

## Follow up Letter



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

### To members of Meeting for Sufferings

11 April 2017

### Meeting for Sufferings 7 April 2018

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your care and commitment to our meeting on Saturday – it was good that our last meeting of the triennium should be so well- gathered and Spirit-filled. The key items to share with your Area Meeting this time will be:

- 1) our discernment about **the right way forward for promoting our testimony to sustainability** : our care for the planet, our living green witness, our concern for all creation or however you like to phrase the concern. Our minute 6 re-emphasises that our Quaker faith is the spiritual basis of this concern which should permeate everything we do. But as we also minuted, we seem unable to go forward with this as we would wish and so, as an organisation, we have started on a different approach.
- 2) minute 9 receives the minute from Southern Marches Area Meeting about **honesty in public affairs** and your Area meeting will be asked to respond to this to enable us to consider later in the year what more Quakers in Britain may do.
- 3) we also considered **conflict in meetings** and agreed to changes to our current **appeals procedure**. Minute 5 gives some guidance as to how we should act in the first instance but this is a big issue and we turn first to Quaker Life for advice and guidance.

We hope that your meeting has sent in the names of new representatives and alternates for the 2018-2021 triennium. If not, we will need them as soon as possible and certainly before Yearly Meeting (4-7 May), which is when new representatives will be appointed. (You can check all the nominations here: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/ym/nominations-and-committee-membership>.)

We also hope your AM, committee or group has been able to consider the three questions on diversity within our meetings. Meetings have been encouraged to ask themselves:

1. In what ways is your meeting (or committee or group) already diverse?
2. In what ways could it be more diverse?
3. What would help it become more diverse? What are the opportunities and barriers?

These questions were sent out last October. Please encourage your AM clerk to send your responses, to [sufferings@quaker.org.uk](mailto:sufferings@quaker.org.uk), to reach us by early September.

We would also like to ask you personally for any feedback about the experience of meeting in the small meeting house (Sarah Fell) as compared with the George Fox room that we have usually met in. Again, please let us know by emailing [sufferings@quaker.org.uk](mailto:sufferings@quaker.org.uk), or sending a note in the post.

Thank you for all you have given in your work as Meeting for Sufferings representative in the past three years and I look forward to seeing you at Yearly Meeting if possible.

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope (Romans 15.13)*

Peace be with you

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anne Ullathorne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anne Ullathorne  
Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings

**The following papers are included in this mailing:**

- Minutes of the Meeting held 7 April 2018
- Meeting for Sufferings: functions list (April 2018)

## **Meeting for Sufferings: are we addressing our functions?**

*Quaker faith and practice* section 7.02 sets out 19 functions of Meeting for Sufferings (a-s). Arrangements Group hopes it will be helpful to monitor how the agenda items enable us to address these functions. Business at this meeting related to 7 of the functions. (We also hope that function i) *to foster communication throughout the yearly meeting* is addressed by representatives before and after every meeting.)

- a) To set the priorities for the centrally managed work
  - MfS 18/04/06, Report of the BYM Sustainability Group Review Group
  
- c) To receive regular interim reports from BYM trustees
  - MfS 18/04/12, BYM Trustees
  
- d) To receive the BYM trustees' annual report & accounts for information
  - MfS 18/04/12, BYM Trustees
  
- g) To deliberate on how best to support the spiritual life of the yearly meeting and to further the development of its visionary and prophetic role
  - MfS 18/04/06, Report of the BYM Sustainability Group Review Group
  
- h) To keep under review and to test as appropriate the existing and new concerns to it by AMs and others
  - MfS 18/04/06, Report of the BYM Sustainability Group Review Group
  - MfS 18/04/09, The post-truth world and Quaker response
  
- j) To receive minutes from area meetings
  - MfS 18/04/09, The post-truth world and Quaker response
  
- k) To make appropriate entries in the prison and court register
  - MfS 18/04/04, Court and Prison Register
  
- l) To appoint representatives to attend other Yearly Meetings
  - MfS 18/04/07, Appointments
  - MfS 18/04/10, Letter of greeting to Ireland Yearly Meeting
  
- o) To give assistance to area meetings in the amicable settlement of disputes
  - MfS 18/04/05, Appeal Review Group report
  
- p) To hear appeals against area meeting decisions
  - MfS 18/04/05, Appeal Review Group report
  
- r) To authorise action and minute as required under other sections of Quaker Faith and Practice
  - MfS 18/04/07, Appointments
  - MfS 18/04/11, Quaker Recognised Bodies
  
- s) To set up an arrangements group and support and working groups to assist its own work as it sees fit
  - MfS 18/02/08, Support Group: Appointment of Search Group



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

## At a meeting of Meeting for Sufferings

Held at Friends House, London on Saturday 7 April 2018

### **MfS/18/04/01 Opening Worship**

During opening worship we have heard Quaker faith & practice chapter 20.68 read.

We have also remembered a member of Meeting for Sufferings who has recently died.

### **MfS/18/04/02 Membership**

Since our last meeting we have received the following nominations and requests for release for Meeting for Sufferings until the rise of Yearly Meeting 2018:

#### **Release requests received:**

Rici Marshall Cross – Young Friends General Meeting representative

#### **Nominated:**

Eleanor Fuller – Young Friends General Meeting representative

Deirdre Haslam – Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee representative

We appoint the Friends named and thank the Friends released for their service.

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

Sue Brock-Hollinshead – Cambridgeshire AM

Lesley Chandler – Cornwall AM Sheila Houldin – Wirral & Chester AM

Mike Shilson – General Meeting for Scotland

#### **Other visitors:**

Ann Adams – Southern Marches AM

Lis Birch – BYM Sustainability Group clerk

Linda Craig – Committee on Clerks

Helen Meads – Committee on Clerks

Laurie Michaelis - BYM Sustainability Group secretary

Beryl Milner – Appeals Review Group

Teresa Belton – BYM Sustainability Group Review Group

Gordon Benson – BYM Sustainability Group Review Group

Jane Stephenson – BYM Sustainability Group Review Group

Michael Booth – BYM Staff, Church Government Advisor

## **Minutes**

James Johnson – BYM staff, Recording Clerk's Office  
Anne van Staveren – BYM staff, Media Relations Officer  
Oliver Waterhouse – BYM staff, Assistant Head of Ministry & Outreach

### **MfS/18/04/03 Agenda**

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

### **MfS/18/04/04 Court and Prison Register**

Further to minute MfS/17/10/05, we have heard about the witness of two Friends who were arrested last September outside the DSEI (Defence & Security Equipment International) arms fair held at the ExCel exhibition centre in London Docklands. On 7 February, Jo Frew, an attender at Tottenham meeting (North London AM), along with three others, appeared at Stratford Magistrates Court and was found not guilty of obstruction of the highway. On 8 February, Simon Watson of East London AM (also Ohio Yearly Meeting), along with three others, also appeared at Stratford Magistrates Court, and was cleared of wilfully obstructing a public highway. Both cases are being appealed and may reach the High Court.

We have also heard that Ian Bray of Brighouse West Yorkshire AM, with other members of a group, carried out four nonviolent direct actions in 8 days between 19th and 26th March as part of the Stop Killing Londoners, Cut Air Pollution campaign. They were charged with criminal damage and are awaiting a court date.

We agree to add the names of all these Friends to our court and prison register, and we hold them in the Light.

### **MfS/18/04/05 Appeal Review Group report**

In July 2016, on the recommendation of Church Government Advisory Group (CGAG), Meeting for Sufferings agreed to review the appeal process as described in sections 4.25 and 4.26 of *Quaker faith & practice* (minute MfS/16/07/11 refers). The Review Group's report is before us today, and Beryl Milner, convenor of the Group, has spoken to it.

Beryl has emphasised the 5 overarching and essential elements that need to apply in any process of reconciling discord:

- 1) That we meet in worship and expect that the Spirit will lead and guide us
- 2) That we should listen deeply to each other and take time for reflection
- 3) That communication (especially electronic) should be careful and clear (reflection should inform clarity)
- 4) That unnecessary delay should be avoided
- 5) That appropriate confidentiality is maintained by all involved

The report acknowledges the sometimes devastating and lasting effects of conflicts within meetings and highlights the fundamental problems both of a lack of familiarity with our Church Government and the spiritual basis of our decision making, and of the increase in mental health issues within our meetings.

Today we have heard that we all need to be engaged with this issue and that we need to prioritise preventive work by encouraging a ministry of teaching in cultivating our understanding of Quaker ways.

It is important for us to ask for support and advice from Quaker Life at an early stage and to be realistic in our expectations.

We forward this minute to Quaker Life Central Committee, for information, recognising its work to support meetings that are dealing with difficulties and conflict. We encourage the committee to return to Meeting for Sufferings if they wish for further discernment.

We also note Quaker faith & practice 4.23 recommends that there is a standing conciliation group within each area meeting, or groups of area meetings. We ask Quaker Life to report back to us when they feel able, as to how meetings in Britain Yearly Meeting are being supported in conflict transformation.

We agree to the recommendations of the Review Group, namely:

- a) Section 4.25 setting out provision for a dissatisfied Friend's appeal to be heard by an area meeting (and, if that fails, by another area meeting) be removed. We note that in doing this we will need to ensure that greater priority is given to conflict transformation locally with appropriate external support;
- b) as a principle for the revision of section 4.25, a member dissatisfied with a final decision of an area meeting affecting them personally and adversely may appeal to Meeting for Sufferings if, and only if,
  - i) the decision concerns the termination of membership; and
  - ii) the grounds of the appeal are that the decision was not made in right ordering, or was not made with knowledge of the relevant facts, or was unreasonable; and
  - iii) experienced mediators have been involved and the matter is not resolved;
- c) Section 4.26 provision for appeals to Meeting for Sufferings following disputes between area meetings should be removed, and provision should be made elsewhere in Quaker faith & practice for an area meeting in dispute with another to seek advice from the Recording Clerk.

We forward this minute to Church Government Advisory Group, asking it to draft appropriate text for *Quaker faith & practice*.

We thank the Review Group for their work and their report and lay the Group down.

### **MfS/18/04/06 Report of the BYM Sustainability Group Review Group**

The BYM Sustainability Group is a working group of Meeting for Sufferings, set up by minute MfS/2014/10/10 to oversee and encourage progress in relation to the commitment, made at Yearly Meeting in 2011, to become a low-carbon, sustainable community. We heard from the Group at our last meeting (MfS 18/02/10) when we recorded our appreciation for work undertaken, and we have received their minute BYMS/2018/03/03, tabled today.

The Terms of Reference made provision for Meeting for Sufferings to review the Group after three years, to ensure this continues to be the right approach to taking forward our Commitment. A Review Group was set up in 2017. Its report is before us today, and Jane Stephenson has spoken to it. She began by reminding us of the Canterbury Commitment

made in 2011 by our YM and the challenge it made to us individually, locally and corporately. MfS was asked to work with area meetings and staff and tried to meet this responsibility by setting up a Group that could take a holistic view. The Review Group has found that there were inherent problems here both in terms of ambition and in organisation and we have heard of frustrations and difficulties. We have been challenged to come up with a better way of achieving a collaborative and co-ordinated approach to sustainability work.

We reaffirm today our commitment to Sustainability, as Yearly Meeting minuted in 2011.  
*“Sustainability is an urgent matter for our Quaker witness. It is rooted in Quaker testimony and must be integral to all we do corporately and individually”* (AFFA 2009-14)

We have been moved today by the Spirit and have heard testimony affirming the spiritual basis of this concern and its centrality to all we do, individually and collectively. How do we respond effectively to the leadings of the Spirit? We need leadership from within our Society and we need to explore what it is about our structures that makes it difficult to make the progress which we would like to see.

The Review Group has made four major recommendations and the second of these states that central and standing committees should continue to take increasing responsibility for their role in facilitating the movement of BYM to becoming a low carbon, sustainable community. To ensure collaboration, resourcing, effective communication, and co-ordinated responsibility for all required tasks, a specially convened meeting should be held to determine jointly exactly how this work is to be taken forward. The meeting should be attended by representatives of the BYM Sustainability Group, Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC), QPSWCC’s Economics, Sustainability & Peace Sub-Committee (ESP), Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC), Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations, (QCCIR), Quaker World relations Committee (QWRC), Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM), Quaker Stewardship Committee (QSC), Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees (BYMT), the Board of Friends House (London) Hospitality Limited, the clerks of Meeting for Sufferings, and members of Management Meeting. We agree that this is an important first step.

At this time, we are unable to unite with the first recommendation to lay down the BYM Sustainability Group.

We considered the third recommendation that MfS maintain oversight, continuing to report back to Yearly Meeting each year on the progress of this concern, and do this by receiving annual reports from central and standing committees and AMs, sharing successes and identifying where further support is required. We need this recommendation to be developed further to understand what this would entail. We ask MfS Arrangements Group to look at how this may be done.

We look forward to a report from the meeting of representatives, that will inform our future discernment.

We thank the Review Group for their work and their report and now lay the Review Group down.

## **MfS/18/04/07 Appointments**

Central Nominations Committee brings forwards the following names for service or release:

### **Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group**

Appoint to serve from July 2018 to September 2021:

Gill Greenfield	Mid-Somerset AM
Karen Draycott	Northamptonshire AM

### **Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee**

Request for release:

Pete Redwood	Leeds AM
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### **Friends Trusts Limited**

Reappoint to serve for a third term from May 2018 to May 2021:

Paul Whitehouse	Bristol AM
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Reappoint to serve for a second term from May 2018 to May 2021:

Rachel Ashton	Chilterns AM
Lucy Parker	Norfolk & Waveney AM

### **Representatives to European Yearly Meetings**

Appoint to serve:

#### Germany Yearly Meeting (25-28 October 2018)

Annette Duensing	Luton & Leighton AM
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#### Ireland Yearly Meeting (18-22 July 2018)

Ruth Clements McQuaid	West Scotland AM
Marie McCusker	Lancashire Central & North AM

#### Netherlands Yearly Meeting (25-27 May 2018)

Silas Price	Norfolk & Waveney AM
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### **Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations**

Request for release:

Ben Wood	Leeds AM
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### **Pendle Hill – Friends in Residence**

Appoint to serve:

Melvyn Freake	North East Thames AM
Maggie Freake	North East Thames AM

We appoint the Friends named and thank the Friends released for their service.

### **b) Yearly Meeting Nominating Group**

#### **Central Nominations Committee**

Request for release:

Jenny Routledge	Norfolk & Waveney AM
Aidan Childs	Devon AM



We release these Friends and thank them for their service.

### **MfS/18/04/08 Support Group: Appointment of Search Group**

We appoint the following Friends to form an ad hoc search group to bring in the names of 8 Friends to serve on Meeting for Sufferings Support Group for our next triennium for appointment at our July meeting:

John Arnison	Leeds AM
Ann Banks	Brighouse West Yorkshire AM
Judith Mason	Banbury & Evesham AM
Sylvia Boyes	Craven & Keighley AM

### **MfS/18/04/09 The post-truth world and Quaker response**

We receive minute 18/06 of Southern Marches Area Meeting held on 13 January 2018.

The Area Meeting has been considering the question of restoring truth and integrity in the public sphere, and their leadings as individuals, as local meetings and as an area meeting.

Friends in Southern Marches AM are concerned about a lack of honesty in public affairs; and that in turn this impacts on how we live Quaker values in the world. The AM recognises that we need to begin with ourselves before pointing the finger at others; to be open to listening to those with whom we disagree (including via social media), and communicate with those who do not share our views. We have also been reminded about work within our Yearly Meeting in 1990 – 2004 under the heading ‘Truth and Integrity in Public Affairs’, which was laid down at a time when the energy and sense of urgent leading in the concern had abated.

MfS has heard a clear call to test this concern more widely and will send this minute and the briefing papers to Area Meetings. We ask Friends to consider this concern, to send any relevant minutes for our further discernment and to share news of any work they are already doing. We expect to return to this matter in November.

### **MfS/18/04/10 Letter of greeting to Ireland Yearly Meeting**

We receive from Quaker World Relations Committee a draft for our letter of greeting to Ireland Yearly Meeting to be held at Limerick Institute of Technology on 18–22 July 2018 (paper MfS 2018/04/10).

We ask the clerk to sign the letter (as amended in the meeting) on our behalf.

### **MfS/18/04/11 Quaker Recognised Bodies**

Further to minute MfS/15/12/1, we receive paper MfS 2017/10/14 recommending a group for registration as a Quaker Recognised Body.

We agree to register Quaker Bolivia Link as an external group for five years, with registration to be reviewed by April 2023.

**MfS/18/04/12 BYM Trustees**

Ingrid Greenhow, clerk of BYM Trustees, has spoken to the minutes of the meeting held on 16 and 17 February 2018. She drew particular attention to work on the Lobbying Act, and anticipated receipt of an interim report at the half way stage of the Vibrancy Project; a review of the procedure for legacy-funded projects, and a review of the Management Meeting arrangements.

Trustees also responded to the three questions concerning Diversity & Inclusion that had been posed by MfS. We were glad to hear of the appointment of two regional youth workers (in Bristol and in Sheffield) and a plan to recruit an inclusion and diversity co-ordinator.

Peter Ullathorne, Yearly Meeting Treasurer, reported on a good year in 2017, with much spent on very good work. The large increase in reserves is attributable to revaluation of our properties.

We thank the Trustees for their work.

**MfS/18/04/13 Closing minute**

This has been the final meeting of the current triennium and we have closed our time together in worship, rejoicing in the presence of the Sprit with us.

We thank all Friends who have served Meeting for Sufferings during the last three years,

Anne Ullathorne  
Clerk

**Meeting for Sufferings: Functions Checklist (Quaker faith & practice Chapter 7.02)**

	<b>Requirement</b>	<b>April 18 minutes</b>	<b>Comments</b>
A	To set the priorities for the centrally managed work	6	Sustainability
B	To issue public statements in the name of BYM		
C	To receive regular interim reports from BYM trustees	12	
D	To receive the BYM trustees' annual report & accounts for information	12	
E	To make a report on its own activities to YM		
F	To determine the dates of YM		
G	To deliberate on how best to support the spiritual life of the yearly meeting and to further the development of its visionary and prophetic role	6	
H	To keep under review and to test as appropriate the existing and new concerns referred to it by AMs and others	6,9	Sustain, TIPA
I	To foster communication throughout the yearly meeting		
J	To receive minutes from area meetings	9	S Marches
K	To make appropriate entries in the prison and court register	4	
L	To appoint representatives to attend other Yearly Meetings	7,10	Apt and Ireland letter
M	To receive information about changes in the composition or status of general meetings and gatherings		
N	To make changes in the composition of area meetings		
O	To give assistance to area meetings in the amicable settlement of disputes	5	Appeal process
P	To hear appeals against area meeting decisions	5	
Q	To give guidance on policy matters referred to it by the BYM trustees from time to time		
R	To authorise action and minute as required under other sections of Quaker Faith and Practice	7/11	Appt/QRBodies
S	To set up an arrangements group and support and working groups to assist its own work as it sees fit	8	Search group

- Receiving reports from central committees adds to our understanding and decisions regarding both A priorities and G supporting the spiritual life of the YM