



Yearly Meeting of
the Religious Society
of Friends in Britain

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

16 March 2017

Meeting for Sufferings will be held on Saturday 1 April 2017

Dear Friends,

Our next meeting is on Saturday 1st April in Friends House and you will find the agenda and papers attached.

May I draw your attention to the checklist for Meeting for Sufferings provided by the MfS Support Group, especially if this is your first time at Meeting for Sufferings or if you just want to refresh your mind about our arrangements. The link is:
<http://www.quaker.org.uk/mfsarrangements>

Last meeting we considered some ways in which we could improve our working. Thank you for the feedback both from your groups at the meeting and for some emails received afterwards. We made a minute asking MfS Arrangements Group 'to study the responses and take things forward.' And we have identified three improvements we can make:

- 1) The headline agenda items will be sent out to representatives and alternates and to the Area meeting clerks' cluster, as soon as we have agreed the outline agenda and then the full papers will be sent out as now, a full two weeks before the meeting;
- 2) In order to remind ourselves of the responsibilities set down in *Quaker faith & practice*, Chapter 7.02 and how we are meeting those, a completed checklist will be attached to our minutes after each meeting;
- 3) When receiving reports from our Central Committees and others, we will try to identify what we, as Sufferings, wish to hear about as well as encouraging the reporting committee to share what it is they wish to tell us.

Continued on next page

On 1st April 2017 the day will divide into two – in the morning we will focus on governance and accountability and the agenda includes information from trustees, Church Government Advisory Group and the report from Quaker Stewardship Committee which requires you please, to consider whether wider central use could be made of the information that Area Meetings provide in their trustees' annual reports and accounts. You should have already received notification about this so that you can consult in your own Area Meeting.

In the afternoon, the emphasis will be on the world fellowship of Friends with the report from Quaker World Relations Committee, our letter to Ireland Yearly Meeting, Area Meeting minutes and other 'domestic' issues.

I hope your travel arrangements work well for you and look forward to seeing you then.

Yours in Friendship



Anne Ullathorne,
Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings

Papers enclosed with this mailing

Agenda

MfS 2017 04 05	BYM Trustees minutes
MfS 2017 04 06	Quaker Stewardship Committee Report to Meeting for Sufferings
MfS 2017 04 07	Quaker faith & practice: proposed revision to section 14.40
MfS 2017 04 08	BYM Sustainability Group Review
MfS 2017 04 10	QWRC 2017 Report
MfS 2017 04 11	Letter of Greeting to Ireland YM
MfS 2017 04 12	AM minutes received
MfS 2017 04 13	Quaker Recognised Bodies
MfS 2017 04 06b	Quaker Stewardship Committee report



Meeting for Sufferings 1 April 2017

George Fox room, Friends House, 173 Euston Road,
London NW1 2BJ

Agenda

09:00 Arrivals

10:00 Session starts

1. Opening worship

2. Welcome and introductions

3. Agenda

Adoption and acceptance of the agenda.

4. Membership

(MfS 2017 04 04 – tabled paper)

5. BYM Trustees annual report

(for information)

Ingrid Greenhow, clerk of BYM Trustees, will speak to the minutes of the February 2017 meeting.

(MfS 2017 04 05)

6. Quaker Stewardship Committee report

(for consideration)

Ursula Fuller, clerk of Quaker Stewardship Committee, will speak to the paper. This is an opportunity for dialogue with QSC, and to respond to the three questions asked on the first page.

(MfS 2017 04 06)

Break

(Continued) Quaker Stewardship Committee report

7. Church Government Advisory Group amendments to *Qf&P* (for approval)

To approve proposed changes to Quaker faith & practice, which would then be forwarded to Yearly Meeting.

(MfS 2017 04 07)

12.30 – 14.00 Lunch in the Restaurant

Informal lunchtime gatherings in the William Penn suite:

Meet members of Quaker Stewardship Committee.

Meet members of Quaker World Relations Committee

BYM Trustees will also be present and keen to meet with Friends

- 8. BYM Sustainability Group: Review Group terms of reference (for approval)**
To approve terms of reference for this short-term review group.
(MfS 2017 04 08)

- 9. Appointments**
(MfS 2017 04 09 – tabled paper)

- 10. Quaker World Relations Committee report (for consideration)**
Barbara Windle, a member of Quaker World Relations Committee, will speak to the report. This is an opportunity for dialogue with QWRC, and to respond to the question asked at the end of the paper.
(MfS 2017 04 10)

- 11. Letter of Greeting to Ireland YM (to note)**
(MfS 2017 04 11)

- 12. Minutes received from Area Meetings**
(MfS 2017 04 12)

There are no minutes from Central Committees or other bodies this time.

Hampshire and Islands AM Minute 7 from the meeting held 14 January 2017 regarding the Vision for a Criminal Justice system.

Brighouse West Yorkshire AM Minute 17/02/11 from the meeting held 12 February 2017 regarding the care of vulnerable adult members and the responsibilities of local meetings.

North East Thames AM Minute 17.21 from the meeting held 18 February 2017 regarding transgender and non-binary inclusion.

Break

- 13. Quaker Recognised Bodies (for approval)**
To register some Quaker Recognised Bodies
(MfS 2017 04 13)

- 14. Meeting for Sufferings in Manchester (for information)**
To hear further details of the meeting that will take place at Manchester Mount Street Meeting House this October.

Closing worship

16.00 Close
Tea, coffee and departures.

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group

Held on 6th March 2017 at Friends House.

Present: Margaret Bryan (convenor), Sue Goodson, Ursula Fuller, Jane Pearn, Anne Ullathorne and Juliet Prager.

In attendance: Graham Spackman, Ann Wilkinson (item 5)

1. Reflections on Meeting for Sufferings February 2017

We have reviewed our February meeting, noting feedback from Meeting for Sufferings Support Group, Home Groups and individual Friends. We note a strong desire to engage Friends in their Area Meetings and to strengthen links between members and the central work and its priorities. We will be adjusting the flow of information to reps and AM clerks.

2. Clerk's meetings with Quaker Life and Britain Yearly Meeting Sustainability Group

Anne Ullathorne attended part of a meeting of the joint committees of Quaker Life Central Committee and Britain Yearly Meeting Sustainability Group and reported back to us.

3. Forward Agenda

We have considered our forward agenda which informs our planning.

4. Agenda for 1 April 2017

We planned the agenda for our April meeting, agreeing to send out the Quaker Stewardship Committee report straight away to allow more time for consideration locally.

5. Meeting for Sufferings October 2017

Anne Wilkinson and Graham Spackman updated us on matters relating to our meeting in Manchester in October. We are looking forward to engaging with local Friends.

6. Date and time of future meetings

NB we will meet 10.30 and 3.30 on each occasion

Friday 28th April 2017

Monday 4th September 2017

Friday 3rd November 2017

Margaret Bryan
Convenor

MfS 2017 04 Additional information

Meeting for Sufferings Forward Agenda (2017)

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

June	<p>Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) annual report</p> <p>Reports from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Friends General Meeting • General Meeting for Scotland • Meeting of Friends in Wales <p>(these reports will be brought, if ready: otherwise, we will receive them at a later meeting)</p> <p>Central Nominations Committee – update on new ways of working</p>
October (Manchester)	<p>Yearly Meeting 2017 – reflections and follow-up</p> <p>Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC) annual report</p> <p>BYM Communications – including our Speaking Out policy</p>
December	<p>Young People’s Participation Day</p> <p>Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC) annual report</p> <p>Our Faith in the Future – two years after being adopted by MfS, how are Meetings using it?</p>

Matters expected to return in due course

- **Gender Equality and the Tabular Statement** – sent to Recording Clerk March 2015
- **Pastoral and spiritual support to people who are not able to regularly attend local meetings** – sent to Quaker Life for advice in February 2015
- **Use of the phrase ‘Quakers in Britain** - forwarded to BYMT for advice in April 2016 (expected to return in October 2017)
- **Review of the Appeal process** – report from the review group
- **Review of BYM Sustainability Group** – to appoint a 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

Other items to be timetabled

- **Quaker Recognised Bodies** – approval of proposals (as ready)

At a meeting of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Friday 17 and Saturday 18 February 2017 at Friends House London

Minutes

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

In attendance: Lis Burch, Clerk of BYM Sustainability Group (minutes **BYMT-2017-02-15** and **16**); Helen Drewery, Head of Worship & Witness, (minutes **BYMT-2017-02-01** to **BYMT-2017-02-12**); Lesley Hennigan, Project Manager, Property Support for Quaker Meetings (minute **BYMT-2017-02-10**); Lisa Kiew, Head of Finance & Resources, (except minute **BYMT-2017-02-22**); Andrew Lane, Quaker Council for European Affairs Director in Brussels (minute **BYMT-2017-02-14**), Laurie Michaelis, Secretary, BYM Sustainability Group (minutes **BYMT-2017-02 15** and **16**), Paul Parker, Recording Clerk (except minute **BYMT-2017-02-22**); Juliet Prager, Deputy Recording Clerk, (except minute **BYMT-2017-02-22**); Oliver Robertson, Clerk of Quaker Council for European Affairs (minute **BYMT-2017-02-14**)

Prevented: Paul Grey, Head of Operations

BYMT-2017-02-01 Welcome, agenda check, conflicts of interest check, minutes of last meeting

We will be welcoming Andrew Lane, Quaker Council for European Affairs, Representative in Brussels; Oliver Robertson, Clerk, Quaker Council for European Affairs; Lis Burch, Clerk of BYM Sustainability Group; Laurie Michaelis, Secretary, BYM Sustainability Group.

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2016 have been signed by the clerk and placed in the minute book.

There are no unrecorded conflicts of interest.

We confirm our agenda.

During our opening worship, we have heard Advice 25. Caring for oneself. From "Good Business – ethics at work." Advices and queries on personal standards of conduct at work published by The Quakers and Business Group.

BYMT-2017-02-02 Consent agenda

(a) Minutes received

We receive the following minutes:

- Audit Committee 20x16 (**BYMT-2017-02-02a**)
- Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee 18-20xi16 (**BYMT-2017-02-02b**)
- Property Support Reference Group 23xi16 (**BYMT-2017-02-02d**)
- Friends House (London) Hospitality Ltd 24xi16 (**BYMT-2017-02-02e**)

- Employment Committee 24xi16 (**BYMT-2017-02-02f**)
- Property Strategy Group 25xi16 (**BYMT-2017-02-02g**)
- Quaker Life Central Committee 25-27xi16 (**BYMT-2017-02-02h**)
- Finance & Property Committee 26i17 (**BYMT-2017-02-02i**)
- Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations 27to29i17 (**BYMT-2017-02-02m**)

(b) Other items

We note receipt of the following:

- (i) Staff Data Safety Group annual report (**BYMT-2017-02-02j**). This report covers 2016 but includes work the group plans for 2017 particularly in light of the General Data Protection Regulation which comes into effect in May 2018.
- (ii) Insurance report (**BYMT-2017-02-02k**)
- (iii) Operational Plan progress report (**BYMT-2017-02-02l**)

BYMT-2017-02-03 Items on draft minute

(a) **Finance reports**

We receive the financial reports for period 11 and period 12 of last year.

(b) **Audit Committee annual report**

We receive the BYMT Audit Committee annual report for 2016, the last report from the Committee under its old format and terms of reference.

(c) **Appointments**

(i) **Audit Committee**

We note the following appointments were made to BYMT Audit Committee as between-meetings' decisions:

David Bunney - Central Yorkshire

Christine Willmore - Bristol AM & trustee

We note also that Paul Whitehouse was appointed as Clerk as a between-meetings decision.

We record the following releases from the previous BYMT Audit Committee and thank these Friends for their service:

Graham Taylor

James Eddington

Mike Perks

Shirley Torrens

Gerald Craddock

Christine Willmore

Val Ferguson

Jean-Marc le Tissier

(ii) **Property Support Reference Group**

We accept the nomination of Colin Gerard as clerk/convenor of the Property Support Reference Group and so appoint him for the duration of the project.

(d) **Endowments**

We receive a request for a resolution to convert an endowment into a restricted fund (BYMT Finance & Property Committee minutes FP17/06) (**BYMT-2017-02-03e**)

We hereby pass a resolution to apply for Charity Commission consent to spend the endowment arising from the Elsie Sawell bequest, on the basis that the income generated is small relative to the needs, and noting that there are likely to be additional needs coming to the fore through the pilot project looking at property support for meetings.

(e) Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee Strategic Plan

We receive and welcome Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee's Strategic Plan and thank them for their work.

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

BYMT-2017-02-04 Reflective meetings

Nick Francis, Assistant Clerk, has reported on the reflective meetings held with outgoing Trustees and those completing their first year of service. We recommend that the Clerk and Assistant Clerk are involved in the induction process.

We ask the Clerk and the Recording Clerk to review the pattern of meetings, and to look at our membership of the Trustee body becoming more inclusive.

BYMT-2017-02-05 Trustees news

We receive the reports of the activities of Trustees since our last meeting (**BYMT-2017-02-05**), including the reports of seminars, etc, undertaken.

We have been reminded of the importance of undertaking external training for trustees.

BYMT-2017-02-06 Joint meeting of Quaker Life and Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committees

Hazel Shellens has reported on the joint meeting of QLCC/QPSWCC with members of the BYM Sustainability group, BYM trustees, the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings and the Vibrancy regional development workers (QPSWCC minute 2017/11 and QL minute 2017.11 refers), which was held from 10-12 February 2017 at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre. We are encouraged to hear of the positive approach to areas of joint working, especially on strategy development, and look forward to hearing of further progress from our central committees.

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

BYMT-2017-02-07 Recording Clerk's report

We receive the Recording Clerk's report (BYMT-2017-02-06) covering

- Governance, Management, external relations and communications: Yearly Meeting Gathering, Management changes, Operational Plan, Communication & Services department review, List of public statements agreed, Visits, External relations (Quaker and related organisations), External relations (faith sector), External relations (third sector)
- Operations: General news, building works. Health & safety
- Finance & resources: Staff changes, Fundraising strategy, Training strategy
- Worship & witness: News & updates, Central Committees' strategy development, Support for meetings strategy, Joint Libraries Development Project

This report also included the confidential staffing update.

We have received Management Meeting minutes for 22 November (with Operational Managers Team minutes), 13 December, 10 & 24 January and 14 February. We will not be receiving Operational Managers Team minutes in future.

BYMT-2017-02-08 Risks

(a) High and major risks 2016

Further to minute BYMT-2016-06-18, we receive paper BYMT-2017-02-07a detailing what has been done to mitigate the four high likelihood and major risks we identified, and assessing whether these steps have decreased the risks.

We ask for a report on all the work being undertaken to look into Ageing and Declining membership to be brought to a future meeting this year.

(b) Risk Register 2017

We receive a paper on the 2017 Risk Register (BYMT-2017-02-07b) commenting on the Risk Register.

BYMT-2017-02-09 Quaker Meeting Houses Heritage Project

We receive the final report of the Quaker Meeting Houses Heritage Project (**BYMT-2017-02-08**) listing outcomes, impact and next steps. The report also includes the main section of the National Overview Report. We have highlighted the value of this document to Friends and thank all those involved for their work and particularly Ingrid Greenhow.

The project now being complete, we lay the project group down.

BYMT-2017-02-10 Property support

We are joined for this item by Lesley Hennigan, Project Manager, Property Support for Quaker Meetings. She has introduced this legacy-funded project to us, which she has been working on since 20 October since when she has met with many Friends and visited several properties. She has responded to our questions.

The Property Support Reference Group is supporting Lesley in her work.

BYMT-2017-02-11 Scottish Advocacy pilot project review

We receive a paper on the review of the Scottish Advocacy pilot project 2015-2016 which recommends:

- That Scottish Parliamentary Engagement work should be accepted by trustees of BYM and GMS as core work for Quakers in Britain.
- That Scottish Advocacy work should continue for at least another three years (2018 – 2020); the Pilot be renamed to reflect its core status; and a revised MoU be agreed by Trustees of BYM and GMS.
- That the basic arrangements for governance and management between BYM, GMS, PLFG, and the relevant staff members should continue.
- That consideration be given to increasing the hours of the SPEO (e.g. from 2.5 days to 3.5 days) to reflect the increasing opportunities and needs for this work, if these continue through 2017, and subject to agreement as in recommendation E.

- That new arrangements for financing the project be agreed between BYM and GMS trustees. We recommend that Friends in Scotland continue to contribute, within their capacity.
- That existing and future concerns be discerned as at present by PLFG, with agreement by GMS trustees and GM Clerks.
- That the work programme continue to be developed between PLFG and staff at Friends House.
- That the SPEO should be encouraged to strengthen links with Scottish media, under guidance from QCS; and that GMS and AMs in Scotland be encouraged to continue improve their websites.

The report was considered by Management Meeting (Minute MtM -2017-01-17).

Paul Parker attended a meeting with the Trustees of General Meeting for Scotland on 6 February when they received and considered the report. We note minute 4 of their meeting.

We welcome the review and we ask Management Meeting to consider options for continuing BYM's commitment to supporting advocacy work in Scotland for another 3 years, and to bring proposals to us in June.

We have heard that the Recording Clerk will be working to put in place a new memorandum of understanding between BYM and General Meeting for Scotland, and welcome this development.

We thank Beryl Milner and Douglas Rennie for their work in producing this review.

BYMT-2017-02-12 IT strategy

We receive the IT strategy paper (**BYMT-2017-02-11**) which proposes to move forward to a more integrated and simplified provision achieved by reviewing existing systems with a view to replacing them, investing in integrated systems and ensuring appropriate interconnection between applications.

The broad strategy is set for a 5-year period, Management Meeting would review progress every 3-6 months with a full formal review at the end of 2020. This report was considered by BYMT Finance & Property (FP17/11) who accepted the importance of the proposal and were content for management to progress the strategy direction, subject to the budgeting cycle and capital processes when the detailed costs will come back to Finance & Property Committee and Trustees as per the Financial Regulations.

We endorse this approach.

BYMT-2017-02-13 Employment Committee annual report

We receive the annual report from our Employment Committee. We appreciate the positive minutes and reports from the committee.

We send this minute to BYMT Employment Committee.

BYMT-2017-02-14 Quaker Council for European Affairs

Andrew Lane, QCEA Brussels Director, and Oliver Robertson, Clerk of QCEA, join us for this item.

We receive paper **BYMT-2017-02-13** which summarises the relationship between BYM and QCEA.

Andrew and Oliver have presented to us about the work of QCEA, and have responded to our questions.

BYMT-2017-02-15 EU Referendum

Lis Burch, clerk of the BYM Sustainability Group, and Laurie Michaelis, secretary to the BYM Sustainability Group, join us for this item.

Further to **BYMT-2016-09-14**, we receive paper **BYMT 2017-02-04** giving notes of the interfaith meeting at Lambeth Palace with the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Exiting the EU, attended by the Recording Clerk.

We note that BYM is considering making a submission to government about the issues which are of primary concern to Friends. We have offered suggestions for inclusion in the submission.

BYMT-2017-02-16 Sustainability

Lis Burch, clerk of the BYM Sustainability Group, and Laurie Michaelis, secretary to the BYM Sustainability Group, remain with us for this item. Meeting for Sufferings on 4 February received the annual report of the Group (MfS 2017 02 05) and we receive this minute.

Lis Burch has updated us on the work of the Sustainability Group. We recognise the challenges of implementing the sustainability commitment across Yearly Meeting. We agree to revise the terms of reference of committees to include reporting on sustainability, and we ask the Recording Clerk to implement this. We ask staff to look at ways of co-ordinating our work on our sustainability commitment within the centrally-managed work, and to liaise with the Sustainability Group on how this can be reported more coherently and regularly.

We have heard of the proposed plans for a project on Nurturing our Sustainability Ministry, and ask staff to support the development of a legacy funding application, alongside other developments, for consideration in due course.

We thank Lis Burch and Laurie Michaelis for their report and uphold the group in its work.

We send this minute to the BYM Sustainability Group.

BYMT-2017-02-17 Quaker United Nations Office Geneva

Lis Burch, clerk of the BYM Sustainability Group and Laurie Michaelis secretary to the BYM Sustainability Group, remain with us for this item. We receive paper BYMT-2017-02-16 from the working group we appointed by minute BYMT-2017-9-11b on QUNO funding and fundraising.

The paper contains two key recommendations:

- i. That we agree a revised Agreement on Fundraising to be concluded between BYMT and QUNO (Geneva) to permit QUNO to approach potential donors in the UK; to enhance communication between the two organisations about fundraising intentions; to provide for BYM to apply for additional funding from

bodies which will only fund an organisation based in the UK; and clarify the position with restricted donations and legacies.

We authorise our clerks to sign the agreement on our behalf.

- ii. That we commit a maximum of £533,500 of legacy funding over a three year period from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2020 to fund QUNO's project on Human Impacts of Climate Change.

We agree to this.

We thank our working group for their work, and now lay the group down.

BYMT-2017-02-18 Review of legacy funding arrangements

We receive a report on the proposed legacy funding (time limited projects) review as recommended by minute **BYMT-2015-11-03a** (paper **BYMT-2017-02-17**).

We agree to establish a small group to review the legacy funding (time-limited projects) approach. The review will consider whether the goals set out by Trustees in 2013 and 2014 have been achieved; whether the approach should be continued; and, if so, whether any changes should be made. We ask our nominations group to bring in names of three trustees to serve on this group, to our meeting in June.

BYMT-2017-02-19 Trustees annual report and financial statements: update

We receive paper **BYMT-2017-02-18** updating us on the preparation of the Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2016.

BYMT-2017-02-20 Meeting for Sufferings and Yearly Meeting Gathering preparations

(a) Meeting for Sufferings

We have discussed our contribution to Meeting for Sufferings on 1 April.

(b) Yearly Meeting Gathering

We have discussed our participation at Yearly Meeting Gathering.

BYMT-2017-02-21 Reviewing the meeting.

We have reviewed the meeting.

BYMT-2017-02-22 Time without staff

We have spent time without staff.

We part, hoping to meet again on Friday 31 March 2017.

Ingrid Greenhow
Clerk

Quaker Stewardship Committee Report to Meeting for Sufferings

Quaker Stewardship Committee (QSC) is a standing committee of Britain Yearly Meeting. It reports directly to Yearly Meeting in session and is not formally answerable to any other part of BYM. Like Meeting for Sufferings, QSC's main interaction with local work is through area meetings.

This report is in three sections: Quaker Stewardship Committee and the role of trustees, how QSC helps and current areas of interest. It asks Meeting for Sufferings three questions:

- What more can QSC and area meetings do to ensure that trustees and treasurers receive the support they need?
- Would making wider central use of the information provided in trustees' annual reports and accounts be a worthwhile allocation of BYM's resources?
- How can QSC best prompt a wider conversation to ensure that Britain Yearly Meeting's governance structures are sustainable in the long term?

We hope that representatives and alternates will consult their AM trustees about these questions in advance of the Sufferings meeting.

QSC and the role of trustees

QSC supports meetings and other bodies which collectively form Britain Yearly Meeting in their stewardship and coordinates the relationship between the yearly meeting and those administering charity law (Quaker Faith & Practice 14.36-42). Most of QSC's work is focused on providing support, advice and training for treasurers and trustees to enable them to meet the requirements of charity law in their stewardship of finance and property; encouraging openness accountability, transparency and integrity in all our affairs.

The role of trustees includes but is not limited to ensuring legal compliance with a range of laws and regulations, for example, charity law, rules on accounting, safeguarding and data protection. The regulations Friends need to comply with have evolved over time but the concept of good stewardship goes back to the earliest days of the Society. Even if there were no legal requirements the Society would want to ensure Friends are safeguarded and that its resources, including money and property, are well managed and deployed effectively to further its objectives. Trustees are appointed by area meetings to carry out this task on behalf of Friends for a temporary period, and while their role focuses on a range of practical issues it is a spiritual one requiring discernment.

"It follows that trustees must be well-grounded in the life and concerns of the meeting for which they act. ... Just as they care for the life of the meeting, the meeting should support and uphold them and their work.

In its turn, the meeting must trust the discernment of the trustees, to whom much day-to-day decision-making may be entrusted." (Qf&p 15.07).

QSC has a wide remit. The committee has discerned its priorities and set the following objectives for 2017-20 that align with Our Faith in the Future:

1. To support area meeting trustees and area meetings in working effectively together to carry out the tasks laid on them.
Quaker communities are loving, inclusive and all age; all Friends understand and live by Quaker discipline.
2. To support area meetings in finding and retaining people to act as trustees, treasurers and other posts with significant responsibility for their management and governance.
Quaker communities are loving, inclusive and all age; all Friends understand and live by Quaker discipline.
3. To ensure that all area meetings produce annual reports and accounts that comply with regulatory requirements, help Friends make best use of their resources and communicate Quaker work and public benefit to a wider audience
Quaker values are active in the world; Quakers are well known and widely understood.
4. To ensure that support is available to all trustees for their diverse areas of responsibility, recognizing that this responsibility is shared with Quaker Life Central Committee, and others.
Quaker communities are loving inclusive and all age; all Friends understand and live by Quaker discipline.
5. To support area meeting trustees in finding and establishing the right legal vehicle for their work.
All Friends understand and live by Quaker discipline; Quakers are well known and understood.
6. To provide effective support for meetings on property matters.
Quaker communities are loving inclusive and all age; Quakers are well known and widely understood.

How QSC helps

QSC's support concentrates on key elements of the trustee role including charity law, finance and property. Trustees also receive support from Quaker Life particularly on matters relating to wardens, employees and in managing conflict in meetings. QSC and Quaker Life Central Committee have arrangements in place to ensure regular communication on issues of shared interest and concern. QSC also liaises with the new property support officer; the committee's remit for property is areas such as legal ownership, review of leases, insurance and charity law.

QSC provides help in a variety of ways including:

- an email cluster for all trustees (with plans to set up a similar one for treasurers) that provides a forum for trustees to ask questions, offer answers and share best practice;
- handbooks and other reference materials for trustees and treasurers;
- Trustees and Treasurers News;

- advice sheets on common areas of concern or difficulty, for example, setting a reserves policy, responding to changes in accounting standards and third party liability insurance for meetings that hire out rooms;
- check lists for treasurers and trustees producing annual reports and accounts to bring them up to date with current accounting requirements and Charity Commission/OSCR guidance on good practice;
- group membership of the Association of Church Accountants and Treasurers which includes all area and local meetings treasurers and provides access to additional advice and support; and
- a network of link friends with every area meeting linked to a named member of QSC who can answer questions or find someone who can. Link Friends review all trustees' annual reports and accounts so that QSC can report to Yearly Meeting on the standard of reports and accounts and identify areas for improvement.

QSC also supports a cycle of conferences and events for trustees and treasurers. From 17-19 February 2017 seventy trustees and others met at Woodbrooke. The theme of the weekend was "Spinning the Plates: juggling the joys and challenges of trusteeship" and it provided a chance to explore the spiritual and practical aspects of trusteeship with sessions on key areas of responsibility, an opportunity to share topics of concern and best practice, and a question and answer session. Common themes explored during the weekend were:

- difficulties in finding Friends to serve as trustees;
- improving communications between trustees, Area Meetings and Local Meetings;
- how to continue to improve trustees' reports and accounts;
- how to balance short and long term considerations when discerning the way forward on big financial issues such as whether to sell or retain property; and
- better publicising the help available to trustees from QSC and Quaker Life.

Question: What more can QSC and area meetings do to ensure that trustees and treasurers receive the support they need?

Current areas of interest

QSC is keen to encourage better use of trustees' annual reports to share what Quakers are doing with a wider audience and communicate the public benefit of area meetings more clearly. Used in the right way, annual reports could play a key role in outreach, they could also be better used within the Society to collect key information from Area Meetings in a consistent and regular way without the need for separate surveys or correspondence.

The Sustainability Group has challenged all committees to set out how their work relates to the Canterbury commitment. Trustees have been involved in many of the area meeting projects responding to the Canterbury commitment and many reference this in their annual reports. The Canterbury commitment is part of Britain Yearly Meeting's objects so, as one example of making better use of reports, QSC could ask area meeting trustees to reference their response to the Canterbury commitment in all annual reports. This information could be passed on to the Sustainability Group, providing information in a consistent format and saving the group contacting all area meetings and local meetings separately.

Question: Would making wider central use of the information provided in trustees' annual reports and accounts be a worthwhile expenditure of BYM's resources?

QSC is also considering the longer term. There has been a tightening of the regulatory regime for charities in recent years. Following the well-publicised problems at Kids Company and in relation to charitable fundraising there are likely to be increased demands on charities of all kinds to be more transparent about how they manage their affairs and contribute to public benefit. At the same time changes in pensions and other financial pressures mean more Friends are likely to need to, and choose to, continue in paid work for longer than they have in the past.

An area meeting cannot function as a charitable body if it does not have enough trustees. Area meetings are increasingly reporting that it is difficult to find Friends to serve as trustees, and to a lesser extent, treasurers. More research would be needed to establish the full extent of the problem and the underlying causes but problems raised by Area Meetings include:

- The range of issues for which trustees are legally accountable (including financial and property matters, safeguarding and data protection to name just some).
- A shortage of Friends with the necessary skills.
- A shortage of Friends with the good health and time available to carry out these roles.
- In some meetings, insufficient understanding and support amongst Friends for Quaker governance in general and the legal accountabilities of trustees in particular.
- In some places, complex governance arrangements add to the burden on trustees and to the number of trustees needed, for example, where there are separate trusts and charities linked to the area meeting.

QSC provides support to resolve immediate problems, for example, advising on buying in professional support, asking a neighbouring area meeting if they can help fill a trustee post (trustees need to be Members of the Society of Friends but can be from another area meeting) and finding ways to simplify governance.

However, addressing these problems one at a time and without a long-term vision for our governance risks Britain Yearly Meeting missing opportunities and making a decision in one area that closes off options in another.

For example, part of the answer might be for some area meetings to merge. Some are already looking at this but there is no national picture to guide their discernment. QSC believes it is likely that the challenge of finding suitable and willing Friends to fill trustee and treasurer posts will get harder and Friends should take the opportunity to think imaginatively about our future governance now.

The long term governance of Britain Yearly Meeting is a matter for Britain Yearly Meeting, Britain Yearly Meeting trustees, Meeting for Sufferings and the Society as a whole; it is not a matter for QSC alone. QSC is keen to promote and encourage a conversation about future governance, and believes this is both necessary and urgent to secure a sustainable governance model for future generations.

Question: How can QSC best prompt a wider conversation to ensure that Britain Yearly Meeting's governance structures are sustainable in the long term?

Mary Aiston & Ursula Fuller on behalf of QSC
1.iii.2017

Current members of Quaker Stewardship Committee (with AMs and terms of service)

Mary Aiston (Kingston & Wandsworth AM)	27/05/2016 – 27/05/2019
Fred Ashmore (Kingston & Wandsworth AM)	27/05/2016 – 27/05/2019
Yvonne Dickson (Wirral & Chester AM)	27/05/2016 – 27/05/2019
Martin Ford (Leeds AM)	27/05/2016 – 05/08/2017
Ursula Fuller (East Kent AM)	05/06/2014 – 10/05/2017 (Clerk)
Ann Gee (Luton & Leighton AM)	29/05/2012 – 28/05/2018
Kathy Gollin (West Somerset AM)	04/05/2015 – 28/05/2017
Peter Morris (Surrey & Hampshire Border AM)	04/05/2015 – 28/05/2018
Roger Paddison (Kendal & Sedbergh AM)	31/07/2011 – 01/08/2017
Daphne Wassermann (West Scotland AM)	09/08/2014 – 09/08/2017 (Asst Clerk)
Ian Watson (Cumberland AM)	04/05/2015 – 28/05/2018

07 Quaker faith & practice: proposed revision to section 14.40

Introduction

Church Government Advisory Group (CGAG) is a working group of Meeting for Sufferings (MfS). Its role is to identify, draft and recommend any church government amendments to *Quaker faith & practice*.

Last December, MfS approved some changes to *Quaker faith & practice*, and forwarded them to Yearly Meeting (minute MfS/16/12/16). CGAG has spotted another change needed in one of the sections, so is now asking MfS to approve another small revision, in time to be included in the Yearly Meeting 2017 papers. The note below explains more; and CGAG's minute is copied afterwards.

Note from CGAG

In December 2016, your Church Government Advisory Group recommended changes to Qf&p section 14.40 (Quaker Stewardship Committee) to reflect the change of Management Meeting structure; the fact that Yearly Meeting 2013 had changed the terms of reference to Quaker Stewardship Committee was overlooked.

This means that our recommended wording does not suitably describe the current situation.

We have revisited the current wording of section 14.40 and compared it with the current terms of reference of Quaker Stewardship Committee. This enables us to suggest a simplification to the wording of section 14.40 as follows.

14.40	<p>Quaker Stewardship Committee shall comprise the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) nine Friends appointed by Yearly Meeting, from names submitted by Central Nominations Committee (see 6.21), for a three-year period beginning and ending at a Yearly Meeting, three members retiring annually though eligible for reappointment for a second term and exceptionally for a third;b) a clerk and assistant clerk appointed by Yearly Meeting annually from names submitted by Central Nominations Committee (see 6.21); <p>together with the Recording Clerk and General Secretary of Quaker Finance & Property, ex officio.</p> <p>In case of a vacancy, Meeting for Sufferings is authorised to make an interim appointment up to the next Yearly Meeting.</p>
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The words crossed through can be removed. We invite Meeting for Sufferings to consider this proposed wording, and to forward it, if agreeable, to Yearly Meeting 2017 in place of the form of words agreed at your December 2016 meeting.

Catherine James, Convener
Church Government Advisory Group, March 2017

Minute of a meeting of Church Government Advisory Group held 2 March 2017 at Friends House, London

CGAG 17/04a Another look at Qf&p 14.40

We forwarded changes to the text of 14.40 to Meeting for Sufferings by our minute16/27, and as a result, we have received MfS minute16/12/15 Quaker faith & practice, where they have agreed to send our recommendations to BYM 2017.

We have now learned that our proposed changes were made without full awareness of the current terms of reference of the Quaker Stewardship Committee. At present the terms of reference name only the Recording Clerk as an ex officio member. We therefore suggest that 'and General Secretary of Quaker Finance & Property' is deleted.

We forward this minute to Meeting for Sufferings with the recommendation that they reconsider their decision of December 2016.

Catherine James
Convener

To: Meeting for Sufferings

BYM Sustainability Group - Review

The BYM Sustainability Group (BYMSG) works to oversee and encourage progress in relation to the commitment, made at Yearly Meeting in 2011, to become a low-carbon, sustainable community.

In its current format, the group was set up in 2014 for three years in the first instance. When the BYMSG reported to Meeting for Sufferings in February this year, it was agreed to set up a small review group to consider whether this continues to be the right approach (minute MfS 2017/02/06).

Meeting for Sufferings is asked to approve the following draft Terms of Reference.

Meeting for Sufferings Group to review the BYM Sustainability Group

Draft Terms of Reference

The Review Group shall work within these terms of reference, under the authority of minute XXX of Meeting for Sufferings held 1 April 2017.

1. Summary of purpose

To review the Terms of Reference of the BYM Sustainability Group and to propose any alterations which may be required.

2. Membership

2.1 The Group comprises 3 or 4 members appointed by Meeting for Sufferings on the nomination of Central Nominations Committee for the duration of the review.

2.2 The Group shall appoint a convenor from among its membership.

2.3 A member of BYM staff designated by the Recording Clerk will attend meetings and act as secretary to the Group. Meetings without a member of staff should occur only with the agreement of the Recording Clerk.

2.4 The clerk of Meeting for Sufferings and the Recording Clerk or their designate may attend any meeting ex officio and will receive all documents and correspondence circulated by the group.

2.5 The Group may invite the attendance of other Friends or specialists on an ad hoc basis to help on particular issues on its behalf, but may not co-opt on a permanent basis.

2.6 Other members of staff may be asked to attend for specific agenda items by invitation of the Group.

3. Frequency of meetings

3.1 The Group shall meet as frequently as appropriate to carry out its task within the calendar agreed by the Recording Clerk. Meetings should only occur with agreement of its secretary or the Recording Clerk.

3.2 The Group shall seek an appropriate balance between meeting together face-to-face and communicating individually or collectively in other ways.

4. Duties and responsibilities

4.1 The Review Group will consider the Terms of Reference of the BYM Sustainability Group. The Group's Terms of Reference should be reviewed to see whether clarifications, improvements or simplifications can be made to it.

4.2 The Review Group should consider whether the BYM Sustainability Group is the most effective way to oversee and encourage progress towards our shared commitment to become a low-carbon, sustainable community (Yearly Meeting 2011, minute 36), and if so, the most appropriate location for such a group in BYM's structures.

4.3 The Review Group should consider how the BYM Sustainability Group is enabling progress within the strategy set out in 'Recommendations for Action: Becoming a low carbon sustainable community' prepared by Minute 36 (Canterbury) Commitment Group (May 2014), adopted by Meeting for Sufferings in June 2014 (MfS 2014 06 11) and amended by Meeting for Sufferings in February 2016 (MfS 2017 02 06).

4.4 The Review Group may consult as widely as possible including (but not limited to) among members of central and standing committees, as well as with Friends in local and area meetings.

4.6 The Group shall present a final report for Meeting for Sufferings, if possible before the end of 2017, making recommendations including any changes to the Terms of Reference.

5. Authority and accountability

5.1 The Group is accountable to Meeting for Sufferings and draws its authority from it.

5.2 The Group shall work within these terms of reference and report to Meeting for Sufferings on how it is fulfilling them as required.

5.3 The Group shall work according to the Quaker business method, as described in chapter 3 and elsewhere in *Quaker faith & practice*.

5.4 The Group shall keep notes of all its meetings, minute decisions made in formal meetings and keep these notes and minutes together as a record of its work.

5.6 In carrying out its task, the Group may communicate informally with Quaker meetings, committees and groups as necessary.

5.7 The Group will work within the budget drawn up by the Recording Clerk as part of the operational plan approved by Trustees.

Quaker World Relations Committee 2017 Report to Meeting for Sufferings

Committee Purpose: Enriching understanding between Friends worldwide and engaging Quakers in Britain in Quaker issues and concerns around the globe

Membership: 8 (6 Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) representatives to Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) and 2 co-clerks of the QWRC Forum and Network)

Background

The reconstituted committee now has two years' experience. It has a number of specific tasks to undertake on behalf of BYM, all of which it has undertaken. The rest of its work is the result of a process of discernment about how best to take forward our purpose at the present time.

We have undertaken all the specific tasks required of us. Some of these tasks occur regularly each year (letters of greeting to Europe and Middle East Section (EMES) Yearly Meetings, report to EMES on behalf of BYM, etc.). Other specific tasks vary from year to year, and come to us in the form of minutes from Sufferings requesting us to act on behalf of BYM in some way.

These clear-cut responsibilities represent a partial fulfilment of a set of much broader purposes, namely:

- (a) Maintaining and deepening the relationships of Quakers in Britain with Quakers in other yearly meetings, and with FWCC
- (b) Holding an annual consultative Forum to provide a space for wider collaborative engagement in its work (the Forum consists of representatives of other BYM central bodies, BYM representatives to Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) and Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA), and FWCC)
- (c) Furthering our Quaker witness, in collaboration with the Forum, by encouraging BYM collaboration with FWCC and intervisitation (virtual or actual) between BYM and friends worldwide
- (d) Through community building and by responding actively to the concerns of other yearly meetings, the Committee and Forum promote understanding of the patterns of worldwide Quakerism today and enhance international and cultural linkages.

QWRC's 8 members are all committed to these purposes, and have worked hard in these first two years to progress them. At our meeting in November 2016 we took stock of our experience to date. We began to develop a vision of where we would like to be in five years' time, and identified a set of priorities for the coming year that would take us closer to the vision.

The rest of this report is in three parts.

- (a) Looking back: key activities in the past year
- (b) Looking forward: our plans for the coming year
- (c) Some queries for Meeting for Sufferings

(a) Looking back: Key activities from February 2016 to January 2017

Following up the four key messages from QWRC to BYM following the World Plenary in Pisac, Peru: these messages were

1. All YMs are asked to commit to concrete sustainability actions in 2016 and also to promote sustainability at every level from individual to YM. We urge BYM Friends to develop our 2011 commitment further and share it more widely.
2. The energy, passion and value of our younger adults is a huge resource, underused in BYM.
3. Difference sets us an uncomfortable challenge, but we welcome the fact that it calls us to deep and loving listening and sharing. Through this we can move beyond labels to meet God in one another.
4. Continuing our mutual engagement with world Quakerism demands creative thinking and solutions. We must find ways to grow Quaker understanding and increase virtual and actual intervisitation sustainably.

QWRC has communicated these messages in many ways – through its 2016 report to Meeting for Sufferings, at the Forum, at Yearly Meeting 2016, in talks to various meetings and groups, through interactions with the BYM Sustainability Group, and through the QWRC online network.

QWRC has also worked with FWCC on a proposal for a legacy funded sustainability communications officer, whose key role will be to gather information about Quaker sustainability actions worldwide, share them widely, and facilitate collaboration and worldwide movement building.

Responding to minutes from Meeting for Sufferings: we have received two of these. One concerned sustainability, and asked us to find out more about what other YMs are doing in response to the Pisac call. FWCC has been gathering responses, and this will be an important focus for the sustainability communications officer.

The other concerned the statement issued on February 4 2017, entitled Quakers stand alongside victims of racist policies. QWRC was asked to disseminate the statement as it saw fit. Following consultation with the FWCC General Secretary, we sent it to the secretaries of all four FWCC Sections, asking them to send it to their YMs. We also posted it on the QWRC network.

Letters of upholding to other Yearly Meetings, when they were faced with challenging circumstances: we sent four such letters during this period. The first was to Friends in Burundi, faced with community violence in the light of constitutional changes to allow the existing president to serve a further term. The other three were to Friends in France YM, Belgium and Luxembourg YM and Germany YM when their countries experienced acts of terrorism.

Deepening our understanding of worldwide Quakerism through our own work: individual members of the committee have taken responsibility for learning more about Quakers in each of the four FWCC Sections. We found the 2016 Swarthmore lecture, and the follow-up meetings at YM and then at Woodbrooke, very helpful in this regard. Members have attended a variety of relevant meetings, and reported on what they have learned. Apart from the Pisac World Plenary, these have mainly been EMES meetings and the EMES Peace and Service Consultation.

Deepening our understanding of worldwide Quakerism through interacting with knowledgeable British Friends who are not members of QWRC: there are many such people, and our aim is to enrich our work by drawing on their expertise, and collaborating with them whenever possible.

Some of us belong to the Quaker Africa Interest Group, and others to Quaker South Asia Interest Group. QWRC members participated in both their meetings this year. Last November we had a presentation from the Recording Clerk about the visit that he and the BYM clerk made to Philadelphia and Baltimore YMs.

We have considered the reports made by BYM representatives to EMES YMs. The QWRC Forum has given us a focused opportunity to learn more from other BYM Quaker bodies with international aspects to their work, notably QPSW, and from our representatives on the two international bodies – QUNO and QCEA.

The first QWRC Forum: this was a new venture for all of us involved and we were pleased that it went well. A highlight was a talk by Diana Randall, director of FCNL (Friends Committee on National Legislation), based in Washington, USA. There was much useful feedback on the day, which has informed our planning for the 2017 Forum.

Intervisitation: one of our key responsibilities is to encourage this, whilst bearing in mind the actual and opportunity costs, and the carbon footprint entailed, when Quakers from different parts of the world meet face to face. This goes far beyond the small numbers in the committee itself. We are very mindful of our purpose of Enriching understanding between Friends worldwide and engaging Quakers in Britain in Quaker issues and concerns around the globe. Hence we work to involve other individual BYM Friends, and to interact with them so that we learn together and can embed this learning and experience in future work. Virtual intervisitation has to be a key part of our strategy, through networks, discussion fora, and Skype meetings etc. We have begun to work on a policy. In the meantime, the great value deriving from well planned visits to us by Friends from elsewhere, and vice versa, remains evident. A good example was last summer's visit by Robert Wafula, principal of Kaimosi Theological College in Kenya. We have heard from many other Friends how enriching this was for them, and our own experiences bear this out.

(b) Looking forward: priorities for the coming year

Working with FWCC to recruit and then help oversee and steer the work of the sustainability communications officer: we expect this to be an excellent opportunity in many ways. In particular we see great scope for worldwide movement building.

Developing our intervisitation strategy: this will include a hospitality framework for guests from elsewhere, and also identifying a list of events at which QWRC or its nominees would be represented.

Exploring possibilities for connecting more effectively with BYM Friends who are knowledgeable about Friends in the Americas and Asia-West Pacific: the Quaker Africa Interest group and the Quaker South Asia Interest Group are valuable opportunities for interaction and collaboration, and for increased awareness and knowledge about Quakers in those parts of the world. And we have many mechanisms

for interaction with FWCC's Europe and Middle East section (EMES) to which BYM belongs. However we have no organised mechanism regarding the Asia West Pacific Section as a whole, or for any part of the Americas.

A QWRC event with York Friends: we will have a residential committee meeting in York over the final weekend in September, and will have an internationally focussed meeting with York Friends as part of this. We hope this will be a model for an annual event with BYM Friends in different parts of the country each year.

Making a significant input into Yearly Meeting Gathering, ensuring an international dimension: we will be hosting four international Friends who will play a part in this, and we will seek to draw in other Friends attending from beyond BYM. We hope that opportunities for global movement building will emerge.

There are several strands to our plans for the Gathering, though not yet finalised at the time of writing, as the detailed programme is not yet in place. We will certainly have our usual welcome desk, and a stall at the groups Fair. We will be hosting a welcome social event for international visitors, including our guests, at some time on the Sunday, and will also have a room available throughout the Gathering as a dedicated 'intervisitation space'. We expect to be arranging opportunities to experience programmed worship, to which our international visitors will contribute. We also expect to be facilitating international inputs from our guests and others into afternoon workshops, and have suggested peacebuilding and sustainability as two workshop themes. We have also proposed a workshop session towards the end of YMG, focusing on movement building in the worldwide family, drawing on the experience we will have had in exploring the YMG theme of movement building.

Reviewing the QWRC network: the network has been running since 2015, and it is timely to take stock. It has not taken off as much as we would like as yet, though the potential is clear. (Any member of BYM is welcome to join – all it takes is an email request to Marleen Schepers at marleens@quaker.org.uk)

Reviewing the Forum: once the March 25 Forum has taken place, we will have two Fora on which to reflect. It will therefore be timely to take stock.

(c) Question for Meeting for Sufferings

Our remit requires us to engage British Friends with Quaker concerns around the globe. Do you have any suggestions for us about ways of doing this more effectively?

Ann Floyd
Clerk Quaker World Relations Committee

Current members of QWRC (with AMs and terms of service)

Lee Taylor (Luton & Leighton AM)	01/01/2011 - 31/12/2017
Ann Floyd (Chilterns AM)	01/01/2015 - 31/12/2017 (Clerk)
Huw Still (York AM)	01/01/2015 - 31/12/2017
Alick Munro (Kingston & Wandsworth AM)	01/01/2013 - 31/12/2018
Barbara Windle (York AM)	01/01/2011 - 31/12/2018
Elaine Green (Ipswich & Diss AM)	01/01/2017 - 31/12/2019

Letter of Greeting to Ireland YM

Introduction

Each year, Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) sends representatives to other Yearly Meetings in Europe. We also send a letter of greetings, signed by the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings. Recently it has been our practice for Sufferings to approve the letter to Ireland Yearly Meeting (IYM), recognising that BYM and IYM have a particular relationship.

This year, Ireland Yearly Meeting will be held at Rathgar, Dublin, over the weekend of 20-23 April 2017.

Europe and Middle East Section (EMES) of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) has a website which includes information and/or provides links to Quakers in other parts of Europe - <http://fwccemes.org>. The Ireland Yearly Meeting website is at: <https://quakers-in-ireland.ie>.

Date

Dear Friends,

We send our loving greetings to Friends in Ireland, holding you in the light as you meet together for your yearly meeting. We are always inspired by the strength of your community and continuing witness, stretching back to the time of George Fox and William Edmundson. We offer our prayerful support and fellowship as you gather together.

Following the outcome of last June's EU referendum, we feel a particularly strong need to reaffirm our love for all our neighbours in Europe, especially our love and support for Ireland Yearly Meeting. We are keenly aware that the vote to leave the EU – supported by a majority in England and Wales - will have perhaps the most serious consequences for Ireland. We will continue to offer our loving support as Ireland Yearly Meeting continues to model the connection and bridge-building which is now so vital across our countries and our continent, refusing to be divided.

The Quaker World Relations committee of BYM has been working with renewed focus on fostering intervisitation between British Friends and Friends around the world. Now more than ever, we see the need to build and maintain fellowship with Friends across the section, regardless of political divisions. We hope to welcome, and visit, many of you over the next year.

This year Britain Yearly Meeting will meet from the 29 July to the 5 August at the University of Warwick, focussing on movement building through the theme "Living out our faith in the world". We look forward to welcoming Friends from Ireland to enrich our community, deepen our discernment and strengthen our shared movement.

Our yearly meeting in 2016 focussed on gifts and concerns, considering how to identify and act on these, and supporting each other in our journeys. We heard of many examples of this from across the yearly meeting, ranging from holding peace vigils, to supporting prisoners and refugees, to divesting from fossil fuels and greening our meeting houses.

Collectively we came to the realisation that gifts of the Spirit can be recognised by how they are used, rather than what they are. We returned home to our communities feeling the urgent need to be more faithful, bold, and open, taking heed of the promptings of the Light, sharing our leadings with our meetings, and testing these concerns together.

British visitors and our representatives to your 2016 meeting have told us of your kind hospitality and the deep sense of community they experienced amongst you. The representatives' report and your epistle have been shared with our Quaker World Relations Committee, and with members of our Meeting for Sufferings, representing all our Area Meetings in Scotland, England and Wales. We look forward to hearing from our Friends [**name of this year's rep(s)**] about their experiences with you this year. We pray that your Yearly Meeting will deepen your spiritual life together, and strengthen your resolve to act and live out your faith in the wider world.

Peace be with you.

In Friendship,

Anne Ullathorne
Clerk
Meeting for Sufferings

Meeting for Sufferings 2017 04 01 – AM minutes received

Hampshire and Islands AM Minute 7 from the meeting held 14 January 2017 regarding the re-sending of **minute 9** from the meeting held on 9 July 2016 on the Vision for a Criminal Justice system which was not included in the MfS minute in December 2016.

Brighouse West Yorkshire AM Minute 17/02/11 from the meeting held 12 February 2017 regarding the care of vulnerable adult members and the responsibilities of local meetings. Also attached is a background paper on this particular case.

North East Thames AM Minute 17.21 from the meeting held 18 February 2017 regarding transgender and non-binary inclusion. Also included is a statement from Wanstead local meeting which has been endorsed by the Area Meeting.

Hampshire and Islands AM held on 14 January 2017.

Minute 7 of Hampshire and Islands AM held on 14 January read in part.

We agree to send our minute on the Vision for a Criminal Justice system which was not picked up by Meeting for Sufferings in their minute in December.

The minute 9 of Hampshire and Islands AM held Saturday 9th July 2016 is shown below.

In Friendship

Eddie Slade
Clerk

Minute 9 of Hampshire and Islands AM held Saturday 9th July 2016

We have considered the Vision for a criminal justice system a view from the Quaker Peace & Social Witness Crime, Community & Justice Sub-committee.

We feel that it is worthwhile to have a vision for the criminal justice system, however, the way that this is presented doesn't give us a feeling that it is a call to action to change the criminal justice system. The presentation as what we are for and against is a useful start in clarifying our vision.

The issues raised by Women in prison and the large proportion of prisoners that have mental health issues are not properly addressed within this vision.

We hope that this vision can be taken forward and refined into a useful document setting out our views, which we can use as an inspiration for action locally within the society.

We will forward this minute to Meeting for Sufferings as part of the consultation on this vision.

Eddie Slade, Clerk

Additional note:

As the AM's minute explains, last year Hampshire and Islands AM sent a minute responding to the request for consideration of QPSW's Vision for A Criminal Justice System. Unfortunately, it was missed by staff and didn't reach the full list reported to Sufferings in December. Staff regret this and have apologised to the AM.

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group hope Meeting for Sufferings will be willing to record receipt of this minute and to forward it to Quaker Peace and Social Witness, for the attention of its Crime, Community and Justice sub-committee.

Brighouse West Yorkshire AM held on 12 February 2017.

Minute 17/02/11 Concern: Vulnerable Adults

We have heard of the concern of Bradford Friends arising from their experience of supporting a vulnerable adult expressed in the following statement:

‘Should a Meeting accept responsibility for the care of one of its members unable to care for him or herself, to safeguard the interests of both the Friend concerned and those tasked with making decisions on his or her behalf, all decisions relating to the care, property and effects of the Friend concerned should be taken by a group of nominated Friends within the Meeting, working together with the legal process as appropriate.’

A number of Friends have spoken in favour of this and we unite with this concern. We wish to forward this concern to Friends nationally, to seek to ensure good Quaker collective practice in these situations, which can be complex. We hope that guidelines for good practice can be provided, to be shared nationally through Quaker Life.

We ask our Clerk to forward this concern along with an anonymised version of the paper presented by our Friend Hilary Browne on behalf of Bradford Friends today to Paul Parker our Recording Clerk who will direct it to the appropriate central groups or individuals.

A copy of the statement of concern is filed with these minutes.

In friendship,

Val Bone
Acting Clerk

Additional note:

The statement of concern is copied below this note.

Brighouse West Yorkshire AM did not send this minute formally to Meeting for Sufferings. However, the Recording Clerk is aware that at least one other Area Meeting has been challenged by a similar situation.

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group therefore anticipate that some Area Meetings will be interested to that this minute has been sent. Representatives may want to share it with their own Area Meetings.

Arrangements Group have not allocated a lot of time for this item. They suggest forwarding it to Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC), asking for advice. This might include more detail regarding the legal situation; information about what other faith groups are doing; and suggestions about the format of any guidance which could be made available to Meetings. QLCC is expected to report to Meeting for Sufferings again in December.

The Care of Vulnerable Adults: a concern.

Recently a Local Meeting took responsibility for the care of one of its Members over a considerable period from when she first became housebound, to hospital and eventually to the care-home where she stayed until her death.

It was a tremendous privilege for Meeting to care for her in this way but also a tremendous responsibility.

Since her death Elders have reflected on the experience and have learned from it. They believe they made two mistakes.

1. The Friend was a confident, retired teacher who had been at the heart of the Local Meeting. Whilst recognising her increasing frailty at no time did Elders consider her to be a 'vulnerable adult' in the legal sense of 'safeguarding'. This was a mistake.
2. The Local Meeting did not follow established Quaker practice in organising and managing her care. Elders and Overseers relied on Members volunteering to visit and take responsibility for the many legal and domestic tasks involved. The Local Meeting now recognises it did not provide a framework for oversight and decision making according to the way of Friends.

Whilst there are Quaker guidelines for the care of children and young people in Meeting there is no guidance to Friends on the care of vulnerable adults. The Yearly Meeting Safeguarding Officer knows of no Quaker document covering this matter and he agrees it is an area for further discussion and discernment to help other Meetings faced with similar responsibilities. Clearly, where possible the vulnerable Friend needs to be part of the decision making process as do any family who may be geographically distant or more local but minimally involved or estranged.

Brighouse West Yorkshire Area Meeting would like to bring the following concern forward for further discernment within Yearly Meeting.

Should a Meeting accept responsibility for the care of one of its members unable to care for him or herself, to safeguard the interests of both the Friend concerned and those tasked with making decisions on his or her behalf, all decisions relating to the care, property and effects of the Friend concerned should be taken by a group of nominated Friends within the Meeting, working together with the legal process as appropriate.

North East Thames AM held on 18 February 2017.

Minute 17.21 Transgender and non-binary inclusion

We have heard read minute 16/89 of Wanstead Local Meeting and the statement the meeting has endorsed (both attached)

We give thanks to our two Friends for speaking authentically to this matter today. The worship that followed on has led us to places of loving empathy and a wish to endorse the statement.

With amendments made in this meeting, we forward this to Meeting for Sufferings for their consideration.

David Irwin
Clerk

Transgender & Non-binary Inclusion Statement from North East Thames AM

“Facing turbulent times, Quakers in Britain seek a future where 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.”“ Our faith in the future (Quakers in Britain, 2015)

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/meeting-for-sufferings/our-faith-in-the-future>

Quakers in North East Thames Area Meeting are aware that our community is a continuing creation in which we seek to know and love ourselves and one another in all our differences, united at a profound level in our efforts to reach and respond to others in the things that are eternal.

We want our Local Meeting to be a safe place where each person can come as their own true self and find a spiritual home.

We recognise that there is a growing awareness in society, and in the Society of Friends, that the terms ‘man’ and ‘woman’ prove incomplete when describing the diversity of gender identity and experience that exists.

We hope that we can all grow together in our understanding of gender identity.

We want it to be known that our Area Meeting is a place where all are welcomed and nurtured, including people who are transgender and non-binary.

We hope that we can share a spiritual companionship, creating a place where we can all listen to and connect with one another, and accompany one another with love.

Additional note:

Arrangements Group feel it may be helpful for the Meeting for Sufferings to spend a little time reflecting on this minute and the statement.

They suggest it could be sent to Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC), primarily for information, as there may be implications for pastoral care and support.

Quaker Recognised Bodies

Introduction

In 2015, following a review of the Listed Informal Groups arrangement, Meeting for Sufferings agreed a new way for BYM to relate to other Quaker bodies (minute MfS 2015/12/17).

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

The aim is that this new relationship will clarify benefits and responsibilities for QRBs and Britain Yearly Meeting. It's also a way to strengthen links between centrally-managed work and the wide range of exciting Quaker work being done by other bodies, helping build a vibrant Society of Friends.

The full paper, setting out the reason for the change and how it will work, is available in the papers for the December 2015 Meeting for Sufferings papers www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/meeting-for-sufferings/papers-and-minutes – or please ask for the paper by emailing sufferings@quaker.org.uk).

The guidelines for groups that would like to be a QRB are also on the BYM Website www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/quaker-groups

Last year staff co-ordinated a pilot, which led to four groups being registered by Meeting for Sufferings last December: Living Witness, Quaker Disability Equality Group, Quaker Values in Education, and Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs.

All the other Listed Informal Groups have now been invited to consider registration.

Three groups have completed the process. All of them were listed in the 2016 Book of Meetings as listed informal groups. Staff consider that the criteria for listing them as Quaker Recognised Bodies have been met, and are happy to recommend that Meeting for Sufferings registers them:

1. Nontheist Friends Network
2. Quakers and Business Group
3. Quaker Concern for Animals

Information about these groups can be found in the following pages. Each of the 'forms' will be lodged in the Friends House Library, as we build up a full register of QRBs.

The groups and their link staff member may have discussed other details not included in the form. If Friends have any questions about the process detail, please contact Michael Booth via groups@quaker.org.uk, or telephone Michael Booth 0207 663 1023.

If Friends feel any uncertainty about registering a group, it would be helpful for the clerks to know before Meeting for Sufferings (email sufferings@quaker.org.uk).

Nontheist Friends Network

Constitution: The Nontheist Friends Network has a formal constitution, but it is not a body that is formally registered as a charity.

Governance: The Annual General Meeting appoints a Clerk and a Steering Group to run the Network between AGMs. The Steering Group appoints a Treasurer and a Membership Secretary, and fills other offices considered necessary. The AGM and the steering group aim to make and minute their decisions in accordance with traditional Quaker practice.

Type of Group: “free-standing”

Foundation: The group was established in 2011

Aims: The Network’s aim is to provide a forum and supportive framework for Friends who regard religion as a human creation. We want to ensure that our Religious Society of Friends is an inclusive rather than an exclusive Society. We seek to explore theological and spiritual diversity and their practical implications, in respectful acceptance of different views, experiences and journeys.

Publications and activities:

Occasional Newsletter - appears about 5 or 6 times a year, sent by email. Annual conference held at Woodbrooke usually for around 40 people. Presence at BYM – an open session, and a table at the Groups Fair. Occasional regional events, and some occasional events at which Members speak or lead – e.g. a Retreat at Glenthorne, workshop days for Area Meetings, articles by members in The Friend and other non-Quaker publications. Occasional contacts with Friends in USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

In addition members of the network have been involved in the Theology Think Tank of the Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group.

Membership: About 80 paid members, and a larger number of “interested followers”.

Finance: Approximate annual budget £9-10,000. BYM staff have seen accounts.

Winding up: In the event of a decision by the AGM to lay down the Network, any financial or other assets shall be transferred to a Quaker charity or organisation chosen by the steering group.

Archives: none

Current contact details: From 26 March 2017
Gisela Creed, 24 Auchinloch Road, Lenzie, Glasgow G66 5EU

Website: <https://nontheistquakers.wordpress.com/>

Staff link: Alistair Fuller, Head of Ministry and Outreach, Quaker Life.

Quakers and Business Group

Constitution: The group has a formal, 14 page, constitution, which makes it clear the expectation for decisions to be reached by following the Quaker business method.

Governance: Q&B has three co-clerks, Elders and Overseers. We use the Quaker Business Method to make decisions, Trustees/Management Committee meet twice times a year

Type of Group: An externally regulated body: a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, CIO 1157008

Foundation: CIO registered 12 May 2014. Previous group gathered in late 1990s, which went on to form a registered charity that then moved to CIO.

Aims: Our purpose is *"to be the custodian, modern interpreter and promoter of Quaker principles in business and the workplace"*. We provide a supportive network for those upholding these principles and promote our work through events, programmes, projects, speaking engagements, publications and research.

Publications and activities: Two events per year, one inward looking (aimed at Quakers) and one Outreach/outward looking to share Quaker thoughts/findings with the wider world. We fund PhD and other research into Quaker business history ethical business practices and Quaker business methods <http://qandb.org/index.php/what-we-do/research>

Membership: 171

Finance: As a CIO and formerly as a charity, the organisation has prepared annual accounts, which are suitably examined.

Winding up: There is provision in the constitution for winding up the organisation, which makes it clear that any remaining assets should be used for a charitable purpose similar to this organisation. It has reserves sufficient to allow a year's worth of meetings and events to allow the Trustees to wind up the CIO appropriately. This is separate from the restricted funds.

Archives: Currently being stored in a couple of Meeting Houses, a central storage arrangement is being looked for.

Current contact details: Wendrie Heywood, Co-clerk
64 Warwick Road, London, N11 2SX
clerk@QandB.org

Website: <http://qandb.org>

Staff link: Paul Grey, Head of Operations

Quaker Concern for Animals

Constitution: The organisation has a constitution, which was last amended in May 2009: a new constitution is expected to be considered in May 2017.

Governance: The group has an executive committee and an annual general meeting. Although the Quaker business method is not specifically described as such, there are two parts of the constitution that allude to it:

Type of Group: “free-standing”

Foundation: 1891, as the Friends’ Anti-Vivisection Association; later becoming the Animal Welfare and Anti -Vivisection Society and finally Quaker Concern for Animals in 1978

Aims: Our primary objective is to raise the profile within the Religious Society of Friends of non-human animals and the issues affecting them.

Our Mission Statement:

Quaker Concern for Animals witnesses to the divine in all creation and works for the protection of animals and the promotion of their rights.

We are committed to the defence of our fellow species, whilst appealing to that of God in everyone.

Publications and activities: Our activities include:

- Providing literature, articles and 2 newsletters per annum to our members (including member Quaker Meetings). I enclose pdfs of our latest newsletter and booklet *Journeys of Compassion*, published in 2016.
- Supporting conferences and religious services. We are sponsors of SARX’s Creature Conference on animal theology this year.
- National and international co-operation with other animal protection groups. We carried out a project in 2016 to canvas leading animal protection groups and individuals for their views on the EU referendum as a service to our members and to general public.
- Lobbying of organizations, media and politicians
- Protests against animal exploitation and cruelty.
- Funding animal charities, especially the smaller specialised ones.

We are committed to our ecumenical and interfaith policy. We are a founder member of the Animals Interfaith Alliance.

Other 2016 activities included holding a QCA ‘residency’ in Friends House Bookshop on World Animal Day (with the Friends House Restaurant being meat free on that day) and a stall at YM.

Continued on the next page

Membership: ~160 paid up members

Finance: An auditor is required to be appointed.

Winding up: There is provision for the Quaker Concern for Animals to be wound up and any remaining funds to be distributed to further its charitable purposes.

Archives: Archives: reside with Clerk, Treasurer and in various deposits at Friends House Library. We are considering work to digitise those holdings we are able to source.

Current contact details: Thomas Bonneville
Flat 1, 35 Western Road, London N2 9JS
clerk@quaker-animals.co.uk

Website: <http://quaker-animals.co.uk/>

Staff link: Jamie Scott, Catering Manager

Quaker Stewardship Committee

Leeds Area Meeting has sent this minute of its meeting held on Saturday 18 March, in response to the Quaker Stewardship Committee report.

2017/21 Quaker Stewardship Committee report for Meeting for Sufferings

The Quaker Stewardship Committee (QSC) has asked Area Meetings to respond to three questions to be considered at Meeting for Sufferings on 1st April:

- **Question 1:** What more can QSC and AMs do to ensure that Trustees and Treasurers receive the support they need?
- **Question 2:** Would making wider central use of the information provided in Trustees' Annual Reports and Accounts be a worthwhile expenditure of BYM's resources?
- **Question 3:** How can QSC best prompt a wider conversation to ensure that BYM's governance structures are sustainable in the long term?

We feel that question 2 is the key to everything. If we had access to more information we may be in a position to consider question 1 which might lead to an answer to question 3. There was a feeling that the reports should be available widely so that problems can be identified and addressed. Continuing training should be available to help trustees who may be struggling, and to highlight areas which need help.

These annual reports express what is important in our outward witness. Could wider use of information from these reports help Britain Yearly Meeting's work to reflect local activities and concerns?

We ask the clerks to forward this minute to Meeting for Sufferings.

Pat Gerwat
Co-clerk, Leeds Area Quaker Meeting