ecumenical organisations in other parts of the world is of immense importance.

XI. Faith in action: Diaconia and koinonia

In a period where European values like solidarity and human rights are under threat, it is important that churches in Europe show, through their actions, how such values can be put into

practice. Statements on issues like future of Europe are only credible if churches themselves try to live up to the values they promote. From the very beginning of the Church, Christians have pursued their social agenda through diaconia (Eph 6,7; Cor 16, 12-18; Phil 2,30).⁷ It is a fundamental attribute of the Church and a guiding motive for its mission. Diaconia is based on communication and participation, directed toward wider society, and toward the fundamental economic, political and cultural structures that shape life.

An important function of diaconia is working both with, and on behalf of, those whom it seeks to serve. This role encompasses identifying and challenging injustices at every level—locally, nationally and internationally. It means addressing the huge disparities of income and wealth which mark the globalised economy. But it also means advocating the cause of those who are excluded because of race, gender, faith, ability or age. It points to the need for all to change in order that all may live in dignity. Diaconia also has a ministry and a duty to address all injustices covering the vast territory from unjust use of force to injustices against nature and God's Creation. Such activity goes back to the foundational values of modern culture and rests on our fundamental belief in the equality of people before God, and of people as made in the image of God."

In church history, Christian diaconia (service) has always been understood as a contribution to the creation of a fellowship (koinonia) of solidarity, in the sense of a koinonia of persons (1 John 1,7). It is an expression of the fullness of the body of Christ. From a theological perspective, diaconia is inseparably related to koinonia. A local church can only fully realise itself when it is a serving, diaconal church. As the prominent 20th century theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) pointed out: *"The Church is only the Church when it is there for other people."*

The need for a common witness in civil society has been echoed on several occasions by the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), Heinrich Bedford-Strohm. He stresses that *"public theology and public witness, need to get much attention in our work."*⁹ This view is echoed and focussed on Europe by Archbishop Michael, former metropolitan of Austria, who stated that, in critical times, churches are more than ever called to *"project their values in a broad society and exhort the responsible politicians to respect the human person created in the image and likeness of God. In order to do so, the churches should demonstrate an ecumenical responsibility, a common Christian testimony and a cross-confessional witness within Europe."*

XII. Europe: A common home

European identity has always presented paradoxical traits. On the one hand, the history of our continent has demonstrated a shared sense of belonging; on the other, it is equally evident that for many centuries the shared patrimony has always manifested itself in quite a plurality of forms, cultures, and languages.

CEC Member Churches come from diverse cultures and traditions. We know from experience that it can be difficult to deal with differences. At the same time, however, we know that we should not be afraid of differences and that 'unity in diversity' can be a successful formula if we focus on common concerns, respect and even treasure different identities by providing space for diversity and focusing on that which unites us. CEC observes with concern that in the Europe of today common values are less in evidence. The EU today is at a stage in its history where serious questions can be asked about its identity as a community of values. Soul searching is required anew and with renewed intensity. Europe needs more than a common market. It has to include the question of identity and social relationships. The neglect of their importance over the past years led to Europe's current empty heart, driven by economic competitiveness and profit, equipping students and young professionals with high profile science degrees, but forgetting about a bigger goal than success and profit. The EU and Europe as a whole need once again a clear explanation about what its roots and goals are. The desire for more sovereignty can be

understood but, in the view of CEC, sovereignty should not mean selfishness and closing one's eye for the legitimate needs of other people who are in need of solidarity. Over and above sovereignty, CEC prefers koinonia to be the leading concept in the debate about the future of Europe. Koinonia focuses on how genuine communities, which are based on sharing, service and solidarity, can be created. Even in communities based on the concept of koinonia, conflicts and difference of interests can be part of daily life. If the spirit of koinonia prevails, such conflicting interests can be fruitful because they are handled in a responsible way. Cultural and political diversity in Europe should not necessarily be seen as a threat to its unity but as a potential treasure and enrichment. The creation of a common Europe must not be based on an expansion of one particular lifestyle nor on imposing standards of one part of the continent on another."

The process of developing a common Europe is certainly a process of developing a sense of European community . . . The true value of 'community' should be once again given importance in the European context. A natural feature of the 'community' is life in solidarity."

"The biblical notion of multiple identities as it is introduced in Paul's letter to the Romans is something that can be further developed especially in the conditions on our continent."

Fruitful European cooperation can only succeed if it is based on dialogue, mutual understanding, respect for each other's history and culture, and learning from each other.

"The EU and, indeed, Europe as a whole, need to be clearly recognisable as a community of values; it must sharpen its social profile and give young people better prospects for their future. Europe needs to be a continent of reconciled diversity which confronts its worldwide responsibility."

For CEC, the choice for the future of the EU is not between a full blown federalist system on the one hand, and a patchwork of independent states hiding behind their draw bridges on the other hand. Each issue and policy has to be judged on its own merit in order to assess where 'more Europe' or 'less Europe' is necessary. The main criterion for making such an assessment is the question which policy is most effective for enhancing the quality of life in Europe and in the world as a whole. In this broader view, an EU operating at different speeds is feasible. An EU *à la carte* with members continually opting in and out of joint policies is not desirable and would be unworkable. It is possible, however, that a core group of Member States decides to pursue further integration of policies while others prefer not to go along. For example, in our view not all Member States have to agree on detailed political issues such as joint monetary policies. It is, nevertheless, crucial that policy decisions are based on fundamental values that unite countries in the EU. Such values should not only apply to the EU but should extend to Europe as a whole. To address the current pressing problems in Europe and to respond to all the practical challenges, we need vision and commitment, and the cooperation of all available forces; public and private sector, politicians and civil society, and also churches and others motivated by faith and conviction. Cooperation and dialogue are essential principles in this respect. In order for our dialogue to become more than a mere cultural exchange, politicians of the European Union, as well as the wider public were reminded by the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew during his visit to the European Parliament that *"there must be a more profound understanding of the absolute interdependence—not merely of states and political and economic actors – but the interdependence of every single human person with every other single human person."*

For CEC it is crucial to strive for peace with justice in Europe, as citizens and as churches. We can achieve this only when we join forces. The process of joint policy making based on shared fundamental values, which has been promoted by many churches and their members must continue to serve its purpose—the fruitful management of relations between interdependent nations to the benefit of the common good in Europe and in the world. The churches in Europe, with their broad-based membership and ecumenical structures, are in a good position to

encourage people to strive for a common European house with commonly shared values as its foundation.

In 1989 at the first European Ecumenical Assembly in Basel, the concept of a “common European home” played an important role. The Basel Assembly set up something like “house rules” for the European home:

- the principle of the equality of all who live there, whether strong or weak;
- recognition of such values as freedom, justice, tolerance, solidarity, participation;
- a positive attitude towards adherents of different religions, cultures and world views;
- dialogue instead of resolving conflicts through violence.

CEC believes that these words are still very relevant for the situation in which Europe finds itself today. They continue to inspire us, both as a vision and as an urgent agenda for the citizens and the politicians on our continent. Europe needs both vision, as well as clear acknowledgment of our roots. The Union needs to provide for people living there a home offering the place, as well as the space. In this regard it may be helpful to make a distinction, proposed by the former President of the EU Council Herman van Rompuy:

A place—‘ein Ort’—brings protection, stability and belonging. It is ‘ein Heim’, where people feel at home. A space on the other hand ‘ein Raum,’ opens up movement and possibilities. It is about direction, speed and time. As human beings, we need both. A space in which we fly, and a nest we can call ours. We are very simple creatures! With Europe, the focus has always been on space.

The European Union cannot survive as a beacon of hope if the law of the market is the only guiding principle. We have to recapture the spirit that inspired the founding fathers – including reconciliation, forgiveness, solidarity, human dignity with equal respect for all. The multiple crises that Europe is currently facing are not as great as those suffered after the end of the Second World War, and yet competing interests seem to be paralysing an effective common response. A society that is not a community will fall apart. We call upon all people of goodwill, whatever their creed or conviction to join in the struggle to overcome petty differences and be willing to put the best interests of the continent as a whole—both its longstanding citizens and those arriving as new residents—before sectional interest and afford to all the dignity merited by fellow human beings, creatures made in the image and likeness of God.

XIII. Our call

In evaluating the current challenges people in Europe have to face, in the spirit of the Charta Oecumenica and responding to the call to a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace of the World Council of Churches, the governing board of CEC:

- Issues this open letter to churches in Europe on the situation in the continent, which outlines its vision of Europe with regard to the EU and shares its concerns about the future of this historical European project in the present circumstances;
- Reaffirms its understanding of the EU as a community of values pursuing human dignity, peace, reconciliation, justice, the rule of law, democracy, the respect for human rights, solidarity and sustainability;
- Encourages CEC Member Churches and all Christians in Europe to step up efforts in making such Christian virtues as respect for others, solidarity, diaconia and building up a community more visible in public life;
- Calls churches in Europe to an intensive discussion on the future of our continent, the role of the European Union and our vision of shared values.

Invites CEC Member Churches and partner organisations to react to this letter; considering the specific situation in different parts of the continent, we invite churches to be part of a

consultative and participatory process leading to the next CEC Assembly in 2018. We appreciate receiving your contributions highlighting your specific experiences and concerns related to the European project. We also appreciate reflection on the role of the churches in this historical moment, and in shaping the vision of a European home, as well as questions arising from these discussions. Churches may also wish to articulate their expectations of CEC in this regard by the end of December 2016.

ANNEX: Fundamental values of the European Union

Article 2

The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.

Article 3

- 1. The Union's aim is to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples.*
- 2. The Union shall offer its citizens an area of freedom, security and justice without internal frontiers, in which the free movement of persons is ensured in conjunction with appropriate measures with respect to external border controls, asylum, immigration and the prevention and combating of crime.*
- 3. The Union shall . . . combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child. It shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States. It shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced.*
- 5. In its relations with the wider world, the Union shall uphold and promote its values and interests and contribute to the protection of its citizens. It shall contribute to peace, security, the sustainable development of the Earth, solidarity and mutual respect among peoples, free and fair trade, eradication of poverty and the protection of human rights, in particular the rights of the child, as well as to the strict observance and the development of international law, including respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter.*

Treaty on European Union



Friends World Committee
for Consultation
EUROPE & MIDDLE EAST SECTION

A European Quaker contribution following the Conference of European Churches (CEC) open letter on the future of Europe - May 2017

1. Responding to the CEC open letter

1.1 We wish to express our gratitude to CEC for taking this initiative, and encouraging the consideration of the important issue of the future of Europe to its member churches, and to those, like us, who are organisations in partnership. We value the opportunity for dialogue with fellow Christians, and hope earnestly for a higher public profile for our individual communities' Gospel-led witness, especially when this takes different forms and emphases. Christians should witness to the value of diversity in the way we work together, and reach out to others with respect and humility.

1.2 We particularly value that the open letter *"reaffirms its understanding of the EU as a community of values pursuing human dignity, peace, reconciliation, justice, the rule of law, democracy, the respect for human rights, solidarity and sustainability"*, and that it *"encourages CEC Member Churches and all Christians in Europe to step up efforts in making such Christian virtues as respect for others, solidarity, diaconia and building up a community more visible in public life."* We appreciate the theological principles of Christian diaconia (service) and koinonia (fellowship) as the foundational blocks for community life, from the small scale, to the largest, always affirming the value of every human life as bearing God's image, and of life itself in all its forms, as the expression of God's creative power. In Quaker experience and practice we have come to understand our peace witness as a special form of diaconia. Because of the understanding of and commitment to the nonviolent call of the Gospel, Quakers renounce violence and military force. Thus we have been freed to explore other ways of dealing with conflict, crisis and develop methods of interventions and conflict transformation that help to uphold the peace witness.

1.3 We share the commitment in the Charta Oecumenica that *"On the basis of our Christian faith, we work towards a humane, socially conscious Europe, in which human rights and the basic values of peace, justice, freedom, tolerance, participation and solidarity prevail."* We also agree that it is not enough to look solely to the countries within the European Union, but it is necessary to look beyond the current borders to understand the pressures the European project is facing and its context. We agree that global economic and environmental problems need globally coordinated solutions, but are only too painfully aware of how difficult it is to achieve such co-ordination – we would like to offer some examples of our own experience in this respect further on in this response.

1.4 It is true that *"different opinions exist on specific policy questions and on how to organise ourselves in Europe. Also on bigger issues such as to stay in or leave the European Union or the Council of Europe, Christians find themselves on different sides of the divide"*. We experience this within our own Quaker communities in different countries in Europe. However, we believe that no compromise can be made on issues of *"respect for human dignity, peace, justice, freedom, tolerance, participation, solidarity, and sustainability"*. These values are enshrined in Articles 2 (The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-

discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail) and 3 (1. The Union's aim is to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples) of the consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union.

1.5 In the coming years Europe will have to decide on the course of security and defence issues including their place in its relationships with other parts of the world. Churches should be adding their voice to these discussions and speak truth to power – the truth that is laid before us in the Sermon on the Mount. The message reminds us that hatred destroys both the fabric of society and the soul of its people. It is a tested practical knowledge through the churches diaconia at home and abroad and would be an answer to the cry of our fellow Christian brothers and sisters living in areas of conflict to hold our governments and companies accountable.

1.6 We must indeed acknowledge that the economic model embraced and developed by the European Union has not benefitted all citizens, and has resulted in feelings of disenchantment that are fuelling current discontent and more nationalistic perspectives. The growing gap between rich and poor within countries and between countries in Europe and more so at a global level has caused deep unrest and is experienced as unjust. These needs have to be addressed, and hope for a better, more egalitarian system, fostered¹. We wish to see the development and advocacy of new and radically different economic models that put the well-being of human and other forms of life, and the preservation of the environment, ahead of exploitation for profit.

1.7 We concur that the European Union has brought about a number of important achievements, including *“the unification of most of Europe in peace and freedom since the Second World War and for the first time since the Middle Ages, is a major historical achievement. Also in the area of human rights, progress has been made. The European Convention on Human Rights, the European Court of Human Rights, the European Social Charter and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights are all milestones for Europe. The European project, in its various manifestations, stands as an example of what can be done through reconciliation, stability and prosperity.”*

1.8 We welcome the statement that *“Solidarity with refugees is a consequence of Christian faith and our commitment to working towards a just and compassionate society. Therefore, the present predicament of refugees and migrants is a matter of grave concern for CEC.”* The situation is of great concern to Quakers too, who have been engaging at different levels and in different countries with direct relief and advocacy on behalf of refugees and migrants. We as people of faith have a special responsibility to point to reasons for migration and flight in Europe, which more often than not cause and contribute to an increase in arms production and trade, unjust economic structures and climate change, mostly caused by the wealthy few.

1.9 We agree that *“Transparency and listening to citizens are of crucial importance for the future of Europe.”* Furthermore, we advocate personal responsibility in educating oneself on the reality of public life. We commend to other CEC churches the Advice of Friends in Britain, who remind each other: *“Remember your responsibilities as a citizen for the conduct of local, national, and international affairs. Do not shrink from the time and effort your involvement may demand.”* Attitudes towards European institutions are often based on prejudice and mistrust, even ignorance. When this is the case, such attitudes need to be challenged. This is not to deny the democratic deficits which still exist and need to be addressed, as the CEC open letter acknowledges.

1.10 We welcome the recognition of the contribution of non-Christian faith traditions and philosophies, particularly Judaism and Islam, to the culture and development of Europe historically, and in the present. Inter-faith solidarity and community building need to be explicit commitments and this should not stop with the Abrahamic faiths.

1.11 We share the concerns about the increasing reliance by the European Union on military solutions to the problems that beset it. In addition, we are very worried about the European Union's support for the arms industry through the European Defence Action

¹ Cf Dommen, Edward, "A Peaceable Economy", Geneva, World Council of Churches, 2014.

Plan, and its moves to divert €100 million EUR from the Development Cooperation Instrument to the Instrument for Stability and Peace for the military capacity building of forces in countries with ineffective governance and poor human rights adherence records. We are very wary of moves to prioritise the armament sector within the new Skills Agenda for Europe. This would see a most unwelcome change in the use of the Erasmus programme, thus far limited to civilian projects. These developments are alarming, and run contrary to the founding principles of the European Union and Council of Europe. Quakers in Switzerland, for instance, are also concerned about the evident willingness of the Swiss authorities to tolerate the export of Swiss arms to places where they feed armed conflict and where there is the possibility that corruption may be involved. We hope churches will speak out against these.

1.12 As well as saying no to these developments, it is our responsibility to advocate for more resources in people and funds to develop shared security concepts that eschew militarism and are rooted in Human Rights, participation, and respect for each other and in the development of effective peacebuilding and non-military shared security structures.

2. An analysis of issues from a Quaker perspective

2.1 As we look forward to the 15th CEC General Assembly in Novi Sad, Serbia, in 2018, we encourage greater clarity in differentiating the European Union from the Council of Europe. The latter is a broader institution, which hopefully will endure even if the political entity of the European Union weakens or flounders. It is the principles of dialogue, cooperation, human rights and solidarity that we would wish to focus on at all times, and not necessarily the institutions themselves. In other words, the institutions are only worthy of support if they deliver on their principles, and not in their own right.

2.2 We have a concern about the current use of 'terrorism' and 'terror' as terms of summary condemnation. They serve to justify increasing and intrusive "security" measures and to normalise the erosion of civil liberties. 'Terrorism' feeds on alienation, humiliation, and exclusion; it can be an expression of despair. It can be seen as the outcome of a failure of *koinonia* on the part of society as a whole. It calls for more energetic *diakonia* to foster an inclusion which rejoices in diversity. Thorough application of the founding values of the Council of Europe recapitulated in Article 2 of the Consolidated Version of the Treaty of the European Union (see paragraph 1.4) can provide an essential antidote to this form of organised violence. The European institutions and governments at all levels down to local authorities must ensure that there is the funding and civil-space for community groups, lay or religious, social services, educators and families to support such *diakonia*. The forces which drive people to resort to violence can be structural, rooted in social and economic injustice. Some forms of them are European in scope; indeed the EU has in the past applied policies which dealt effectively with some of them, with the aid of the structural and other regional and sectoral funds. Such policies should be pursued with renewed vigour.

2.3 We also believe that there needs to be a much more explicit reference to the Churches' historical complicity in, and contemporary tendency to foster, nationalism, touched on in the paragraph that mentions *"some keywords to keep in mind are: crusades, wars over and between religions, inquisition, patriarchal structures, persecutions of witches, colonisation, slave trade and slavery, racism and fascism."* We believe a stronger call to repentance is needed here, and the acceptance of mutual accountability in our only too human fallibility.

2.4 We cannot escape our complicity in the many terrible wars that devastated our continent for centuries. We know that many churches have increasingly identified with their home nations more deeply than with the Universal calling of the Gospel. This should be a source of deep sadness for those who stand in the spirit of the Reformation. It is our firm conviction that the Church must be permitted to be the Church. It must serve no other imperative than those declared by Christ. A national Church always falls into the

trap that Christians are born rather than made. We cannot 'become Christians' through some national culture or formal set of institutions, but only if we accept the leadings of Christ (1 Cor. 1:30). Yet the ultimate failure of the Reformation to truly renew the Church can be seen in the way the early Protestant Churches (those of Luther and Calvin respectively) continued to accept the compatibility of Christianity with the use of repressive force. We hope that the current ecumenical endeavour, and true servant leadership from Catholic, Orthodox and Reformed churches, will finally eschew force, and embrace fully Jesus' nonviolent teachings.

2.5 Another sad legacy of Christianity in Europe has been the scourge of anti-Semitism, which we cannot ignore, as its toxic consequences haunt Europe and the Middle East to this day. Once again we need acknowledgement, repentance, and a commitment not to repeat the errors of the past, by, for instance, allowing Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, xenophobia and racism to go unchallenged in our day.

3. A contribution from Quaker tradition and experience

3.1 Peace lies at the root of Quaker beliefs as it does of the European ideal. The Quaker movement originated in Britain in the middle of the 17th century, at a time of civil war that was largely religious in its expression but which was entwined with economic exploitation and ethnic oppression. The Quaker Peace Declaration following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 is a founding document of this religious movement. "*We do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ, which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight and war against any{person} with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world.*" We would wholeheartedly welcome the repudiation of "Just War" doctrines by fellow Christians in favour of articulating and practising "Just Peace", and non-violence, as recently expressed by his Holiness Pope Francis in his message for the celebration of the 50th World Day of Peace on 1st January 2017. This statement could not be more timely, and we unite with it most gladly.

3.2 In the early 18th century the French Royal Army conducted a war of repression against the Protestants in the Cévennes. Some of the Protestants published an open letter to their fellows, "Remember that the crimes and violence of your enemies do not authorise you to commit similar ones... Blind as you are, have you forgotten that the real Christian is never permitted to return evil for evil... Know that it is to violate all civil and moral laws to use arms against your enemies, and that it is an enormous crime and an unimaginable blasphemy to dare to claim that you are inspired by the Holy Spirit in all your works..."² The document is one of the founding narratives of French Quakers.

3.3 William Penn, one of the founding figures of the Quaker movement, published in 1693 *An essay towards the present and future peace of Europe by the establishment of an European dyet, parliament or estates*. In this pioneering piece, a European parliament was to serve as a means towards the peace of Europe. A few years later a French translation appeared. It may well have been the work of L'abbé de St Pierre as part of the preparations for his own *Project to render peace perpetual in Europe*, published in 1713-16³. St Pierre's work in due course inspired Kant's *Perpetual Peace* (1795).

3.4 Penn's Diet was composed of representatives of States. His contemporary and correlative John Bellers drafted a similar proposal in his *Some Reasons for a European State*⁴. No less aware than Penn of the active role of religion in European wars, Bellers explicitly included in his scheme "*a proposal for a general council or convocation of all the different religious persuasions in Christendom ... that they may be good*

²Translated by Edouard Dommen from a document entitled *Letter written on 7 January 1703 by the fanatics of Languedoc nicknamed Quakers to the Protestants in revolt or Camisards of the Cévennes*.

³ Daniel Sabbagh, *William Penn et l'Abbe de Saint-Pierre: Le Chaînon Manquant*, "Revue de synthèse", janvier- mars 1997, pp. 83-105

⁴ Roderick Pace & Peter van den Dungen, *John Bellers, Some Reasons for an European State. Facsimile of the original essay of 1710*. Tercentenary edition, Valletta, Midsea Books, 2010

subjects and neighbours, though of different apprehensions of the way to heaven"⁵.

3.5 For Quakers, Europe is not just a market, however common; it aspires to be a community at peace at least with itself and, better still, with the world.

4. Some examples of faithful witness

4.1 Although we are a very small community, we have often felt called to pioneer radical, counter-cultural witness. Issues such as gender equality, anti-slavery, social reform, conscientious objection to war, have been some of the defining campaigns of our history. As well as issues, a way of working that is distinctive has been developed over the centuries. This centres on presence, the establishment, for instance, of Quaker houses in hostile locations to facilitate mutual dialogue. So it was that a Quaker presence was established in Berlin in the 1920s, which has endured through the Weimer Republic, the Nazi regime and later found itself on the Eastern side of the Berlin wall. Similarly, Quaker House in Geneva, established in the days of the League of Nations, is now part of the Quaker United Nations Offices (the other being in New York), which facilitates encounters between diplomats of different countries and persuasions to build confidence and mutual trust. Other examples are Quaker House in Belfast, which played an important role in the years that led to the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland, Friends House Moscow, and the Quaker schools that are still at the heart of the community in Brummana, Lebanon, and Ramallah, Palestine.

4.2 Part of our contribution to the European-level polity has been Quaker House Brussels, home of the Quaker Council for European Affairs for almost 40 years. Through our presence we encourage realistic and practical alternatives to violent policies. The culture of EU foreign policy institutions is increasingly one of 'crisis management' rather than prevention. One opportunity that the EU could seize is to integrate conflict prevention into EU policies on trade and international development. The EU has diplomatic power through EU delegations across the world. However, EU delegations rarely prioritise conflict prevention, or have sufficient related expertise within their staff.

4.3 These experiences are grounded in the invitation by one of our founders, George Fox, to "*answer that of God in everyone*", that is, to avoid the tendency to oppose and demonise those who are different from ourselves, or with whom we disagree, but always acknowledge the divine presence and dignity they embody, and the potential for grace and transformation to manifest in them, as in us. Trust in God's loving purposes, not the power of our arguments, is the way to connect even with the most unlikely of interlocutors.

4.4 As well as a vision for the future of Europe, we need to have connectivity to enable us to respond to foreseen and unforeseen developments. Quakers have a long-established practice of identifying and testing concerns, and acting on these to bring relief in emergency situations. An example of this is the Kindertransport⁵ in 1938/39, which was undertaken by Friends and others at the same time as the Europe & Middle East Section of Friends World Committee for Consultation was established. This illustrates the practical use of a network, and reaching out to other human beings in need, regardless of faith affiliation.

4.5 We offer the fruit of this experience in the humble hope that it may inspire and encourage, just as we ourselves are inspired and encouraged by the many faithful lives and practices from other traditions, and the natural peace of all humanity.

⁵ The two foregoing paragraphs draw liberally on Peter van den Dungen, "The plans for European peace by Quaker authors William Penn (1693) and John Bellers (1710) "*Araucaria. Revista Iberoamericana de Filosofía, Política y Humanidades*, ano 16, no 32. Segundo semestre de 2014. Pp. 53-67

⁶<http://www.quaker.org.uk/about-quakers/our-history/quakers-and-the-kindertransport>

5. A statement of what we wish to see emerge from this ecumenical work

5.1 We hope that this may be indeed a *"Kairos moment - a crucial moment of truth - for the future of Europe."* We believe that the Christian churches can and should offer hope and leadership in living in the light of "Good News" of liberation from economic and ideological oppression, from fear and mistrust of others, from reliance on violence as the means of settling the legitimate and inevitable tensions of living together in community. As people of faith we need to pledge our loyalty and worship only to our Creator, and expose the false gods of markets, wealth at the expense of exploitation of others and the earth's resources, security through military might. We need to recognise, encourage and uphold each other, and offer the hand of friendship to those of other faiths - or none - especially when they are in need of protection and succour. We must praise, preserve and build on those institutions that further God's purposes for creation, and resist, bravely if necessary, the powers that would oppress our fellow human beings, even at significant cost to ourselves. We must follow Jesus' example of love in action, and learn from his life the reality and cost of obedience to God.

Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations

9-11 June 2017

QCCIR/17/48 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation

Further to minute QCCIR/17/26, Rachel Muers has reviewed Ben Wood's paper for QCCIR to use on the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, and Ben has produced a revised version (QCCIR 2017 06 13).

We gratefully accept the paper, and, as per the previous minute, agree to send it to Meeting for Sufferings for information and to both the Lutheran Council of Great Britain and the Evangelical Lutherans. We encourage Ben to offer the paper for publication in Friends Quarterly. We forward this minute along with the paper to Meeting for Sufferings.

Rowena Loverance
Clerk

To: Meeting for Sufferings

The 500th anniversary of the Reformation: A Quaker Response

1. What we Cherish

"Unless I am convicted of error by the testimony of Scripture or (since I put no trust in the unsupported authority of Pope or councils, since it is plain that they have often erred and often contradicted themselves) by manifest reasoning, I stand convicted by the Scriptures to which I have appealed, and my conscience is taken captive by God's word, I cannot and will not recant anything, for to act against our conscience is neither safe for us, nor open to us".

When Luther uttered these words at the Diet of Worms in 1521, he had already unleashed a spiritual revolution that was reshaping the Western world. At the heart of Luther's radical message was the inalienable nature of Christian conscience. Neither Popes nor bishops nor councils could replace a believer's individual commitment before God. For Luther one was not born a Christian, but must become one: working out one's 'salvation with fear and trembling' (Phil 2:12). In this respect, the awful mystery of the Cross always overshadowed Luther's life. To be a Christian in Luther's demanding sense involved more than adopting rituals or outward codes, it required the crucifixion of an older self, so that a new perfected personality might be 'raised in glory'. In this way, Quakers are children of the Reformation. Like Luther, it was an earth-shattering return to Scripture which convinced George Fox that a better vision of the Christian life was possible. Like Luther, Fox was not content with half-baked answers to his spiritual struggle. Both could not be consoled by special works of ritual piety but desired to receive inward wholeness from the grace of God. Yet Quakers' fidelity to the spirit of the Reformation runs deeper still. Following in the steps of the Reformers, Fox affirmed that the true Church referred to the priesthood of all believers. In Fox's affirmation that 'the righteousness of Christ.... is the royal garment of the royal priesthood, which everyone must put on' (QF&P 19:31) early Friends aligned themselves with the early Reformation's desire to remake the Church as a true people of God- all made equal in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28). Alongside our commitment to the priesthood of all believers, we cherish Luther's insistence on the ordinariness of holiness. For Quakers, all parts of life present opportunities for the worship of God. Like Luther, we do not believe that the world is something from which we should retreat, but an opportunity for service. Our witness to the peace of Christ demands that we respond to the cries of a world in need.

2. Mourning the Failures of the Reformation

Despite Luther's emancipatory call to Christian liberty, within less than a generation the Reformation's call for the spiritual renewal of the Church had become the plaything of secular power. Kings and princes used the newly formed Protestant movement as a means of keeping themselves on their thrones and in control of their territories. In England, the 1534 Act of Supremacy gave the monarchy control of the English Church. A Christianity once constrained by papal decree became quickly ensnared by monarchy and civic authority. This should be a source of deep sadness for those who stand in the spirit of the Reformation. It is our firm conviction that the Church must be permitted to be the Church. It must serve no other imperative than those declared by Christ.

It is our conviction that we cannot 'become Christians' through some national culture or formal set of institutions, but only if we accept the leadings of Christ at work in our conscience (1 Cor. 1:30). Yet the ultimate failure of the Reformation truly to renew the Church can be seen in the way that the early Protestant Churches (those of Luther and Calvin respectively) continued to accept the compatibility of Christianity with the use of repressive force. While Luther had argued that spiritual liberty was the rightful inheritance of every Christian, he did not believe that this should apply to the world beyond the Church's walls. Luther not only accepted that Christians could wield the sword, but argued that followers of Jesus should faithfully serve civic authorities. As the Augsburg Confession of 1530 later codified this position, it was right and proper for Christians to 'to award just punishments, to engage in just wars' and to serve as soldiers' (Article XVI). As Quakers, we believe that bloodshed and brutality are inconsistent with the Spirit of Christ. To affirm the joy of Bethlehem and the agony of Golgotha means calling the world to account for its faithlessness in the face of war and violence. To live in the shadow of this proclamation must mean the repudiation of force by the disciples of Jesus. As Quakers, our first loyalty is not to the state but to the Prince of Peace (Is. 9:6). As the Declaration of the Harmless and Innocent People of God (1660) expressed this commitment: 'as for the kingdoms of this world, we cannot covet them, much less can we fight for them, but we do earnestly desire and wait, that by the word of God's power and its effectual operation in the hearts of men the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ, that he might rule and reign in men by his spirit and truth' (QF&P 23.04).

3. Renewing the Quaker Way, Renewing the Reformation

When surveying our history, Quakers are painfully aware of the failures of our ancestors in articulating a generous vision for Christ's Church. First-generation Friends guarded their status as a chosen people zealously, condemning Catholics as well as Protestants for their faithlessness. In the intensity of their proclamation, early Quakers often spoke harshly and cruelly to those who sought God's healing through other churches. While Quakers have always recognised the presence of God in the faith of others, factional certitude has repeatedly severed Friends from the gracefulness of our own witness. Today, we sincerely repent of all past words and actions which have bred hatred and mistrust. Quakers today rejoice in the diversity of Christian witness. Through prayerful listening and shared experience, we have come to recognise the Spirit at work in diverse Christian communities. By treasuring the insights of other Christian traditions, we seek more than a narrow procedural agreement between confessions, but earnestly desire greater ecclesial unity based on prayer, faithfulness, and action. By extending hands of friendship we search for signs of the coming of Christ's Kingdom. But we know that peace is not a pearl easily won. Recognising one another as part of one great Christian household requires attention, imagination, empathy, learning and mutual care in every generation. Words alone, no matter how fine, cannot do this but only actions which spring from a tender conscience.

There can be no faithful Reformation without reconciliation between the followers of Jesus. Reformation should never be a position for its own sake but must deepen the life of the whole Church. While Quakers continue to draw inspiration from the example of the Reformers, we are fundamentally rooted in the spirit-led simplicity of the Apostolic witness. This, we believe, is the common treasure of all Christians and the only basis for unity. The kind of fellowship which will ultimately heal the breaches of the Reformation will not be one based on doctrines and councils, but grounded in the

realisation of the true Christian commonwealth: 'devoted...to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer' (Acts 2.42-44). What does this apostolic legacy demand of us? To follow Jesus means living in the likeness of Jesus. It is simply not possible to separate the life of faith from outwardly obeying the Spirit of Christ. To be a Church renewed means service since 'faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead' (Js.2:17). There is no faithful Gospel without looking 'after orphans and widows in their distress' (Js. 1:27) nor is there any freedom in Jesus without committing ourselves to the ways of peace and justice. If the Reformation task calls us to be faithful to the Church's moral mission, it also asks of us, in the spirit of the Reformers, what is essential in our life together as Christians? Is it our modes of worship, theories of atonement, our understanding of sacramentality, or something deeper? The Apostle Paul offers us a challenging reply: 'One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God'(Rom 14:5-6). Quakers believe that the only rule adequate for all the followers of Jesus is the discipline of mutual care. As Jesus told his disciples: 'I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you' (John 15:15). No creed or doctrinal formulation can be a substitute for this concord between souls. As the Quaker Christopher Story rightly observed in 1737: 'The unity of Christians never did nor ever will or can stand in uniformity of thought and opinion, but in Christian love only' (QF&P, 27.12).

4. Our Future and the Spirit of the Reformation

What is the future of the Reformation? Quakers desire a Church which is always reformed and reforming. What does this reforming spirit demand of us in 2017? We know that our present task is to make our Quaker Way a fit vessel of service for the whole people of God. Yet we are also painfully aware that we frequently evade this demanding commission. It is easier for us to sink into the familiarity of our local community and a self-contained vision of 'Quakerism' than to appreciate the convictions of others. While the spiritual cocoon is always superficially attractive, it is nothing but a spiritual dead-end. In this commemoration year, let us begin with empty hands, attentive to what others can give; and as we remember the past, let us reaffirm our common heritage of faith and action. What is the first step? When we worship together, we must not treat our holy silence as ours alone, but as an instrument of love and trust set aside for the whole Church. When we worship with others we should bring these same virtues with us, in the hope that they will nurture the enduring bonds of peace. The language of 'Reformation' is useless if it does not build up catholicity. In this genuinely ecumenical spirit, we ought to ask: how might my words and actions nourish those who are not present? Are there any wounds that my life as a Quaker can heal? Taking such questions seriously means holding ourselves accountable for those attitudes that prevent us living in a spirit of unity. Yet such reaffirmation must begin with each of us.

In recent times, many Quakers have found the language of 'Church' either spiritually barren or personally painful. Many Friends now feel intensely disconnected from the language of Scripture and increasingly estranged from the wider Christian tradition. This has led to a corresponding loss of confidence among Friends in sharing the insights of the Quaker Way with others. If we are to be a truly reformed community

(both faithful and self-critical) we will need to overcome our fear of Church-language and listen lovingly to the experiences of other Christians, even when we disagree. This may not be easy for those Friends who feel profoundly wounded by their negative experiences of other confessions. Such scars frequently run deep and cannot be cured all at once. Yet, without vulnerability, we cannot truly listen and we cannot truly love. How then shall we move forward? The practice of listening need not be a source of distress or fear, if we feel assured by our shared Quaker story. Indeed, such openness cannot fail to refresh such a story, for in understanding what others find of value, we may yet rediscover what it is that we ourselves most treasure.

Ben Wood

QPSWCC 17/54 Annual report from QCEA
(QPSWCC 2017 09 12)

Elaine Green, BYM Representative on the Quaker Council for European Affairs, has presented an annual report on QCEA's work.

We are pleased to receive, for the first time, such a report. We are encouraged to hear that the new governance arrangements, leadership and strategy appear to be working well. We affirm the focus of QCEA programme work on peace and human rights (in particular migrant and child rights) in light of current challenges in the European context. We welcome the report on Child Immigration Detention in Europe (add link). We recognize the importance of QCEA's role in supporting a European Quaker voice and presence. We welcome the closer links with QUNO that are developing. We note the strategic shift from campaigning towards growing QCEA's quiet diplomacy work, and look forward to hearing about how this progresses. We were interested to hear about the "Ministry of Presence" and cultural activities, which are supporting quiet diplomacy and awareness raising.

We have discussed links and collaboration between QPSW and QCEA, in particular on peace and security, and are pleased to hear that working relations are positive.

We send this minute to the General Assembly of QCEA and Meeting for Sufferings.

Charlotte Seymour-Smith
Clerk

First Annual Report from the Quaker Council for European Affairs to QPSW Central Committee

At its meeting in December 2016, Meeting for Sufferings received a report from me describing the revised constitutional arrangements of the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) and agreed a revised set of reporting and information processes as follows:

The Representatives and appointed Executive Committee members jointly compile the triennial report to Meeting for Sufferings on the life of QCEA

The Representatives and appointed Executive Committee members are all from time to time available to talk to groups or meetings of British Quakers about QCEA and to support fund-raising

Matters related to funding and property are not handled by either the Representatives or the appointed members of Council/Executive Committee but are managed between the Executive Committee, Friends House and BYM Trustees, and

The Representatives report to QPSW CC on an annual basis, timing to be agreed, to update the Committee on the work progress of QCEA within the portfolios of peace and human rights.

This is the first of such annual reports and covers the operational period since the General Assembly held in October 2016.

Resources

To give Friends a feel for the level of current resourcing of the QCEA work, 50% of funding comes from member yearly meetings and individual European Friends. British Friends contribute around 25% of total income, Dutch Friends 15%, German Friends 2.5% and smaller contributions from Ireland and Switzerland. Other yearly meetings contribute as best they can, although their own membership numbers are quite low. For programmed work, QCEA has secured a grant from the JRCT at 16% of total income, and is in receipt of an anonymous individual contribution which is conditional upon securing matched funding from other sources; this presents a challenge and QCEA is appealing to all Friends for additional contributions to meet this condition.

In staffing terms, current income now funds 3.8 FTE, with a further 1.1 FTE funded from reserves.

Focus and accountability

The Executive Committee (responsible for day-to-day governance and equivalent to a Trustee body) has held a WebEx meeting almost every month to maintain the management oversight of the work within a business strategy which it completed for approval by the General Assembly in April 2017. There are 8 members of the Executive Committee, appointed by the General Assembly, but not necessarily from amongst there number. British Friends Elaine Green, Oliver Robertson and Linda Craig are members of the Committee in their own right, i.e. not accountable to BYM, although Elaine Green is also a BYM representative to the General Assembly. At its meeting in March 2017, Meeting for Sufferings nominated Joshua Habgood-Coote as a second BYM representative to the General Assembly.

Overall, the new pan-European governance bodies are working effectively, sensitive to the changing political context. The failure of Le Pen to win the French election slowed the populist momentum, but serious concerns remain about the fragmentation of European cooperation and reducing compliance with human rights standards, especially in Hungary, Poland and Russia. In practice, this means increasing investment in militarism at Europe's borders and an expansion of immigration detention.

Our work programmes of Peace and Human Rights are clear, focused and responding to pressing needs felt by the constituent yearly meetings represented in the General Assembly.

The work, focussed on impact, with documented outputs and outcomes, is delivered through advocacy, quiet diplomacy and other cultural activities. The time and staff commitment is broadly distributed as 40% to Advocacy, 40% to Quiet Diplomacy with the remainder to what we might call our "Ministry of Presence" in Brussels, including social and cultural involvement.

Advocacy has involved:

Contact with 40 governments to obtain new information on the extent of child immigration and detention in Europe; the findings of this work are published in a full report (tabled for information)

Twelve-month project (now half way through) to write a policy-maker manual on nonviolent alternatives to security policy;

A published guide to European Convention on Human Rights and assessment of how well each country is protecting human rights;

Supporting the direct engagement of European Friends; for example, 20 Friends meeting the UK representation in Strasbourg and highlighting the failure to implement European Court judgement on prisoner voting;

Hosting in Quaker House a peacebuilding event organised by the Chair of European Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee;

Regular meetings with policy makers from institutions and European governments on a wide range of issues; frequently a lone voice for nonviolent policies in Brussels, and in meetings and consultations.

Quiet Diplomacy has involved:

In January 2017. Bringing together US, South Korea and European governments to talk about nonviolent engagement with North Korea. Quaker returning from human rights visit to Crimea shared findings/reflections in Brussels

A series of diplomatic conversations including the EU and NATO on Rethinking the Securitisation of European migration policy;

A series of events bringing faith groups together to share concerns about militarisation with EU policy makers;

A series of events bringing peace and development organisations together to discuss

resilience of communities suffering from conflict, climate and economic pressure together with EU policy makers;

Reconciliation week with young people from Serbia and Croatia, and their governments.

Ministry of Presence (including Cultural Activities) has involved:

Sold-out Arms Trade film event attended by MEPs;

A number of dinners organised by Syrian refugee which brought policy-makers into contact with affected communities; the group has now developed into legal entity and set up in catering with own premises;

European-level membership of the European Network Against Arms Trade, and hosts a staff member alongside the QCEA team;

Quaker House also as the Brussels office for the Non-violent Peace Force, and place of worship for Jewish and Unitarian groups;

Organised Alternatives to Violence Project and nonviolent communication courses; A range of support for other Quaker activity, such as providing European and Middle-East Young Friends secretariat, events for the Amari Play Centre (Palestine) and support for Quakers witnessing at the Paris arms fair (Eurostat).

In conclusion, there is sound reason to believe that the new constitution and strategic approach is working effectively to position QCEA strongly within a changing Europe. The participant yearly meetings have their own ethical concerns and witness priorities, and the General Assembly has redirected its work towards how to make a difference that supports all those authentic concerns grounded in spiritual discernment. There is a constant need to raise funding for the continuing work on child migrants and conflict prevention.

Elaine Green, BYM Representative and Council member
September 2017

Meeting for Sufferings 2017 10 07 – Other minutes and correspondence received

Ackworth School General Meeting – School governance

Appeal Group – conclusion of appeal

Ackworth School

Introduction

In 2007, Meeting for Sufferings received proposals for the revision of the relationship between Meeting for Sufferings and Ackworth School. The proposals had been considered and accepted by the clerks of Ackworth School General Meeting and the School Committee. Minute MfS/07/03/13 records that, after 2007, Sufferings would no longer appoint representatives to Ackworth School General Meeting; or receive the School's annual report and accounts (which instead would be received instead by the General Meeting). This followed earlier decisions regarding the general relationship between BYM and Friends schools (Minute 10, 3rd March 1998 and Minute 5, 5th May 2001).

Ackworth School has recently reviewed its governance. Working with the Recording Clerk, the Ackworth School General Meeting has confirmed that BYM should no longer be regarded as the direct owner of Ackworth School and that the government of the school rests with Ackworth General Meeting. The relevant minute of Ackworth General Meeting held in 2017 follows.

For legal reasons, this needs to be noted and recorded by Meeting for Sufferings.

Ackworth School's formal relationship with Britain Yearly Meeting

Introduction

Meeting for Sufferings is asked to note alterations to the rules for government of Ackworth School, for one final time. The changes to their rules make it clear that the school is a free-standing institution, independent of the structures of Britain Yearly Meeting, although one that continues to be Quaker in outlook and governance.

Background

The relationship between the Yearly Meeting and Ackworth School has changed over time.

The school is totally separate from the charity that is Britain Yearly Meeting, and in particular the property at Ackworth is not owned by Britain Yearly Meeting: nor has it ever been. As stated in their "Rules and regulations for the Government of Ackworth School":

All property and investments belonging to the School shall be held by Trustees (or a Trust Corporation), who shall be appointed by the School Committee. Trustees need not be members of the School Committee.

However, in the rules and regulations there are still some references to Meeting for Sufferings and Britain Yearly Meeting. This includes a requirement to forward any changes to their rules to Meeting for Sufferings, which need to be noted by, but not agreed by, Meeting for Sufferings.

13. ALTERATIONS TO RULES FOR GOVERNMENT

Three months' notice of the intention to propose alterations to the Rules, with details of the proposed alterations, shall be given to the Bursar by the Clerk of School Committee and similar notice, stating that details of the proposed alterations can be

obtained from the Bursar, shall be given to the Clerks of the Area Meetings of the Religious Society of Friends in Great Britain and by advertisement in "The Friend". Such notice having been duly given General Meeting may adopt the proposed alterations with or without amendment and shall forward them to Meeting for Sufferings.

This requirement to report any alterations to Meeting for Sufferings no longer has any useful purpose.

Decisions made by Ackworth General Meeting

With the agreement and encouragement of Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, Ackworth General Meeting agreed earlier this year to change their rules. Their minute 8a ends:

"This General Meeting agrees that Britain Yearly Meeting should no longer be regarded as the direct owner of Ackworth School and that the government of the school rests with Ackworth General Meeting."

Their minute 8b gives details of the consequent changes required to their rules of government to remove the references to Britain Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings.

Minutes 8a and 8b of Ackworth General Meeting are included as an appendix to this paper.

Action required by Meeting for Sufferings

Meeting for Sufferings is asked to note the changes to their rules of government. These changes will mean that this is the last time that Meeting for Sufferings is asked to note such changes, as the governance of Ackworth School will now clearly rest with Ackworth General Meeting.

Minute of Ackworth General Meeting held 13 May 2017

8a. School Governance

We have received a minute from the working group set up to consider the governance of Ackworth School, this minute has been read and is reproduced below:

Minute of the Working Group set up by Ackworth General Meeting (minute 10a GM held 9th May 2015 & Minute 11 GM held 14th May 2016)) held 13th January 2017 at Ackworth School, concerning Governance:

The Working Group met today with Paul Parker, Recording Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) and Michael Booth, Church Government Adviser at BYM, to consider the governance of Ackworth School and in particular the relationship of the school with BYM. We have considered a raft of documents dating back to our Trust Deed of 1779 through to correspondence and minutes from Meeting for Sufferings up to 2007 regarding the schools relationship with BYM 'the Church'. We have explored the relationship between Ackworth General Meeting and the national charity of BYM and the Society of Friends in Britain more widely. We have received guidance from Paul Parker in his capacity as adviser on Church Government and from Michael Booth. Paul has agreed to send us a follow up letter listing the audit trail of documents researched and detailing his advice to Ackworth General Meeting. We are satisfied

*that BYM should now no longer be regarded as a direct 'owner' of Ackworth School and that the government of the school rests with Ackworth General Meeting. We thank Paul and Michael for offering us their expertise and advice and supporting us through this complex process. Signed: **J. Jane Wheatley, Clerk***

The clerk has received a letter from Paul Parker, Recording Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting in which he acknowledges the 'Ministry of Ackworth School since its foundation'. In his letter Paul gave a summarized audit trail of the relationship between Ackworth General Meeting and Britain Yearly Meeting. Copies of the documents that were considered by the working group and the Recording Clerk's Office are available for interested Friends to see today.

In the light of the work of the working group, together with advice from Paul Parker in his role as 'keeper and interpreter' of the regulations laid down in church governance (Quaker Faith and Practice) this General Meeting agrees that Britain Yearly Meeting should no longer be regarded as the direct owner of Ackworth School and that the government of the school rests with Ackworth General Meeting.

8b. Amendment to Rules of Government

Following the decision of this General Meeting recorded in minute 8a above we agree the following amendments to our Rules of Governance asking our school committee to note the additional request at number 4:

1. General meeting functions

1.To remove the reference to Britain Yearly Meeting from the first sentence. This will read: responsibility for government shall rest with Ackworth General Meeting whose functions shall be:

To delete item 1 (e)

To delete the final sentence

4. General Meeting: Special Meetings

To remove the reference to a Meeting for Sufferings in the first sentence, which will now, read:

The School Committee may instruct the Bursar to call a Special General Meeting when necessary.

We ask the School Committee to provide a process whereby Area Meetings could seek to call a Special General Meeting should circumstances require and bring this addition to our General Meeting in 2018.

5. School Committee: Functions

To add a sentence:

This school will have control of all assets, property and finances.

6c. School Committee: Constitution

Four former Scholars of the School, not necessarily members of the Religious Society of Friends, appointed by Ackworth General Meeting on the nomination of the Ackworth Old Scholars AGM (Appointments generally being made every year).

13. Alterations to Rules for Government

The final sentence of the paragraph will now read:

Such notice having been duly given General meeting may adopt the proposed alterations with or without amendment.

We also agree changes to the introductory paragraphs in our 'Rules and Regulations for the Government of Ackworth School' as reproduced in the introductory paper sent out to representatives in preparation for our meeting today.

We ask our clerk to send a copy of minute 8a and 8b to the Recording Clerks Office and to the Clerk of Meeting for Sufferings.

9. Incorporation

We have received a detailed background paper on the need for incorporation that will bring us into line with the other Quaker Schools and other Quaker bodies in Great Britain and provide added legal protection to members of the school committee. Two other cogent reasons for incorporation are to clarify the ownership of the school to the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI); and to clarify ownership of assets to the banks. The School Committee expects more flexibility in dealing with school finances under incorporation.

Under incorporation the school will become a Company Limited by Guarantee and will need to comply with the Companies Act 2006 and meet the requirements of the Charity Commission (Charities Act 2011), retaining its charitable status. The Articles will contain a recommendation that the Board membership should contain a majority of Quakers. Full Membership of the Company will include: All Trustees (School Committee); Clerk of Ackworth General Meeting; Assistant Clerk of Ackworth General Meeting.

The Company will continue to report to Ackworth General Meeting on an annual basis to give witness to the Quaker ethos and traditions and to maintain its links with the wider Quaker Community.

This General Meeting endorses and accepts these recommendations made by the school committee and looks forward to their report once the Incorporation process is completed. The Articles can be made available to interested Friends.

We agree to lay-down the Working Group and thank them for their work on our behalf.

J. Jane Wheatley

Clerk to Ackworth General Meeting

Appeal

Introduction

In 2016, Meeting for sufferings received an appeal made under the guidance set out in Quaker faith & practice chapter 4 (see minute MfS/16/10/16). An appeal group was formed, and appointed by MfS: Julia Aspden (North Wales AM); Andrew Clark – Chilterns AM); Gloria Dobbin (Luton & Leighton AM), John Lampen (Central England AM) and Charles West (Worcestershire & Shropshire AM).

In order to maintain confidentiality, MfS is not informed of the details, including the name of the AM concerned or of the appellant. MfS is asked to receive the following minute of the appeal group; to record that the appeal has been considered; and to lay down the group.

Meeting for Sufferings December 2016 Group

Further to minutes MfS/16/10/16, MfS/16/12/11 and MfS/17/02/11 of Meeting for Sufferings our appeal group has now considered the appeal before us and reported our findings to the appellant and the Area Meeting concerned. We would now ask that our group be laid down.

Charles West: clerk.
10 August 2017

Meeting of Friends in Wales

Meeting of Friends in Wales will be celebrating its 25th Anniversary in October. On that occasion, the meeting will be held in Newtown, Powys, with an extended shared lunch together.

Meeting for Sufferings may wish to send greetings.



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

At a meeting of

BYM Trustees

Liverpool Quaker Meeting House
Friday 9 June to Sunday 11 June 2017

Minutes

Present: David Burnell, Sarah Donaldson, James Eddington, Nick Eyre, Nick Francis (Assistant Clerk), Ingrid Greenhow (Clerk), Roy Love, David Olver, Virginia Pawlyn, Steve Pullan, Alastair Reid, Hazel Shellens, Tim Southall, Peter Ullathorne (Treasurer), Chris Willmore

In attendance:

Val Brittin, Clerk of Friends House (London) Hospitality Ltd (minutes BYMT-2017-06-10 to 12); Jocelyn Burnell, Co-clerk of Quaker Life Central Committee (minutes BYMT-2017-06-13 to 14); Helen Drewery, Head of Witness & Worship (except minute BYMT-2017-06-17); Paul Grey, Head of Operations (except minute BYMT-2017-06-17); Lisa Kiew, Head of Finance & Resources (except minute BYMT-2017-06-17); Paul Parker, Recording Clerk (except minute BYMT-2017-06-17); Juliet Prager, Deputy Recording Clerk, (except minute BYMT-2017-06-17); Charlotte Seymour-Smith, Clerk of Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee (minute BYMT-2017-06-14)

Prevented: Lynn Moseley

BYMT-2017-06-01 Welcome, agenda check, conflicts of interest check, minutes of last meeting

We will be welcoming Val Brittin, Clerk of Friends House (London) Hospitality Ltd; Jocelyn Burnell, Co-Clerk of Quaker Life Central Committee, and Charlotte Seymour-Smith, Clerk of Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee.

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 to 18 February and 31 March have been signed by the Clerk and placed in the minute book.

There are no unrecorded conflicts of interest. We confirm our agenda.

We ask Roy Love to report back to Lynn Moseley, who is prevented.
During our opening worship, we have heard read *Quaker faith & practice* 3.29.

BYMT-2017-06-02 Consent agenda (1)

(a) Minutes received

We receive the following minutes:

- QPSW Grants Group minute CG 16/43 “Report to Trustees” forwarded by Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee minute QPSWCC 17-07 (BYMT-2017-06-02a)
- Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee minutes 10-12ii17 & 26-28v17 (BYMT-2017-06-02b&c)
- Quaker Life Central Committee minutes 10-12ii17 (BYMT-2017-06d) and 2-4vi17 (BYMT-2017-06-02e)
- Quaker World Relations Committee minutes 24-25ii17& 13v17 (BYMT-2017-06-02f&g)

(b) Continued minutes

We receive the continued minutes papers (BYMT-2017-06-02h)

BYMT-2017-06-03 Consent agenda (2)

(a) Safeguarding report

We receive the Safeguarding report from Michael Booth (outgoing BYM Safeguarding Officer) (BYMT-2017-06-03a).

(b) Safeguarding policy

Further to minute BYMT-2016-06-12(a), we receive a revised safeguarding policy (BYMT-2017-06-03b), removing some unnecessary detail but making it clear that there are detailed procedural documents to be referred to.

We now approve this policy and thank Sarah Donaldson and Chris Willmore for their work on it.

(c) Meeting with auditors

We have received paper BYMT-2017-06-03c asking us to consider whether we wish to meet with the auditors in 2017.

We agree that a meeting with the auditors is not required this year.

(d) Care of personal data by BYM Trustees

We have received paper BYMT-2017-06-03d which reminds us of our responsibilities towards the personal information to which we have access in our role as Trustees.

(e) HS2

We receive paper BYMT-2017-06-03e consisting of Library Committee minute 8 and HS2 Monitoring Group minutes of their meeting held on 24 April 2017.

Library Committee asks us to take relevant action if possible so the costs of valuing the library collections in the light of risks relating to HS2 are not attributable to BYM's budget. We refer this to our HS2 monitoring group.

Minute HS2MG 04 04 “Noise Trigger Action Plan” draws our attention to the likelihood that a further detailed study of options for protecting staff on the third floor from noise and air pollution will be required.

(f) Job titles in Friends House

We receive paper BYMT-2017-06-03f containing Devon Area Meeting's minute, plus other related minutes and correspondence, detailing disquiet with the new designation of the word 'Head' for some staff at Friends House. We thank Devon Area Meeting for their interest in how the centrally-managed work is run.

The Recording Clerk will be visiting Devon Area Meeting in early July. We note that the new management meeting arrangements are due to be reviewed this year and in 2018 and that this would be a good opportunity to look at job titles. We expect to return to this matter at a later date.

(g) Appointments

We receive the nomination of James Eddington, Nick Eyre and Hazel Shellens to conduct a review of legacy funding (time-limited projects) as agreed in minute BYMT-2017-02-18 and to report to us later in 2017.

We agree to these appointments.

BYMT-2017-06-04 Recording Clerk's report

We receive the Recording Clerk's report on activity since our meeting in February, covering:

- External relations: Quaker schools; Faith-based charities/wider third sector; Visits to meetings
- Deputy Recording Clerk: Operational plan; Risk management; Management effectiveness; Impact; Quaker Recognised Bodies; Communications
- Worship and Witness: Support for Meetings; Campaigning and movement-building, Advocacy; Peacebuilding; Outreach; Sustainability
- Operations: Trading; Facilities; Interpretation; Health and safety; Community; Events; Administration
- Finance and resources: Fundraising direction and staffing; Finance team update; Systems investment plan and future capital expense requirement; HR training and induction improvements, conflict training, crisis communications, role-specific training; Property strategy; Procurement; IT ransomware; Data protection changes.

We have received the minutes of Management Meeting for 28 February, 14 and 28 March, 11 and 25 April and 23 May.

We welcome the new, more collegiate format of the Recording Clerk's report and thank our staff for their work.

BYMT-2017-06-05 Trustees' news and conference reports

We receive paper BYMT-2017-06-05 giving our activities and conferences/training attended since our meeting in February.

BYMT-2017-06-06 Finance

(a) Financial report

We receive the financial report for period 3 (BYMT-2017-06-06a).

(b) BYMT Finance & Property Committee minutes

We have received the minutes of the BYMT Finance & Property Committee meeting held on 18 May (BYMT-2017-06-06b).

(c) Epsom property disposal

We receive paper BYMT-2017-06-06c giving BYMT Finance & Property Committee minute FP17/36 concerning property in Epsom.

The property is a semi-detached bungalow in Epsom which was gifted by a Friend. It has been the practice to dispose of such properties and invest the proceeds as we do not have the internal capacity to manage properties to maximise rental income streams. We agree the disposal of 65 Eastdean Avenue, Epsom subject to written advice, including a valuation,

from a qualified surveyor before the sale is agreed, and any other requirements of the Charity Commission.

BYMT-2017-06-07 Woodbrooke-BYM memorandum of understanding

We receive paper BYMT-2017-06-07 giving the proposed memorandum of understanding with Woodbrooke to provide a framework for our working relationship, together with tabled minute 2017.32 of Woodbrooke Trustees' meeting held 2 & 3 June 2017.

Collectively, the two organisations of Woodbrooke and Britain Yearly Meeting, offer Friends a richness of learning, information, support and inspiration.

By working together we reduce the risk of both duplication of effort and in gaps occurring in supporting the needs of Friends and Meetings.

The ways we work together will be many and varied and we must always ensure that the right agreements and working practices are in place. This will help us to hold one another to account and ensure there is clarity about who does what, both within our organisations and also for Friends and Meetings.

Whilst we see the clear need to work together on projects and endeavours, we also value the independence each organisation has. We need to balance the advantages of cross fertilisation of ideas and creative tension with being open enough to allow new ideas, and new ways of working to emerge.

This memorandum of understanding provides a framework for the many working relationships that exist between aspects of the work of BYM and Woodbrooke.

We approve the memorandum of understanding with the amendments presented to us and authorise the clerks to sign it. We authorise staff to take forward work on this joint relationship, guided by the memorandum of understanding, and ask them to make triennial reports to each trustee body on the progress of the working relationship between BYM and Woodbrooke in light of the memorandum of understanding.

We find this memorandum of understanding a useful indication and example of how Quaker groups and committees can work in partnership, and hope it may be helpful to others.

We send this minute to Woodbrooke trustees.

BYMT-2017-06-08 Advocacy in Scotland

Further to minute BYMT-2017-02-11, we receive paper BYMT-2017-06-08 "Advocacy in Scotland – proposed way forward" which was forwarded to us by Management Meeting minute MtM-2017-05-09a.

We affirm the importance of the work of advocacy in Scotland as a key part of our continuing advocacy work. We also value the partnership with General Meeting for Scotland.

Management Meeting recommends that a further 3-year legacy-funded project is developed to meet BYM's continuing commitment to supporting advocacy work in Scotland. The scale of the project is anticipated to be within the delegated amount for approval by Management Meeting. We note the minute of General Meeting for Scotland Trustees' meeting held 30 May 2017 and ask the Recording Clerk to conclude a funding agreement with General Meeting for Scotland in light of this.

We also recognise the importance in general terms of the legacy project review which is to take place shortly.

BYMT-2017-06-09 Use of the phrase 'Quakers in Britain'

Further to minute BYMT-2016-06-15, we receive paper BYMT-2017-06-09 giving the background to the use of the phrase 'Quakers in Britain' and other names of our church/charity.

We note that different terms are used to describe our church and our charity, and recognise that there have been some inconsistencies and occasionally the term 'Quakers in Britain' has been used inappropriately. We also recognise the challenges that come with speaking out to different audiences, via a wide range of media. However, we are satisfied that generally staff and committees have been following the provisions set out in Quaker Faith and Practice and in Meeting for Sufferings' Speaking Out policy (MfS2014/02/05).

We thank staff for developing this clearer guidance and ask that it is used when preparing communications:

- The church is 'The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain' – or more commonly 'Quakers in Britain'
- The charity is 'Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)' – or more commonly 'Britain Yearly Meeting'
- The annual event, and the body of Quakers in attendance, is 'Britain Yearly Meeting' – or more commonly 'Yearly Meeting'.

We forward this minute, along with a paper to be prepared by the Recording Clerk's Office, to Meeting for Sufferings.

BYMT-2017-06-10 Sustainability

Val Brittin, Clerk of Friends House (London) Hospitality Ltd, joins us for this item.

We receive a paper on sustainability (BYMT-2017-06-12) which looks at the breadth of work within BYM (the charity and company) to clarify what our strategic aims are for the coming few years. We receive minute 11 of BYM Sustainability Group held 10-12 May 2017 and minutes QPSWCC 17/27 and QLCC 17.36 which refer.

We welcome the draft strategy, which focuses on three key outcomes:

- a) Quaker meetings and their members are equipped and encouraged to play their part in becoming a low-carbon, sustainable community;
- b) Governments, the private sector and all institutions are taking swifter and more radical carbon-cutting and other sustainability measures;
- c) We can demonstrate that 'our own house is in order' and, beyond that, we are seen to model excellence.

We support the general direction of the Strategy for Sustainability, recognising there may be some drafting adjustments, and will consider a final draft later this year.

BYMT-2017-06-11 Friends House (London) Hospitality Ltd

Val Brittin, Clerk of Friends House (London) Hospitality Ltd, joins us for this item.

(a) Annual report

We receive the Friends House (London) Hospitality Ltd annual report for 2016 (BYMT-2017-06-10a) covering financial performance, value and commitments, green credentials, work to support the centrally-managed work, Swarthmoor Hall, the Bookshop, communications, the future. We thank the company for its service to Britain Yearly Meeting. We welcome this report as an exemplar of what a Quaker business can be in practice, and how a successful business can live out Quaker values.

We are pleased to note that 2016 was the most successful year in ten-year history of Friends House (London) Hospitality Ltd. Notable achievements are the increased turnover of £3.7 million; Gift Aid to Britain Yearly Meeting of £817 thousand and a £1.2 million contribution to the running of Friends House. Visitor numbers reached 333,000 and sales in the Quaker Centre café reached £337 thousand. We welcome the completion of the garden and improvements to the running of the bookshop which should generate more sales and a reduced deficit.

We are delighted that Friends House has recently been awarded a Carbon Smart good certificate for reducing its carbon footprint by 29% since 2009: a significant achievement.

We welcome the investment in hospitality staff training and the collaboration with the Douglas House project.

We are encouraged to hear of the increase in sales at Swarthmoor Hall; the 10,000 visitors to the new café and the increase in the number of Quaker pilgrimages based at the hall.

Further to our minute BYMT-2014-05/06-09, we agree to establish a review group to assess how well the Hospitality Company is meeting its key objectives at Swarthmoor Hall, and ask our nominations committee to bring the names of three Trustees to our next meeting. We ask our staff to draft terms of reference for the review.

At a meeting later in the year the board and senior staff will start a process of horizon gazing to begin mapping out the next 5 to 10 years. We encourage the Hospitality Board to be bold and to look for new opportunities both for our buildings and for work with the community, and to continue to be a beacon of Quaker practice in business.

We send this minute to the board of Friends House (London) Hospitality Ltd.

(b) Minutes

We receive the minutes of Friends House (London) Hospitality Ltd for their meetings held 19 March and 4 May (BYMT-2017-06-10b&c).

BYMT-2017-06-12 Friends House restaurant

Val Brittin, Clerk of Friends House (London) Hospitality Ltd, joins us for this item.

We receive a copy of the Restaurant Review together with a copy of Management Meetings minute MtM-2017-05-05 (BYMT-2017-06-11). The paper tests to see if the Restaurant service is achieving its strategic purpose and vision, outlines some of the constraints of the current service offer and considers what change might look like if required.

We are aware of the importance of providing a place where Friends can meet, eat and talk.

We note that the restaurant, while providing a service that is appreciated by a number of stakeholders, including some staff, Quakers and the general public, incurs an annual deficit of around £60,000.

We encourage the Hospitality Board to continue exploring possible ways forward which might offer opportunities to further support Quaker work and purposes, looking at ways in which food could be provided, noting the need for careful listening to the views of Friends, staff and other customers.

BYMT-2017-06-13 Quaker Life Central Committee annual report

Jocelyn Burnell, Co-Clerk Quaker Life Central Committee joins us for this item.

We receive Quaker Life Central Committee's annual report covering its strategic plan, coping with transition, interactions with other committees, reviewing work with staff, the joint meeting with Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee and ongoing projects.

Jocelyn Burnell has given us an oral update on the most recent meeting of Quaker Life Central Committee held 2-4 June 2017.

We are pleased to hear of QLCC's continuing work on its strategic plan under the headings of the central tenets of Our Faith in the Future and that the committee is feeling more confident about its role. We are encouraged to hear of the interaction between QLCC and other committees and of the positive relationship between QLCC and BYM trustees, and we hope that a similar dialogue will develop between QLCC and Meeting for Sufferings.

We note that the committee is in a time of transition and is initiating a process of reviewing the work under its care. We recognise the success of Quaker Life Representative Council and have discussed how it feeds into the work of the Central Committee.

We receive also a paper on Ageing & Declining Membership sent to us by the Central Committee. Our minute BYMT-2016-02-24 Ageing & declining membership refers.

Acting on a request from BYM Trustees, QLCC has clarified the ways in which this issue of changing membership and attendance is being addressed. These are:

- i) Supporting Quaker meetings to do youth work, based on a vision that all young Quakers aged between 11 and 18 should have access to Quaker provision in their area. A pilot project is being developed;
- ii) Engaging Young Adult Quakers. The appointment of a legacy-funded Engaging Young Adult Quakers Project Officer will help in this;
- iii) Working with Young Families: to be launched later this year;
- iv) Pastoral care and unattached Friends (now concluded);
- v) Outreach, including an exhibition and main speaker event at the Hay Festival;
- vi) Quaker Life Representative Council in April 2017 focused on 'Quaker meeting – being worth the finding'.

We are encouraged to hear of all the work being done to address this issue. We uphold Quaker Life Central Committee and are grateful for its commitment and hard work.

We send this minute to Quaker Life Central Committee.

BYMT-2017-06-14 Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee

Jocelyn Burnell, Co-Clerk Quaker Life Central Committee, and Charlotte Seymour Smith, Clerk Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee, join us for this item.

We receive Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee's annual report covering strategic development, governance structures, reviewing and reporting, building connections with Quaker Life and key programmatic decisions.

Charlotte Seymour-Smith has updated us on the most recent meeting of QPSWCC held 26-28 May 2017.

We are pleased to note that the presence of BYM Trustees at the February meeting of QPSWCC was appreciated and encourage our link Trustees, or other Trustees as appropriate, to attend future meetings where this may be of mutual benefit.

We applaud QPSWCC's focus on priorities and streamlining their processes. We note that QPSWCC intends to replace its current reviewing and reporting cycle with a light touch system, focussing on progress towards its strategic objectives. We support QPSWCC's view that "we have talented and committed staff and we should trust them to do the work whilst ensuring that we have adequate monitoring in place to pick up any problems, as well as new opportunities" (Minute QPSWCC 16/112 refers).

We are encouraged by the wish to develop closer ties with the work of Quaker Life, seeing opportunities for real synergy between the areas of work and also recognising that the committees have distinct roles.

We note the establishment of a new Social Justice Subcommittee to encompass the work of the Crime, Community & Justice Subcommittee and forced migration.

We uphold QPSWCC in its work and are grateful for its commitment and hard work.

We send this minute to Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee.

BYMT-2017-06-15 Yearly Meeting Gathering Preparation

We have discussed our participation in Yearly Meeting Gathering at the University of Warwick.

BYMT-2017-06-16 Reviewing the meeting

We have reviewed the meeting.

BYMT-2017-06-17 Time without staff

We have spent time without staff.

BYMT-2017-06-18 Minute of thanks

We have enjoyed meeting together at Liverpool Meeting House, joining Friends from Liverpool Meeting and other local meetings for tea on Friday afternoon, and meeting together in worship on Sunday. We thank Liverpool Friends and their staff for their warm hospitality.

BYMT-2017-06-19 Concluding minute

We part, hoping to meet again on 22 September 2017 at Friends House, London.

Ingrid Greenhow
Clerk

Use of the phrase 'Quakers in Britain'

This paper brings back to Meeting for Sufferings the matter raised by Cambridgeshire AM, about the use of the phrase 'Quakers in Britain'. Minute MfS/16/04/13 refers.

This paper contains, first the minute recorded by Trustees in June; then a full background paper. The original minute from Cambridgeshire AM is included for reference as an appendix.

At a meeting of BYM Trustees held 9-11 June 2017

BYMT-2017-06-09 Use of the phrase 'Quakers in Britain'

Further to minute BYMT-2016-06-15, we receive paper BYMT-2017-06-09 giving the background to the use of the phrase 'Quakers in Britain' and other names of our church/charity.

We note that different terms are used to describe our church and our charity, and recognise that there have been some inconsistencies and occasionally the term 'Quakers in Britain' has been used inappropriately. We also recognise the challenges that come with speaking out to different audiences, via a wide range of media. However, we are satisfied that generally staff and committees have been following the provisions set out in Quaker Faith and Practice and in Meeting for Sufferings' Speaking Out policy (MfS2014/02/05).

We thank staff for developing this clearer guidance and ask that it is used when preparing communications:

- The church is 'The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain' – or more commonly 'Quakers in Britain'
- The charity is 'Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)' – or more commonly 'Britain Yearly Meeting'
- The annual event, and the body of Quakers in attendance, is 'Britain Yearly Meeting' – or more commonly 'Yearly Meeting'.

We forward this minute, along with a paper to be prepared by the Recording Clerk's Office, to Meeting for Sufferings.



Ingrid Greenhow
Clerk

Use of the phrase 'Quakers in Britain'

1. Introduction

This paper takes forward Cambridgeshire AM's concern about the use of the phrase 'Quakers in Britain'.

The Recording Clerk's Office is grateful to Cambridgeshire Area Meeting for raising this matter. We are clear that the term 'Quakers in Britain' can appropriately be used for public statements (on the basis of previous guidance from Meeting for Sufferings). At the same time, we have been helped to identify some inconsistencies and inappropriate use of the term, leading to a review and clarified guidance for staff.

2. Background

Cambridgeshire AM sent a minute to Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) in November 2015 – the full minute is copied below: Appendix A. The AM expressed concern about the use of the term 'Quakers in Britain' (rather than 'Britain Yearly Meeting') for official and public declarations, especially press releases, and in communications from staff.

The points made by Cambridgeshire AM were:

- The formal title should be used: Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
- The phrase 'Quakers in Britain' is:
 - 'rather cosy'
 - means nothing
 - has no official standing
 - is misleading
- The way we describe ourselves can impact on the way others perceive us.
- Staff and others should use more discipline when speaking out to the public or to official bodies.

MfS sent the minute to Trustees (MfS/16/04/13), whose minute (BYMT 2016/06/15) recorded:

We see connections between the matters raised in this minute and the developing work on our communications strategy which takes into account the intended audiences and objectives for BYM's communications.

Clarity about the identity of the organisation and the authority under which its communications are made is important. Meeting for Sufferings has already approved a Speaking Out policy for the whole Yearly Meeting.

We ask the communications strategy to be accompanied by a clear statement of how the various terms are used.

We will return to this matter when we consider the communications strategy in September.

3. What happens now

Speaking out

Overall responsibility for speaking out lies with our Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings:

Britain Yearly Meeting in session is the final constitutional authority of the Religious Society of Friends in England, Scotland, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

Quaker faith and practice 6.02 (part)

Meeting for Sufferings is the standing representative body entrusted with the general care of matters affecting Britain Yearly Meeting and, in the intervals between Yearly Meetings, the making of decisions and the issuing of statements in the name of Britain Yearly Meeting.

... The functions of Meeting for Sufferings are: ...

b) to issue public statements in the name of Britain Yearly Meeting;

Quaker faith and practice 7.02 (part)

In 2012, Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) considered Advocacy/Speaking out at two meetings, and decided to establishing a Speaking Out Group to review our current policies on advocacy and speaking out. The Group, comprising Janet Quilley (Wensleydale and Swaledale AM) and Julia Bush (Northamptonshire AM) and John Lampen (Central England AM, representing QPSWCC) reported back in 2014, with a paper titled 'Speaking on behalf of Quakers in Britain'.

Based on this report, MfS approved a Speaking Out policy in 2014 (min. MfS/2014/02/05). (The full policy is available on request; and as requested by Meeting for Sufferings there is a shorter version providing [advice for meetings](#). See also appendix B.)

Section 3.28 of Quaker faith and practice provides guidance about this, and explains in what circumstances the Recording Clerk is authorised to issue statements.

Yearly Meeting statements issued on behalf of Friends in Britain require the full discernment of Meeting for Sufferings or Yearly Meeting in session and will be recognised as carrying the full authority of the yearly meeting. Other public statements or comments may be called for at short notice in response to current events using the full range of media. In such cases, the Recording Clerk, in consultation with appropriate clerks of Yearly Meeting, Meeting for Sufferings or Trustees, is authorised by Meeting for Sufferings to issue such a message, as long as it is in line with an established and discerned Quaker position. Press releases publicising the yearly meeting's core work are authorised by the Recording Clerk.

Quaker faith and practice 3.28 (part)

Different names

The name of our charity, registered with the Charity Commission, is 'Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)'.

In practice, other names are in current usage: 'Britain Yearly Meeting', 'Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain', 'Religious Society of Friends' and 'Quakers in Britain'.

These names are variously used to refer to our faith, globally; to our faith body (church) nationally; and to our charitable body. They are used in sometimes interchangeable ways, in publications (published by BYM and by others); on the BYM website; and in Quaker faith and practice.

What guidance exists?

An internal house style guide for staff and committees, prepared some years ago, and updated periodically by staff, sets out guidelines on usage, although these are not always applied consistently. Please refer to appendix C.

When is 'Quakers in Britain' used?

The BYM website (www.quaker.org.uk) has used the heading "Quakers in Britain" for at least the last decade. More recently, "Quakers in Britain" has become more prevalent, including in telephone answering protocols and email sign-offs. It is also used for our Facebook page and Twitter account.

At present, public statements released on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting or Meeting for Sufferings commonly start with the words 'Quakers in Britain...'.

The phrase 'Quakers in Britain' only appears once in Quaker faith and practice. Section 7.07, Meeting for Sufferings Constitution: advice to area meetings as to nominations begins:

In nominating Friends to serve on Meeting for Sufferings, area meetings are reminded of the variety and weight of the business which comes before that meeting, which must have the spiritual authority to speak in the name of Quakers in Britain.

A Framework For Action 2009-2014, adopted by Meeting for Sufferings in 2008, included the name – in this case, it was deliberately intended to refer to all Quakers in Britain:

We hope that at both local and national level Quakers in Britain will be bolder in using the media.

4. Issues for consideration

Public statements

The use of 'Quakers in Britain' for public statements is based on a recognition that at times it is appropriate for central bodies and/or their employees to speak for the whole Quaker community in Britain. This is covered in the book of discipline, and provided for in the Speaking Out policy and the guidelines:

- Yearly Meeting statements issued on behalf of Friends in Britain require the full discernment of Meeting for Sufferings or Yearly Meeting in session and are recognised as carrying the full authority of the yearly meeting.
- Other public statements or comments may be made by the Recording Clerk, in consultation with appropriate clerks of Yearly Meeting, Meeting for Sufferings or Trustees, as long as they are in line with an established and discerned Quaker position.
- Press releases publicising the yearly meeting's core work are authorised by the Recording Clerk.

When statements are made on behalf of the whole church these can be made on behalf Quakers in Britain (i.e. on behalf of the whole church) by the Recording Clerk or MfS, the term 'Quakers in Britain' is appropriate. However, there may be instances when the charity makes a statement – perhaps related to legal compliance – when the term should not be used.

Legal responsibilities

When referring to the legal entity of the organisation, in some instances it may be more accurate and appropriate to use the name of the charity.

- *Property – for example, ownership or copyright of a photo or other piece of creative or intellectual property should be credited to 'Britain Yearly Meeting – because only the organisation BYM can legally hold property.*
- *Employees – all staff are employed by BYM to work on behalf of all Quakers in Britain; so sometimes BYM employees are described in terms of working for Quakers in Britain – e.g. 'Paul Parker, Recording Clerk for Quakers in Britain'. However, 'Quakers in Britain' is not an organisation or a workplace, so it may not be appropriate to describe someone as 'X officer at Quakers in Britain'.*

Partnerships

Britain Yearly Meeting can enter partnerships with other charities or NGOs, and from time to time make joint statements (including signing joint letters). A partnership agreement or MoU would use the term 'Britain Yearly Meeting. However, for joint statements we often use 'Quakers in Britain' because it is more recognisable by non-Quakers.

Transparency, accuracy and clarity

It is not unusual for organisations to have a formal name which is longer or different from the name by which they are commonly known. For Quakers it is important to be transparent in doing so, and to be clear what is referred to.

In media releases, it may be helpful make the status of BYM clear in the accompanying Notes to Editors.

'Quakers in Britain' has become a shorthand partly because there is no convenient geographical term for the area we cover – England, Wales, Scotland, the Channel Islands and Isle of Man (see appendix D).

The term “Quakers in Britain” can lead to some odd grammatical constructions when used to describe the organisation. Generally, it should be treated as plural, a descriptive phrase for the Quaker community in Britain, rather than singular, as it is not the official title of either the church or the charity.

Recently, there was some unhappiness among a (very small) number of Quakers who read the phrase ‘Quakers in Britain has made a submission...’. The point made was primarily about incorrect grammar (which diverted the reader from the content) but one Friend wrote ‘it looked to me as if our staff were already using the expression as the official title of the organisation/entity called The Religious Society of Friends’.

Implications of not using ‘Quakers in Britain’

The term “Quakers in Britain” is more readily understood by the wider public than ‘Britain Yearly Meeting’ (and its variants).

Changing the usage, and particularly the website, would have significant operational implications for the organisation.

There would also be implications for existing advocacy work. Meeting for Sufferings has been urging BYM to speak out on behalf of Quakers, and a change of ‘branding’ might well damage our ability to do this and lead to us being less recognised in the public square.

5. Actions

Clarification of use of the term ‘Quakers in Britain

Trustees have now confirmed a clearer statement of how the various terms are used:

- The *church* is ‘The Religious Society of Friends (**Quakers**) in Britain’ – or more commonly ‘Quakers in Britain’
- The *charity* is ‘**Britain Yearly Meeting** of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)’ – or more commonly ‘Britain Yearly Meeting’
- The *annual event*, and the body of Quakers in attendance, is ‘Britain **Yearly Meeting**’ – or more commonly ‘Yearly Meeting’.

Modify our practice

Based on this guidance:

- a) The ‘Quick style guide’ and also the complete editorial style guide (which is a fairly specialist document that is used mostly by publications staff and freelances) have been revised. The style guide will be kept under review.
- b) Relevant staff have been informed about the new guidance.
- c) In media releases, ‘Notes for Editors’ has been amended.

Thanks to Cambridgeshire AM

The Recording Clerk’s Office is grateful to Cambridgeshire AM for having raised this matter. It has been helpful to clarify that the term ‘Quakers in Britain’ can appropriately be used for public statements (as MfS had previously confirmed). At

the same time, we have identified some inconsistencies and inappropriate use of the term, and been able to review and clarify the guidance for staff.

Juliet Prager
Deputy Recording Clerk
September 2017

Appendix - Cambridgeshire AM held 12 November 2015

Minute 15.11.77 – regarding the phrase Quakers in Britain

Further to minute 15.10.70 Trish Carn, Janet Scott and the Area Meeting Clerks have corresponded together to prepare a paper that outlines our concern regarding the use of the phrase Quakers in Britain by the Communications Department at Friends House. This paper has been read and is reproduced below:

Trish Carn has brought a concern to our Area Meeting regarding the apparently recurring use of the phrase 'Quakers in Britain' for official and public declarations issuing from central office, rather than our official and registered title of Britain Yearly Meeting.

On further research this would seem to be used primarily by the Communications department, located in Friends House, for press releases.

We note that staff are also signing themselves as Quakers in Britain rather than using the name of their employer, Britain Yearly Meeting.

We are puzzled and perturbed that the title Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), which is the name of our Religious Society as registered with the Charity Commission and laid out in our governing document appears to be being dropped and replaced with this rather cosy phrase which means nothing and has no official standing. What is more, we would agree with our Friend Trish Carn that this phrase "Quakers in Britain" is misleading.

We play with words at our peril. We have already ceased to be 'Friends of Truth' always a high order of course, maybe the challenge was too great (!) and we frequently drop the 'religious' a further hidden danger that could lead those unfamiliar with our organisation to think we are just a friendly society.

Please can rather more discipline be applied when we are speaking out to the public or to official bodies?

This Area Meeting sends this minute to Meeting for Sufferings hoping that it will endorse this concern and consider how best to progress it.

J. Jane Wheatley
Clerk

BYM Communications and Speaking Out

In 2012, Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) spent some time considering the topic 'Speaking out in public on behalf of Friends'. At the time, it was clear that there was an appetite among Friends for our voice to be more widely heard on certain issues. As the Recording Clerk Paul Parker, wrote in a paper for MfS:

We are surrounded by a world of media and politics which now works at a new pace, and in new ways. The shift from traditional print and broadcast media to online publications, blogs, audio or video clips, *twitter* and *facebook* is placing new pressures on our ability to respond on behalf of Quakers in Britain in a timely way. We should not allow ourselves to be rushed into a less than well-considered, discerning response; but neither should we allow ourselves to be left behind by circumstance, and our voice consequently not heard as we might wish.

MfS set up a Speaking Out Group: it drafted a policy document which was adopted by MfS in February 2014. At MfS' request, staff produced a shorter version for use by Friends and by local and area meetings – this is copied in the following papers, and the full policy (8 pages) is available on request.

One of the aspirations of Our Faith in the Future is that:

Quakers are well-known and widely understood

We are active in our local communities, reaching out in friendship, making more use of our meeting houses for events and for renting or lending out. All members are ready and equipped to explain our Quaker way confidently and clearly to anyone who asks, as well as to speak publicly on issues of concern. We share our practices as appropriate and make full use of relevant media to reach out widely. In an increasingly divided world, we try to offer 'patterns and examples' of a caring community.

Arrangements Group felt now the right time for MfS to be reminded of the policy, and to reflect on how it is being implemented both by centrally-managed work and in local and area meetings.

Representatives are encouraged to prepare by finding out more about what's being done within your AM (or group or committee) in relation to external communications. What channels work best for you? Do you have a website or use social media? Do you engage with local press or radio? Have you organised public witness or spoken with elected representatives? Have you benefitted from the support available from BYM staff? You may wish to bring examples to share with others.

At this meeting, we will hear from the Recording Clerk and from Jane Dawson, BYM's Head of External Communications.

Appendix

Speaking Out As Quakers, Advice for Meetings

Communicating publicly about our faith and the testimonies is an essential part of our lives and something all Quakers are encouraged to do. The following advice will help local and area meetings speak out confidently.

Meeting for Sufferings (MfS), the body that represents Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) between sessions, has agreed a Speaking Out policy. This is a short summary. The policy can be read in full at www.quaker.org.uk/sites/default/files/MfS-2014-02-04-Speaking-Out.pdf.

The Speaking Out policy identifies two categories of speaking out:

- a Yearly Meeting statement, which defines a new position on an area of concern;
- public statements and comments, which are addressed primarily to the wider world.

Yearly Meeting statements

Yearly Meeting statements establish an agreed text about a Quaker position on a matter of concern and are agreed by BYM or MfS. These may be in the form of a minute or a stand-alone statement.

If a Yearly Meeting statement is used by a local group, it is important to make clear where the BYM statement ends and where comment begins.

Yearly Meeting statements establish and explain the witness of Friends on an issue of concern. They arise from a process of discernment by Yearly Meeting in session or by Meeting for Sufferings and are primarily addressed to Friends in Britain Yearly Meeting.

Such witness arises from the leadings of the Holy Spirit and is tested in the gathered meeting. It is an expression of love and truth. To be convincing, it must arise from our engagement with the issue addressed as well as from our testimonies.

When rightly discerned, we believe our Yearly Meeting statements will convey a spiritual quality that reflects their origin. It follows that these statements should not be strident, recriminatory, judge-mental, self-righteous, clichéd, or ill-informed. Neither should they be narrowly prescriptive.

Our Yearly Meeting statements are addressed first and foremost to Friends, to state the Yearly Meeting's discerned position, to explain how we came to it and to encourage all Friends to unite with it. When we speak out to the world, our voice is not always heard, but our Yearly Meeting statements should nevertheless galvanise us to put our convictions into action.

Public statements and comments

Public statements and comments may take the form of a press release, letter to the media, broadcast interview or online comment. They will use language appropriate to the particular audience. They also have a role in keeping other Quakers informed.

If an area or local meeting makes its own statement, it should include the name of the meeting in the title or opening text. It should not be implied that they are statements from Quakers in general or of Quakers in Britain.

Quaker meetings are advised to set up procedures for making public statements and comments. This will involve consultation among a specified group, including the clerk of the meeting. When speaking locally Quakers are encouraged to draw on statements and comments made by Quakers in Britain and to contact the Advocacy & Public Relationships team, who can support and advise on the most effective use of different types of media.

When communicating publicly on behalf of Quakers, the views expressed must have been discerned by an appropriate Quaker body.

Public statements and comments are made by BYM staff and committees to explain Quaker witness in more specific terms. They are also made by Quaker meetings at local level, by special interest groups and by individual Friends. They are primarily addressed to the wider world, though they also play an important role in keeping Friends informed.

The general principles that guide BYM statements are also relevant to public statements. Such comments should be grounded in discernment and should convey a spiritual quality that reflects their Quaker origin. They contribute our religious witness to the evolving discourse around current events and broader issues of world affairs, using language that will be widely understood by non-Quakers.

Public statements and comments should follow the basic principles indicated in Quaker faith & practice. Friends must be careful to explain the provenance of their statements and must not claim to speak on behalf of BYM without explicit authority. Nevertheless, the message should derive from agreed policy of Quakers in Britain (normally evidenced by minutes, agreed BYM statements and/or Quaker faith and practice). There should be sufficient current or recent concern among the body of Friends it is speaking for to justify speaking out on this subject. The way it is expressed should conform with Quaker values. No area of Quaker work should be jeopardised by the message. If this is a possibility, those considering making the statement should ensure that it can be justified. Meetings, groups and individuals are encouraged to seek advice from relevant Friends and to consult BYM's Advocacy & Public Relationships team.

Who speaks out?

When a meeting issues a public statement or comment, the clerk will normally sign it, unless another arrangement has been agreed. Whoever signs will be involved in the decision-making process and must always agree to their name being used.

Non-public messages

Letters to elected representatives or others with influence should not be publicised by the sender, unless it states it is an open letter. However, in practice even private letters may be quoted by recipients.

Taking action

Quakers who participate in marches or vigils should be aware they may be identified as Quaker spokespeople.

When taking part in a demonstration, an organised Quaker group will be clear about the objectives, that the organiser/s is one that Quakers support and the event is intended to be peaceful.

Some may wish to participate in nonviolent direct action. If there is an intention to break the laws of the state for conscience's sake, participation by any Quaker should be tested with their worshipping group. If a Quaker group trains or supports actions intended to break the law, this should be tested by their responsible body and trustees.

Joint statements are those which BYM (or another Quaker body) supports alongside other bodies. Quakers often have a share in the drafting of such statements, which are addressed to the wider world and/or to agencies responsible for delivering relevant policy.

Joint statements make a necessary contribution to Quaker action. Statements on behalf of Quakers in Britain are subject to careful scrutiny by BYM staff, using a checklist authorised by BYM. Joint statements will only be endorsed when we are willing to support all their messages and to share a platform with all co-signatories, when language and tone are acceptable to Friends, and when we are confident that such statements will not harm other Quaker work that may be going on quietly. Joint statements are reported to the relevant BYM committees, to which they may also be referred for a further process of discernment

Reflections on Yearly Meeting Gathering 2017

Meeting for Sufferings generally spends some time reflecting on Yearly Meeting, at the next meeting.

Yearly Meeting Gathering was held in Coventry at the University of Warwick from 29 July to 5 August 2017. The full minutes can be found online:

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/ym/documents-2>

The website also has videos of key introductions and lectures.

Meeting for Sufferings may wish to reflect generally on the event. Two matters were specifically sent to Meeting for Sufferings:

- Minute 23 – asking Meeting for Sufferings to undertake a review of Committee on Clerks
- Minute 38 – asking Meeting for Sufferings to look at diversity and seek wider participation within our local and national meetings and structures

The following sections in this paper introduce these two matters.

Review of Committee on Clerks

In the minute copied below, Yearly Meeting asks Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) to review Committee on Clerks' manner of working revise their Terms of Reference.

The Committee on Clerks is a Yearly Meeting committee, responsible for considering the short-, medium- and long-term clerkship needs of the Yearly Meeting. It acts as the nominating body for clerks of Yearly Meeting, Meeting for Sufferings and Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees. More information is in *Quaker faith and practice* 6.19.

MfS is asked to establish a short-term review group of three Friends. The Recording Clerk will be asked to bring Terms of Reference, and the Central Nominations Committee to bring names, for MfS to approve.

YEARLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS) IN BRITAIN

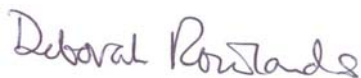
At the Yearly Meeting Gathering held in Coventry at the University of Warwick, 29 July – 5 August 2017

Minute 23: Proposed Revisions to the Terms of Reference of Committee on Clerks Britain Yearly Meeting Committee on Clerks have asked for a review of their manner of working and for a revision of their Terms of Reference. We ask Meeting for Sufferings to take this forward, ensuring that the review includes how to nurture potential Clerks and Treasurer and the relationship between Central Nominations Committee and the Committee on Clerks, bringing new Terms of Reference to Yearly Meeting 2019.

Committee on Clerks have also asked for some minor revisions to be made to their existing terms of reference. The proposed revised Terms of Reference are at Appendix V of *Agenda and notes - Documents in advance part 1*.

We accept these terms of reference.

Signed



Deborah Rowlands
Clerk

Diversity

Yearly Meeting 2017's minute 38 drew together the consideration of a full week of YM sessions considering 'Living out our faith in the world'. It's a long minute, copied in full at the end of this note.

One paragraph was sent specifically to Meeting for Sufferings:

We have heard the call to examine our own diversity, particularly in our committee and organisational structure, locally and nationally. Diversity has several key dimensions and more may emerge in the future. We ask Meeting for Sufferings to look at how we can remove barriers and actively seek wider participation in the full life of our meetings, paying particular attention to race and age diversity and to keep Yearly Meeting informed in their annual report.

This is not a subject that can or should be rushed. Arrangements Group suggests that the bodies that belong to Meeting for Sufferings to reflect in the coming months, allowing time for that to happen before we return to this next year.

The next part of the paper, written by the Deputy Recording Clerk following discussion with Arrangements Group, is intended to help Meeting for Sufferings start its consideration.

Quaker Meetings – loving, inclusive and all-age?

Yearly Meeting's call relates directly to one of the aspirations in Our Faith in the Future:

Quaker communities are loving, inclusive and all-age

All are heard, valued and supported both in our needs and our leadings. Everyone's contribution is accepted according to their gifts and resources. All are welcomed and included. There are clear and effective ways of working together on shared concerns. Fellowship and fun strengthen the bonds between us, enhancing a loving community.

The YM minute refers to 'our committee and organisational structure', which is a helpful starting point. At the same time, we won't be able to increase diversity in committees and the organisational structure without addressing wider issues including membership, outreach, our local and national structures, and roles in meetings.

The minute refers to race and age diversity. In different gatherings, Friends are also thinking about sexuality, gender identity, disability, class and economic inequality. Nobody has 'one identity' and it will be helpful to think broadly and openly.

This work calls for an open, inclusive and flexible approach – which probably doesn't mean turning to our traditional method of setting up a small committee of 'well-known' Friends and asking them to come up with proposals.

We aren't at the start of this journey, and we'll be able to draw on what's already been done. There are many different experiences both within the Society and elsewhere. We may be able to draw on the experiences of other faith groups, and of other Yearly Meetings around the world. BYM Trustees may need to consider allocating resources. Whatever processes we use, they need to be both challenging and loving. It will need careful thinking and planning as well as spiritual guidance.

We could suggest that Friends start by considering some simple questions:

- In what ways is your Meeting (or committee, or group) already diverse?
- In what ways could it be more diverse?
- What would help it become more diverse? What are the opportunities and barriers?

This will enable Area Meetings, central and standing committees, YFGM, Meeting of Friends in Wales and General Meeting for Scotland, as well as BYM Trustees, to reflect in their own way and time and to report back.

Ideas and suggestions are already emerging. I'm happy to collect them, and to share or forward them, in ways that can help an open, flexible and shared exploration. I'll also be glad to work with Arrangements Group to support Meeting for Sufferings as it takes this work forward.

Juliet Prager
Deputy Recording Clerk
September 2018

YEARLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS) IN BRITAIN

At the Yearly Meeting Gathering held in Coventry at the University of Warwick, 29 July – 5 August 2017

Minute 38: Living out our faith in the world: working with others to make a difference.

What does it mean to live out our faith in the world, and to work with others to make a difference? We have been enlightened, inspired, and challenged to take heed of the promptings of love and truth in our hearts. It is love that draws us into the world and pulls us towards its brokenness. We have found it useful to consider the topic under the headings Heart, Head, Hands and Feet, through plenary sessions throughout the week, and in workshops, activities and conversation.

- Heart: the transforming leadings;
- Head: the need to use our intellect, intuition and reason to harness that passion and energy effectively;
- Hands: the tools and skills we bring to the work;
- Feet: the ways in which we can work with others.

What does God require of us?

We heard moving personal testimony of the experience of brokenness, of finding common ground with others in grief, and about receiving upholding and support from our meeting communities and from strangers. If we are able to live and love on the edge, we can start to overcome and move beyond the fears that hold us back, focusing not on outcomes but on intention. Let us not be too afraid. “Oh God, grant me the blessing that I may never hesitate to perform righteous deeds.” (17th century Sikh prayer).

We may be called upon to take direct action, to be an accompanier, to be a placeholder who prepares the ground for others, or to be the one who finds someone else to act; but firstly we have to show up. Just being present is vital. It is exactly ourselves that we bring, with our own feelings and emotions. Moving towards the places where the hurt is deepest can be a great release into truth, and love. Listening to the hurt and anger builds trust.

Heart speaks to heart, and stillness enables the Spirit to speak in our hearts. God will provide us with reassurance, and with loving arms around us.

Jesus gives us an image of the “Strong One” (Mark 3: 27-28), the controlling power that takes us away from God, dehumanises and divides. The Strong One may need to be bound in order to turn the tide and change the power. In speaking Truth to Power, we may also need to offer a safety net or lifeline. But our understanding of Power is nuanced and multifaceted: the world is not divided into “them” and “us”. With responsibility comes power that can be used or abused by each of us: we all need to be bound, and we all need to be liberated and transformed. When we act collectively we can speak out in and with power. Let us call forth the power that is at work in and through all of us: the true Power, the power of God in the world who is building this movement in and for us.

We have shared examples of activity we are already engaged with, including work on climate change, racism, the Living Wage, challenging militarisation, forced migration, tax justice and other work for equality. We have used these examples to draw out common tools and approaches to Quaker work with others. Sometimes prophetic witness or confrontation is required, sometimes the drip, drip of quiet activity over the longer term has most lasting impact, including working through the political systems. If we apply grit to the things that we love we have the opportunity to change the world. The ministry of presence is of great value: we engage, we witness, we walk alongside. We may use story to get our message across, or a noisy presence to let people know they are not forgotten, as well as silence and stillness.

The way we work is an important witness in itself: let us acknowledge, celebrate and cherish it.

Working in partnership with others to build a movement can lead us to question our own practices, for only when we are also working on ourselves can we witness and speak beyond Friends. Can we recognise where we need to learn and to change? Getting to know one another deeply builds relational power and gives us strength, so that we can speak from lived experience, modelling to others how our faith guides our ministry.

In exploring a common purpose, and overcoming challenges with others, we often find common values such as truth, integrity, simplicity, and equality. We should ensure we also develop and share subtler values and practical understandings. Coming together with others, we can bring insights and learn from others, agree what needs to be done, and move forwards without having to compromise who we are or our motivations. Balance is key: balance does not mean never to wobble but comes from being able to find one's way back to centre once something has made one sway.

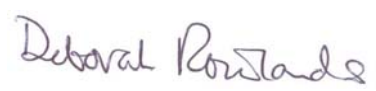
We are inspired, but we are also disquieted. How do our actions sit alongside our faith, how does our 'being' move into 'doing'? What is for individual activity and what will we do corporately? If we are inspired and upheld and supported in our identity and work as Quakers, is that enough? Or are we called to be more radical?

In 2011, Britain Yearly Meeting made a commitment to become a low carbon sustainable community (Minute 36, BYM 2011). That commitment succeeds or fails on our ability to live faithful lives, not giving way to guilt, fear or anger, but acting from nowhere but love. We have heard a sense of urgency over this concern. We will continue to work for climate justice in our lives and in our meetings, trying to do the more difficult things.

We have heard the call to examine our own diversity, particularly in our committee and organisational structure, locally and nationally. Diversity has several key dimensions and more may emerge in the future. We ask Meeting for Sufferings to look at how we can remove barriers and actively seek wider participation in the full life of our meetings, paying particular attention to race and age diversity and to keep Yearly Meeting informed in their annual report.

Surely we are led firstly to be open to the Spirit, waiting and listening in faithfulness for the way forward as we worship together week after week. The source of our strength comes from our worship and our Quaker community.

Signed

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Deborah Rowlands". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Deborah" and last name "Rowlands" clearly distinguishable.

Deborah Rowlands
Clerk

Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee

Please note: there are two sections to this item, and two sets of questions for Meeting for Sufferings:

1. **The general report.** QPSWCC asks:
 - Are you happy with the way QPSW's work is developing?
 - Does MfS have views on the use of virtual committee meetings? Does it have views about what more QPSWCC might do to increase the diversity of Friends giving such service?
2. **A minute from QPSWCC regarding forced migration.** QPSWCC asks Meeting for Sufferings to approve the 'Sanctuary Everywhere Manifesto'.

Annual Report to Meeting for Sufferings, October 2017

Introduction

This annual report from Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) Central Committee aims to inform members of Meeting for Sufferings about the strategies Central Committee is developing for the work and to lay before Sufferings enough information about the work itself to give an overall picture. More information can of course be found on the website – www.quaker.org.uk/our-work. In fact there are an even richer variety of resources there now. Note in particular the podcasts (audio interviews) which are new since last year, the 68 entries in the 'Our Stories' section (giving inspiring news of action for peace and social justice by local Friends) and the section which offers social action training and tools. Elsewhere on the site (www.quaker.org.uk/blog) the recently launched BYM blog includes plenty of QPSW pieces.

The report is as usual in three parts. Section 1 describes some of the ways in which QPSW Central Committee is discerning strategic direction and shaping the work of the department. Section 2 highlights some specific areas of change and achievement which Central Committee wants to draw to your attention. Section 3 offers a brief description and update on each of the main elements of QPSW's work. If you don't know very much about QPSW's work, you may find it helpful to read section 3 first.

Overall, we again ask Meeting for Sufferings – **Are you happy with the way QPSW's work is developing?**

We also invite MfS to reflect on using virtual committee meetings. In revising the terms of reference for our sub-committees and groups, we want to encourage changes which will enable a wider range of Friends to participate, in line with YMG minute 38. We are open to Friends serving for periods of less than three years, for

instance, which may encourage younger Friends to accept nomination. In the draft terms of reference we are also saying 'Some, but not all of the meetings [each year] can be held virtually'. This would save travel time as well as carbon and cost. **Does MfS have views on this, and on what more we might do to increase the diversity of Friends giving such service?**

Section 1 Direction of travel

1.1 Our Faith in the Future We continue to work for vision of *Our Faith in the Future*, especially the sections 'Quaker values are active in the world', 'Quakers work collaboratively' and 'Quakers are well known and widely understood').

1.2 YMG Yearly Meeting's three year process of reflecting on 'Living out our faith in the world' culminated with YMG in August. QPSW contributed substantially to the planning of YMG – especially to the theme of 'movement-building' - and to the event itself. Central Committee at its September meeting reflected on YMG and particularly minute 38. There was a sense that any perceived disconnect between worship and witness had to a considerable degree been healed, with Quaker witness being more deeply grounded in worship, and our faith leading more strongly towards action in the world - as well as towards strengthening community. We feel YMG has pushed us to find ways to involve a wider spectrum of Friends in different forms of activism, and to dare to be more radical. We welcomed the request for Friends to work on diversity and on the continuing commitment on sustainability. Staff are already working on how to take all of this forward.

1.3 QPSW and QL QPSW Central Committee and Quaker Life (QL) Central Committee spent a weekend together in February to further strengthen relationships, and particularly to consider the Vibrancy in Meetings pilot project and aspects of sustainability (with members of the BYM Sustainability Group). One sentence of the joint minute read "We feel that today there has been respectful encounter, a growing trust and an enthusiasm for working more together." We feel that our strategic intention to work more closely with QL is on track and bearing fruit. Staff continue to plan and deliver work across the two departments – with QPSW regularly contributing to QL resources and events and growing Quaker Life input into QPSW strategies.

1.4 Prioritising and resources We continue to wrestle with the challenges of the pressures we feel – often coming through MfS - to be more active on a wide range of issues, while at the same time the resources available are not increasing. We welcome the opportunities Legacy Funding gives us to take on limited-term work, but legacy income is not reliable and it cannot solve the dilemma of how to fund work that often needs to be 'in it for the long term'. The work of QPSW is – rightly, we feel - a mixture of relatively new initiatives and mature programmes which flex and develop but may well need to continue indefinitely. We know we carry the primary responsibility for prioritising witness work at BYM level, but we see ourselves as part of a network of bodies, all of which have a part to play in this. These include YM, MfS and our own sub-committees.

We have reflected that the Religious Society of Friends in Britain seems to be cash-poor but property-rich. Does our history and our future depend on buildings or on

our communities and what we do in the world? Can a different balance be reached?

1.5 Work with and on behalf of Friends We are still increasing the proportion of our work that is supporting and working alongside Friends in Britain. Turning the Tide is being asked by meetings to run workshops and courses to explore how they might build strong communities and take effective action in the world. Our Economics, Sustainability & Peace team has supported the initiatives of a number of AMs and LMs – for instance, against fracking and for a living wage. We run an annual 'Quaker Activist Gathering' to support networking and skills development for action across a range of concerns. However, some work is done best by working on behalf of Friends – where QPSW can speak out at a national level, influence Parliament (in Westminster or Holyrood), or work on complex projects overseas, for instance. We hope that Friends still have a strong sense of ownership of such work.

Section 2 Some Highlights of QPSW's work

2.1 Migration Since our report last year, we have set up new work on Forced Migration, strongly encouraged by the many AM minutes that came to Meeting for Sufferings on the situation of refugees, asylum seekers and other forced migrants, particularly in this country. With the help of Legacy Funding we set up a scoping project, which consulted Friends widely, in meetings across the YM. We accepted the recommendations which emerged and got agreement from Finance & Property Committee to fund the project until the end of 2019. It was launched at YMG as 'Sanctuary Everywhere' and already at least seven meetings have signed up to be 'Sanctuary Meetings', supported by QPSW. (<http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/social-justice/migration>)

2.2 As part of this work on Sanctuary Everywhere, Central Committee has sent you a minute, specifically asking you to consider the proposed manifesto of public policy positions which QPSW and the local Friends would campaign on. Some of these are existing positions, which we and the Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network have spoken out on before, but we feel they would together make a coherent platform to speak from, if Meeting for Sufferings is content with them.

2.3 Peace activism Central Committee met most recently during the week of action to stop the arms fair (DSEI) in London. QPSW staff had supported the planning for this action, and meeting room space was provided in Friends House for the coalition of bodies who coordinated it. As we prepared this report, we were inspired by the stories and pictures of nonviolent direct action taken by Friends and others to block the access roads into the exhibition centre. Many Quakers of all ages were willing to take part in deep meetings for worship there and some were ready to be arrested for their faithful opposition to the arms trade. There was a great energy there, and we know that Friends in other parts of the country also took local action in solidarity. How can we build on that?

2.4 Nuclear Weapons One of our staff, Tim Wallis, made substantial contributions to the negotiation of the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty at the United Nations in New York which was agreed by 122 states in July. He spent time at the negotiations, encouraging the positive engagement of diplomats, and the book he originally wrote on Trident was revised and reissued for international purposes and copies were

given to most of the delegations and to states that refused to take part, including the UK.

2.5 East Africa We have heard impressive figures and many inspiring stories from the Turning the Tide work in Kenya – with Peacebuilders forming strong and active networks and running effective peace and justice campaigns in their communities. The maturity of the programme there has meant that Kenyan trainers have been able to take TTT to Rwanda and Burundi as a pilot. This new expansion was enabled by putting the East Africa one-year placements scheme on hold, which freed up resources. After a very positive external review of the pilot work in Rwanda and Burundi, carried out by a Burundian Quaker, we agreed to lay down the East Africa Peaceworkers scheme and re-allocate the resources to the continuation of the programme in Burundi and Rwanda for up to three years.

Section 3 A broad update on Quaker Peace & Social Witness programmes

3.1 QPSW is a hub for local and national Quaker action for peace and justice and is committed to nonviolent social change. We support Quaker witness in local communities in Britain and overseas, and represent Quakers at national and sometimes international levels to parliaments, governments, business and the general public.

3.2 Much of the work described here is carried out by the team of about 20 paid staff in QPSW, mainly based in Friends House. Staff in Communication & Services department provide specialist support for the QPSW work programmes. The work is overseen by QPSW Central Committee, made up of 15 appointed Friends from across Britain who give their time on a voluntary basis. It is this Committee which has the responsibility for taking the strategic decisions. They appoint sub-committees and groups of Friends to oversee specific work programmes.

3.3 All these staff and committee members form part of the 'centrally managed work', overseen by BYM Trustees. The Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva and the Quaker Housing Trust link closely with QPSW and are given substantial support by BYM but they are legally independent organisations, with their own trustee bodies. Their work is nevertheless described here briefly.

Peace work focussed outside Britain

3.4 East Africa – We work with East African Quakers and other partners to build a nonviolent grassroots peace movement by helping activists change the conditions that lead to violent conflict. After providing training, we support the spread of tools of active nonviolence to those who want to challenge local injustices. With support from us, and from Kenyan trainers, similar projects in Rwanda and Burundi have developed. Read one story here <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/our-stories/nonviolent-change-in-rwanda>. The photographic exhibition about African Quaker Peacebuilders, '*This Light that Pushes Me*' is still being borrowed frequently by meetings. www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/international-work/kenya-1

3.5 Israel & Palestine - The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) aims for an end to the occupation. Its volunteers - Ecumenical

Accompaniers (EAs) - provide protection by presence, support Israeli and Palestinian peace activists, monitor and report violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, and undertake advocacy about the worsening situation. EAPPI is an international World Council of Churches programme. EAPPI UK/Ireland is a joint project of church partners, implemented by QPSW. Returned EAs are keen to speak to meetings, churches, etc. Staff work with partners to lobby the UK government to work for peace in the region; and to raise awareness of the occupation, and of the efforts of Israeli and Palestinian peacebuilders, amongst faith partners and the wider public.

www.quaker.org.uk/eappi and <http://eyewitnessblogs.com/>.

3.6 Conciliation – We have a small team of appointed Friends, coordinated by staff, who support and strengthen key groups of local conciliators who are seeking to end the violent conflicts in part of north-east India. They keep in close touch and visit the region as needed, facilitating and accompanying the processes of reconciliation. A peace agreement between one faction and India continues to have repercussions. The work is sensitive and low-key.

Peace work focussed within Britain

3.7 Peace Education – This work equips Quakers and others to promote and develop peace education in their local schools and communities, nurtures the peace education movement, creates resources and challenges militarisation. The publications *Teach Peace* (primary), updated and now translated into Welsh, and *Fly Kites not Drones* (for primary and secondary schools) have been widely used. Regional ‘train the trainer’ courses in peer-mediation have been held for Quaker projects and groups. The Programme has worked with Woodbrooke to provide an online course in peace education which began in September. Plans are being made with partners for a feature length documentary about militarism in schools, and for large scale events for school students in November 2018 to mark the centenary of the end of WWI. www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/peace/peace-education

3.8 Peace & Disarmament - This programme aims to inspire Quakers to hear the call to action of the peace testimony, working with them in campaigning against the growing militarisation of British society, against nuclear weapons and for a peacebuilding approach to security. We supported the process of negotiating the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty and the actions to try to stop the Arms Fair which is held every two years in London (see 2.3 and 2.4 above). www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/peace

3.9 One-Year Peaceworkers - Each year, we recruit people who want an opportunity to apply their commitment to working for peace, and fund a placement for each of them with an organisation working on a key aspect of peace in Britain and internationally. We seek additional funding to allow us to recruit more than the minimum of two per year. The new Peaceworkers are placed with Leap Confronting Conflict and with Peace Pledge Union. Peaceworkers are often invited to share their experience and enthusiasm with local meetings. www.quaker.org.uk/qpsw-placements-and-peaceworkers

3.10 Turning the Tide - This social action training programme supports groups to build a more just and peaceful world using the skills and tools of nonviolence. We offer a range of workshops and resources for groups who want to change the world. Recent or upcoming workshops include the Green Party national executive, Forest Peoples' Programme, Campaign Against Arms Trade, National Peace & Justice programme and university student unions. We also work extensively with Quaker meetings and recently ran a pilot mini-series in Redland meeting, Bristol and contributed substantially to the movement-building theme of YMG.

www.turningtide.org.uk

Justice work focussed mainly in Britain

3.11 Economic Justice – We are working alongside Quakers across Britain to explore what sort of 'new economy' is needed if it is to have equality, justice and environmental sustainability at its heart. The series of seven booklets (available online and on paper) is almost complete, and approximately fifty meetings are making use of them to study and to stimulate discussion. This is leading towards a national training in autumn 2017 to stimulate action for a fairer economy. We also provide newsletters and briefings, and support campaigns on a range of economic inequality issues including fair tax, fair trade and fair pay.

www.quaker.org.uk/economic-justice

3.12 Sustainability - We aim to drive and support action and reflection, to help Britain Yearly Meeting become a low-carbon, sustainable community, as agreed by YMG 2011. We help Quakers and others to live more environmentally sustainable lives and to explore the connections between sustainability, economics and peace. We seek to influence governments and others, to help transform Britain into a more sustainable society. A major focus this year has been on encouraging divestment from fossil fuel companies, and supporting anti-fracking efforts. We are now monitoring the UK government's Clean Growth Plan and working with others to press the government to uphold its commitments under the Paris Agreement.

www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability-peace

3.13 Criminal Justice - We work to encourage greater compassion within the criminal justice system. In particular, the restorative justice approach is promoted in responses to government consultations. The responses from area meetings to the document 'Vision for a criminal justice system' are currently being analysed carefully to shape future work. www.quaker.org.uk/crime-community-justice

3.14 Housing - Quaker Housing Trust (QHT) is the Yearly Meeting's own housing charity, a practical response to a spiritual concern. Through loans, grants and advice QHT supports projects that are meeting the housing needs of people who are often overlooked. Created as the national channel through which Friends can directly put their own money into social housing, QHT receives no money from Quaker central funds, but QPSW provides the half-time staffing for this work in recognition of the Yearly Meeting's concern for housing issues. www.qht.org.uk

In response to YM 2015's minute on housing, a one-year intern was placed by QPSW with the ecumenical charity Housing Justice, to strengthen their work.

3.15 Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva - A team of 10 staff, including two one-year Programme Assistants, engage with the UN agencies based in Geneva (and to some extent in Bonn and Rome) to help the UN work effectively for peace and justice. QUNO currently works on the Human Impacts of Climate Change, Peace & Disarmament, Food & Sustainability and Human Rights & Refugees.
www.quno.org

Helen Drewery, General Secretary QPSW
Charlotte Seymour-Smith, Clerk QPSW Central Committee
September 2017

Minute of Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee held at Friends House 26 – 28 May 2017

QPSWCC 17/29 PROPOSED WORK ON FORCED MIGRATION

We acknowledge and celebrate the strength of the preparatory work that has gone into this proposal, and its rootedness in Quaker values and the concerns of our local and area meetings.

We approve the recommendation to pursue this programme as set out by the Interim Advisory Group, with a main thrust on Sanctuary Meetings to be combined with testing the scope of option two on detention. We hope that the resources for this work in 2018 and 2019 will be made available from the Legacy Funding scheme.

In approving this work we make the following observations. Valuable work is already being undertaken by the Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network (QARN) and by a range of other organisations working on issues such as detention. It will be important to link up productively and seek to strengthen and complement each other's efforts. It is vital to listen to the voices of those affected by forced migration, and we hope the programme will give space to this. The focus of the work should not be on persuading every meeting to be a sanctuary meeting, but rather on building on the good work that is already being undertaken by Quakers and others. Other elements of the work, such as the national campaign to end detention, are important to Friends, but the work overall will need to be manageable.

We provisionally approve the 'Sanctuary Everywhere Manifesto', subject to the approval of Meeting for Sufferings. Local meetings will need guidance on speaking out on migration and we ask staff to ensure this is provided.

We are drawn to the name Forced Migration for this programme but ask the Interim Advisory Group to take the final decision.

We agree that this work will come under the oversight of the new Social Justice Subcommittee (QPSW 16/106 refers) and will return to this when we consider Subcommittee Terms of Reference later in our meeting.

We are content with the proposed timeline and ask for a progress report at our next meeting.

We send this minute to Meeting for Sufferings and to the Interim Advisory Group on Forced Migration.

Charlotte Seymour-Smith, Clerk

Sanctuary Everywhere Manifesto

We stand by the principle that no person should be discriminated against because of who they are or where they were born. We will speak out and support campaigns to promote this principle. This is the policy change we call for:

1. Every person in the UK should have the right to work, the right to learn and the right to adequate government support if it is needed. We oppose a 'two-tier system' as inherently discriminatory.
2. We support all means of increasing routes to safe passage for people seeking sanctuary, including the introduction of a system of humanitarian visas and increasing the scope of family reunion rules.
3. We believe immigration detention to be neither right nor necessary. Until such time as detention is ended we will campaign for a time limit.
4. We stand together with people born in the EU and people from beyond in opposing deportations. It is impossible for a human being to be illegal.
5. We will insist that existing human rights standards be the foundation on which any UN agreement on migration is built
6. Through all this we commit to resisting racism and bigotry by interrogating our own histories, listening and taking action

Quaker Recognised Bodies

Introduction

In 2015, Meeting for Sufferings reviewed the former Listed Informal Groups system and adopted a new approach (minute MfS/15/12/17). The intention was to recognise the passion and commitment in independent Quaker groups. They can strengthen and deepen Quaker life and breathe energy into more formal structures.

A Quaker Recognised Body (QRB) is an independent group of Friends who explore a common interest, seek affirmation or carry out witness; and which wishes to be recognised as a Quaker organisation because its Quaker roots are important to its identity.

QRBs are registered by Meeting for Sufferings. Registration is intended to be as inclusive as possible. There are three different options for groups:

- **External** groups (regulated externally). Set up with a board or management committee, a clear constitution and regulated by an external body such as the Charity Commission, the Scottish Charity Regulator, Companies House (where a charity is also a registered company), Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission etc.
- **Linked** groups. Linked by minute from (or appointed by) part(s) of the formal structure of BYM such as: area meetings, central committees, MfS, General Meeting for Scotland, Meeting of Friends in Wales etc.
- **Free-standing** groups. Quakers who have come together to learn about or work on a particular topic. Groups are likely to have members who are geographically dispersed; with membership open, but not necessarily restricted, to all interested Friends and attenders.
- **Emergent** groups. Listed for up to two years, and usually treated as free-standing groups.

Experience is showing us that all groups are different; they don't all fit neatly into these categories, but the system is 'good enough' to be sure that these groups are recognised and celebrated. It also ensures that centrally-managed work can offer support, in a way that's appropriate, useful and transparent.

Once a group decides it wishes to register, it lets BYM staff know. A linked member of staff then works with each group to prepare the registration information. Once the group and the member of staff have shared and agreed all the relevant information, a summary is brought to MfS. MfS is asked to make a minute granting registration, and the information is lodged in the Friends House Library.

Request for registration

The following fourteen organisations have applied to become Quaker Recognised Bodies.

Six appeared as listed informal groups in the 2016 Book of Meetings.

1. Friends House Moscow

2. Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture (Q-CAT)
3. Quaker Fellowship for After life studies
4. Quaker South Asia Interest Group
5. Quaker Voluntary Action
6. The Quaker Tapestry

These varied organisations all appeared elsewhere in the 2016 Book of Meetings. Retreat York Benevolent Fund is referred to in the entry for The Retreat, although it is a separate organisation.

7. Friends Southern Summer Events
8. London Quakers
9. The Penn Club
10. The Retreat York Benevolent Fund

The following are all well-established organisations, beyond the stage of being considered “emergent”, but have not previously been included in the Book of Meetings.

11. Experiment with Light Network
12. Friends Community Development Trust Uganda
13. Friends of Hlekweni

The final organisation is Quaker Decriminalisation Network, which is an emerging group: Meeting for Sufferings considered its work in December 2016.

14. Quaker Decriminalisation Network

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.

The notes below give the key details that have been included in the completed applications.

Friends House Moscow

Constitution: Memorandum of Association dated 15/5/96. Friends House Moscow (FHM) is a registered charity: number 1055965.

Governance: FHM collaborates with an American nonprofit, Friends House Moscow Support Association (FHMSA). The work is coordinated via a Quaker body, the Friends House Moscow International Board, on which both charities are represented. The International Board sets strategy and makes funding decisions for the work as a whole. The British and American charities act jointly in accordance with the decisions of the Board."

Type of Group: External.

Foundation: Founded following the decision of BYM to cease funding the presence of Quaker representatives in Moscow in 1996.

Aims: The British charity exists to raise money for and support the work carried out from FHM - an initiative of Friends worldwide which seeks to encourage spiritual growth and the development of a civil society in Russia and countries of the former Soviet Union, based on mutual trust and community cooperation. It aims to provide a stable and visible Quaker presence in the face of Russia's rapidly changing conditions by expressing the unique faith and practice of the Religious Society of Friends. FHM puts this faith into action by working for social justice based on our fundamental belief in the presence of God in each individual.

Publications and activities:

- Fundraising and managing donations in the UK
- Contributing to processes and decisions of the FHM International Board, and conducting charitable activity in accordance with these decisions
- Twice yearly supporter newsletters
- Special Interest Group session and stall at the Groups Fair at BYM every year.
- In November 2014 it organised (jointly with Woodbrooke) a weekend conference at Woodbrooke "Russian Adventures: Quakers, Russia and Civil Society".

Membership: The British Committee currently has 7 members of whom 6 are Trustees. In the last 5 years donations came from 82 British LMs and AMs as well as a number of UK-based individuals. The supporter list contains about 600 names.

Finance: Annual accounts are available via the Charity Commission website. .

Winding up: The charity has a winding up procedure.

Archives: Stored securely online

Current contact details: Mary Morris (clerk) email: info@friendshousemoscow.org

Website: <https://friendshousemoscow.org>

Staff link: Marleen Schepers, Quaker World Relations Committee Secretary.

Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture (Q-CAT)

Constitution: There is a formal constitution: the organisation is a registered charity number 1093757. A new constitution is being drawn up.

Governance: The trustees meet quarterly. The draft of the new constitution makes it clear that a Quaker business method should be used to make decisions.

Type of Group: The group is a Linked group as it carries out the concern of Meeting for Sufferings. It is also a registered charity.

Foundation: The group was founded in 2004

Aims: On behalf of Meeting for Sufferings and the supporting area meetings to work towards the end of torture and complicity in torture; upholding our testimony to peace and equality and working towards healing through reconciliation. (The supporting Area Meetings are currently Central England, North Wales and Wirral and Chester.)

Publications and activities: Regular newsletter and briefings are available to interested people.

Membership: There are currently seven trustees, and a larger number of supporters.

Finance: The accounts are audited or examined in accordance with their constitution. Currently the income and expenditure is below the limit required to be reported to the charity commission.

Winding up: Thought has been given to how winding up of QCAT could be achieved if necessary.

Archives: The trustees hold the archives.

Current contact details: info@q-cat.org.uk

Website: <http://qcat.org.uk/>

Staff link: Clare Wood, QPSW, Head of Social Justice Programmes

Note: Minute MfS 2001/07/04/i/b Abolition of torture authorised Wirral and Chester Monthly Meeting to take up this concern on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting and asked it to report back in due time. Since then, other AMs have added their support. QCAT has reported, not on a regular basis but when its committee felt the time was right – most recently, in March 2015 (minute MfS 2015/03/08).

Quaker Fellowship for After-Life Studies

Constitution: Its committee is nominated, and business conducted, in the manner of Friends. The Committee is responsible to the AGM. Anybody may join.

Governance: All paid-up members are entitled to attend and speak at the AGM, to be considered for the Committee and to serve as Officers of the Society. Decisions are taken by AGM and committee.

Type of Group: Free-standing

Foundation: Established in 2000.

Aims: Provide a forum for discussion on all issues relating to development beyond physical death. Explore evidence for survival and learn from and support those with psychic gifts and experiences. Focus on the spiritual dimension of such experience, so as to integrate it with our Meetings for Worship.

Publications and activities: An anthology in 2000 and updated in 2004. Bi-annual magazine *Reaching Out*. Various books by members. Conferences annually or bi-annually since 2000. CDs of conference talks. Much information on website. Links with other like-minded bodies. AGM and committee.

Membership: 150-200

Finance: The accounts are audited and approved at AGM.

Winding up: By decision of AGM.

Archives: Website.

Current contact details:

Angela Howard angela1@webbscottage.co.uk 01371 850423
Webbs Cottage, Woolpits Road, Saling, Braintree, Essex CM7 5DZ

Website: www.quakerafterlifestudies.wordpress.com

Staff link: Nik Dadson, Website and Social Media Manager

Quaker South Asia Interest Group (QSAIG)

Constitution: No specific constitution known to present convener, Quaker faith & practice is our source of inspiration, information and discernment

Governance: There is an annual general meeting, open to all members of the group. Both the convener and the treasurer report on the annual activities of the group at this meeting.

Type of Group: Free-standing

Foundation: Already formed and active in 1996, having grown out of work laid down by Quaker Peace & Service.

Aims: to assist in the building of a peaceful, just and sustainable world inspired by our Quaker faith and focussing on the South Asian region by

- a) Sharing information to inform our action
- b) Supporting individuals and groups which act to progress QSAIG's main aim, including QPSW's work
- c) Sustain relationships in South Asia that value support of Quakers in Britain

Publications and activities:

- 1) Annual newsletter – electronic and print
- 2) Website
- 3) AGM with sharing of concern and action.
- 4) Emergency financial support e.g. Nepal earthquake 2015.
- 5) Stall at BYM groups fair

Membership: 70+ on mailing list, 10-15 present at AGM

Finance: independently examined annual accounts, QSAIG account with ecology building society. Subscriptions and donations approx. £100 per annum. Balance approx. £300-£400.

Winding up: none yet specified

Archives: notes of 2004-2013 meetings available electronically on website. Newsletters and some copies of meeting notes and minutes sent to library at Friends House and Woodbrooke

Current contact details: Stuart Morton (Convener/Clerk), 1 Witherford Way, Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29 4AY email: stuartm46@gmail.com

Website: www.qsaig.co.uk

Staff link: Judith Baker, QPSW, Conciliation Support Coordinator

Quaker Voluntary Action

Constitution: Quaker Voluntary Action QVA is governed by its memorandum and articles of association dated January 2000. It is a registered charity 1083412 and a charitable company 3908675.

Governance: Governance is by the Trustees who are appointed for a term of three years by the members present at the Annual General Meeting. All business meetings are conducted in the manner of the Society of Friends.

Type of Group: External

Foundation: The group was established in 2000, after the yearly meeting laid down the Quaker International Social Projects (previously Quaker Workcamps) programme.

Aims: QVA offers adventurous opportunities for volunteering that combine meaningful practical engagement with learning, spiritual encounter and reflection. The Working Retreat programme encourages an active witness to our testament to sustainability and peace. In partnership with Quaker Meetings, Centres, and other organisations, we seek to deepen this commitment.

Publications and activities: QVA organises working retreats both in the UK and abroad. These are open to all and a fee is chargeable though bursary help is available. Publications include an annual newsletter and programme of activities.

Membership: There are currently 8 Trustees. There are about 600 supporters in the UK and abroad.

Finance: Funded by donations from supporters and grants from Trusts. QVA charges for Retreats and this offsets much of the cost of running them. Approximate annual budget is £22,000.

Winding up: A procedure exists.

Archives: QVA does not hold formal archives although past minutes and accounts are retained.

Current contact details:

Quaker Voluntary Action, 15 Hollyway, Northenden, Manchester M22 4WS
Email: mail@qva.org.uk Phone :07530 844611

Website: www.qva.org.uk.

Staff link: Maya Williams, QPSW, Economics, Sustainability & Peace Network Coordinator

The Quaker Tapestry

Constitution: The Quaker Tapestry is a registered charity 1035077, and a company 2901085.

Governance: Charity and limited company with a Trustee body. Eleven of the 12 Trustees are Members of the Society of Friends and Quaker business method is used in meetings.

Type of Group: External

Foundation: the Quaker Tapestry as a project began in 1981. The museum in Kendal to exhibit the project was set up in 1994.

Aims: to display, maintain and protect the collection as a way to advance the public's understanding of Quakers, their worship and work in the world. Thorough collaborative endeavour to teach the embroidery and allied skills used in making the panels and to create new ones.

Quaker Tapestry cares for a collection of 77 embroidered textile panels made by 4,000 people from 15 countries between 1981 and 1996. The panels illustrate some of the history of Quakerism from the 17th century to the present day.

Quaker Tapestry is an Arts Council accredited museum and has gained the Visit Britain accolade of 'Hidden Gem'.

Publications and activities: Publications about the exhibition include: pictorial guide with information of every panel, stitch guide and video, an annual calendar with illustrations from the panels and related information, a video about George Fox and the history of the early Quakers on show at the exhibition and sold in the shop.

Activities include: educational visits and formal and informal activity sessions, embroidery Workshops in Kendal and elsewhere.

Roadshows take Tapestry panels around the country and sometimes abroad.

Membership: Membership is open to all. In 2017 there are 194 Life members and 158 annual members, 352 in total.

Finance: The accounts are audited or examined in accordance with their constitution.

Winding up: There is provision made should the organisation need to be wound up. The panels and artefacts are held by the Quaker Tapestry Collection Trust. The Trustees of the Trust have procedures in place for the safe keeping of the panels and other artefacts should the exhibition close.

Archives: Minutes of Trustees Meetings and AGM. The Annual report and Accounts.

Current contact details:

Quaker Tapestry, Friends Meeting House, Stramongate, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 4BH
01539 722975 info@quaker-tapestry.co.uk

Website: www.quaker-tapestry.co.uk

Staff link: Melissa Atkinson, Visual Resources Development Officer, The Library

Friends Southern Summer Events (FSSE)

Constitution: There is a formal constitution, FSSE is registered as a charity, number 1155420.

Governance: Governed by a trustee body and adheres to charity commission guidelines. Trustees develop policy and procedures and are accountable for those policies and procedures being followed. FSSE's events and meetings operate in the manner of Quaker business method. Role holders are nominated and appointed using the Quaker nominations process and roles are held for a limited period. FSSE's safeguarding policy and procedures are regularly reviewed and the organisation is confident that its policy and procedure are fit for purpose.

Type of Group: External

Foundation: Group registered as a charity in 2007, although as a less formal organisation, it has been running events since the 1950's.

Aims: FSSE organises two week-long annual residential Quaker events in August: Junior Gathering (formerly Summer School, ages 11-14) and Friends Southern Senior Conference (15-18). The events advocate the Quaker testimonies of peace, simplicity, equality and truth. They are significant in the lives of those who attend, building confidence, knowledge and supportive friendships which can last a lifetime.

Publications and activities:

Two residential week-long events for young Quakers held annually, which are staffed and run by volunteers. Participants predominantly from the South of England, applications are accepted from young people who live elsewhere. General meeting attended by office holders, volunteers and representatives from Area Meetings.

Membership: Wholly run by volunteers with an annual membership of between 40 and 50 people consisting of the people with responsibility for the governance of the organisation, the volunteer that staff the events, and representatives to the AGM from Area Quaker Meetings. The two events each have over 70 participants.

Finance: FSSE has an annual operating budget of around £50,000. It holds reserves of approximately £30,000. FSSE appoints a treasurer and has its accounts independently examined annually.

Winding up: Provision is in place should such action be necessary.

Archives: FSSE's archives are held by the Clerk of the organisation. In addition to the archives that the clerk holds there are archives relating to safeguarding which are held by the trustee with responsibility for safeguarding.

Current contact details: Clerk: Oliver Waterhouse. info@fsse.org.uk

Website: www.fsse.org.uk

Staff link: Lucy Sam, Children and Young People's Officer, Quaker Life

London Quakers

Constitution: A constitution was adopted in 2010.

Governance: Each of the 7 London Area Meetings appoints at least one member of the LQ Steering Group which meets typically 4 times a year including the Annual General Meeting. Meetings are held in the manner of Friends.

Type of Group: Free-standing

Foundation: London Quakers started in 2009, growing out of London & Middlesex General Meeting. .

Aims: Aim to keep Quakers across London in touch with one another, and to give us a voice in addressing the wider world by organising events and social media for London Quakers.

Publications and activities: Meetings, day conferences on various topics, Facebook page, website.

Membership: There are about 2000 Friends and attenders involved in Quaker Meetings in London.

Finance: Bank account with a reserve of approximately 1 year expenditure. Our Annual budget based on contribution of £350 from each of the 7 Area Meetings.

Winding up: None. If London Quakers does wind up, funds will be divided equally between the 7 Area Meetings of London.

Archives: No formal archives.

Current contact details:

Fred Ashmore, Clerk

47 Lower Teddington Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT1 4HQ

ClerkLondonQuakers@gmail.com

Phone: 07976 299721

Website: <http://www.londonquakers.org.uk/>

Staff link: Jon Martin, Ministry and Outreach Officer, Quaker Life.

The Penn Club

Constitution: The Penn Club has articles of association most recently revised in 2014. Company number 3115589.

Governance: The Club is a company limited by guarantee. It has a board of directors, of whom at least two should be members of the Society of Friends.

Type of Group: External.

Foundation: 1920.

Aims: The Club's principal objects are to promote fellowship and other amenities for the Members of the Club and for others in sympathy with the broad objectives of the Religious Society of Friends and to encourage social intercourse among the Members of the Club.

Publications and activities: We provide accommodation for members and non-members sympathetic to the Club's ethos, members events and a Quarterly Club newsletter.

Membership: About 1100.

Finance: Accounts are prepared and submitted to Companies House.

Winding up: The articles of association make provision for the winding up of the company.

Archives: The archives are kept in the Penn Club.

Current contact details:

The Penn Club, 21 Bedford Place, Bloomsbury, London, WC1B 5JJ
office@pennclub.co.uk Phone: 020 7636 4718

Website: www.pennclub.co.uk

Staff link: Suze Lidbury, Events & Committee Services Team Leader

The Retreat York Benevolent Fund

Constitution and Governance: There is a charity commission scheme last amended in August 2016.

Type of Group: External.

Foundation: 1919. The Retreat Benevolent Fund was re-established as The Retreat York Benevolent Fund in 2006. .

Aims: To provide grants to beneficiaries (Quakers, Attenders or closely associated with Quakers) who cannot afford the fees to be able to access care at either The Retreat York or other psychiatric hospitals in the UK

To assist in the provision of hospital treatment or home nursing in the home of any Friend wherever they are living either for mental or physical illness, including illness resulting from accidents

To fund projects and initiatives which have a direct and demonstrable impact on beneficiaries and which advance good mental health and/or the application and understanding of effective mental health practice.

Membership: There are 4-6 trustees, all of whom are Quakers or attend Quaker meetings.

Finance: The accounts are audited or examined in accordance with their constitution and are available on the charity commission website.

Winding up: The charity commission scheme contains provision for winding up the charity.

Archives: These are deposited in Borthwick Institute, University of York

Current contact details: The Retreat York Benevolent Fund
The Retreat Hospital, 107 Heslington Road, York, YO10 5BN
01904 412551 benfund@theretreatyork.org.uk

Website: <http://www.theretreatyork.org.uk/> or more precisely
<http://www.theretreatyork.org.uk/benevolent-fund-provider-of-healthcare-grants.html>

Staff link: Oliver Waterhouse, Assistant head, Ministry and Outreach Team.

Experiment with Light Network

Constitution: The Network has a Partnership Agreement, rather than a constitution. It includes a clause that makes it clear that it will follow Quaker principles.

Governance: Annual Business Meeting approves the examined accounts and appoints the members of the Steering Group, Nominating Group and any other positions if applicable. The Steering Group organises the work in between Annual Business Meetings and meets 3-4 times per year, using Quaker Business Method and incorporating an Experiment with Light meditation into each of its meetings.

Type of Group: Free-standing.

Foundation: 2009, having evolved out of the Experiment with Light movement that started around 1996/97.

Aims: To support, co-ordinate and develop the teaching and practice of Experiment with Light (EwL) throughout the Religious Society of Friends within Britain Yearly Meeting and beyond; to work with the Religious Society of Friends through the channels of Britain Yearly Meeting to facilitate the acceptance of Experiment with Light as a core Quaker spiritual practice.

Publications and activities: "Journal of the Experiment with Light Network" (published 4 times a year), guided meditation CDs, leaflets, booklets, workshop facilitators' handbook, online resources. The EwL Network runs workshops, retreats and gatherings at Quaker centres and local Friends Meeting Houses and a variety of sessions at Yearly Meeting Gatherings. In 2013 the EwL Network organised an International Gathering at Woodbrooke with 71 participants from 10 different countries. The EwL Network encourages Light groups to consult with and report to their Local or Area Meetings and Elders.

Membership: There is no membership structure, however the Journal is distributed to around 80 Light groups and 500-600 individuals.

Finance: Funded by Quaker trusts and individual donations. The accounts are independently examined.

Winding up: No provision is in place.

Archives: At Friends House Library, London

Current contact details: no postal address.
For general enquiries e-mail experimentwithlight@gmail.com

Website: www.experiment-with-light.org.uk

Staff link: Gill Sewell, Ministry and Outreach Officer, Quaker Life

Friends Community Development Trust (Uganda):

Constitution: A formal charitable constitution has been established by trust deed in 2016. Its income means that it has not yet needed to register with the Charity Commission.

Governance: The trustees use the Quaker business method to make decisions.

Type of Group: Free-standing. However, it is planning to register as a charity.

Foundation: The trust deed is dated 2016, although it has been operating informally since 2013.

Aims: The advancement of community development for communities in Uganda by means of liaising with and making to community organisations in Uganda grants which enable them to fulfil specific community development projects which provide tangible assets for the community, increasing social or economic capacity and opportunity.

Publications and activities: The activities support fundraising in order to fulfil the aims of making grants to community organisations in Uganda.

Membership: There is a trustee body of four Friends, but anyone is able to help fundraise.

Finance: The constitution requires that proper financial records are kept. In 2016, over £2700 was raised. Up to May 2017, about £7800 has been raised, with £7700 being sent to Uganda.

Winding up: Provision is in place should the charity be closed.

Archives: None.

Current contact details:

John Pamely 6 Abington Court 483 Wellingborough Road Northampton NN3 3HN
email: clerk@fcdtu.org.uk 07504982840

Website: www.fcdtu.org.uk

Staff link: Tobias Wellner, QPSW Programme Manager – East Africa Peacebuilding

Friends of Hlekweni:

Constitution: There is a formal constitution: the organisation is a registered charity number 1126598.

Governance: Friends of Hlekweni has regular meetings of its Trustees; Yearly Business Meetings; annual returns to Charity Commission. The use of the Quaker business method to make decisions is noted in its constitution.

Type of Group: External

Foundation: This organisation was started in 2008, although Quaker work in the Hlekweni Friends Rural Service Centre started in 1967.

Aims: To support education, training and peacebuilding: primarily in southern Matabeleland, Zimbabwe.

Publications and activities:

A newsletter is circulated twice a year; annual leaflet. Activities:

- supporting four primary schools in peri-urban Bulawayo particularly with school meals, books and other resources
- financing the Zimbabwe secondary bursary scheme
- peacebuilding activities: Peace Clubs in schools, AVP, combatting domestic violence programmes
- providing practical resources – books, laptops, pre-school resources, teddy plus pencil case scheme for all under 5s in schools

Membership: The organisation has five trustees, and a supporter list of about 600 people.

Finance: The accounts are audited or examined in accordance with their constitution and are available on the charity commission website. The trustees are confident that the finances of the charity are on a sound footing to meet their current and expected future commitments.

Winding up: The group has a winding up procedure.

Archives: No formal archives.

Current contact details:

Friends of Hlekweni, c/o Milton Keynes Quaker Centre
1 Oakley Gardens, Downhead Park, MK15 9BH
Email: info@friendsofhlekweni.org.uk Phone: 07962321166

Website: www.friendsofhlekweni.org.uk

Staff link: Tobias Wellner, QPSW Programme Manager – East Africa Peacebuilding

Quaker Decriminalisation Network

Constitution: Set by Cornwall Area Meeting.

Governance: It has a management committee of not more than 8 people, all of whom must be a member or attender of a meeting in Britain.

Type of Group: Emerging.

Foundation: 2015

Aims: Its stated aims are:

- to enable discernment regarding the decriminalisation of the personal use of drugs
- to promote understanding within BYM of the need for decriminalisation
- to develop a network of individuals, Local Meetings and Area Meetings
- as Quakers to work with other organisations who desire change in both domestic and international drug policy

Publications and activities: It prepared a paper about its concern, which was considered at the December 2016 Meeting for Sufferings. It is working with Friends in other Area Meetings to continue work on the concern.

Membership: About 50 from many different area meetings.

Finance: None. It currently has no finances as its activities are funded by Cornwall Area Meeting. It is anticipated that when the group becomes more established it will develop a budget and appoint a Treasurer.

Winding up: If it is agreed to dissolve the group all remaining money and other assets, once outstanding debts have been paid, will be donated to a charity supported by Quakers. The receiving charity to be agreed at the meeting which agrees the dissolution.

Archives: None.

Current contact details: Vorriey Faragher (Clerk), c/o Truro Meeting House, Friends Way, Pauls Terrace, Truro Vean, Truro, Cornwall TR1 1HD
Email: vozfaragher@gmail.com

Website: A private members only facebook group exists at www.facebook.com/groups/630116713798054/. Some information also is available at <http://www.swquakers.org.uk/content/decriminalisation-possession-personal-use-all-drugs> .

Staff link: Clare Wood, Head of Social Justice Programmes, Quaker Peace and Social Witness

Dates of Meeting for Sufferings

At this meeting, MfS would usually consider and agree dates for meetings the year after next. Arrangements group feel that it would be helpful now to agree dates for the next Triennium.

Arrangements Group has reviewed the pattern of meetings and suggests the following dates. The pattern is based on these factors:

- Meeting for Sufferings should continue to meet five times a year; but with a residential meeting every October.
- Meetings are on the first Saturday of the month except when this clashes with a bank holiday weekend.
- In years when Yearly Meeting takes place in May, MfS would be in July; in Yearly Meeting Gathering years, MfS would be in June.
- December is the best time of year for the Young People's Participation day.

Please note that dates of meetings in 2018 have already been agreed:

3 February

7 April

7 July (first meeting of the new Triennium)

6 October (with the Young People's Participation Day)

23-25 November (residential, at Woodbrooke)

Meeting for Sufferings is asked to consider and agree the following dates for the rest of the 2019-21 Triennium. (Dates from mid-2021 onwards could then be considered by MfS in late 2019).

2 February 2019

6 Apr 2019

6 July 2019

5 October 2019 (residential)

1 December 2019

1 February 2020

4 April 2020

6 June 2020

3 October 2020 (residential)

5 December 2020

6 February 2021

10 April 2021