

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

Agenda & notes

Compiled for Yearly Meeting, Friends
House, London, and online, 27–30 May
2022

Includes online preparatory sessions,
21–26 May 2022



Proceedings

A number of documents will help us meet with hearts and minds prepared. Collectively, these are the '*Proceedings of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain 2022*'.

The full set comprises:

1. *Preparing for Yearly Meeting*, including community guidelines and spiritual preparation
2. *Agenda and notes*, with introductory material for Yearly Meeting and annual reports of Meeting for Sufferings, Quaker Stewardship Committee and other related bodies
3. *Testimonies*, including index of epistles
4. *Trustees' annual report*, including financial statements for the year ended December 2021
5. *Patterns of membership*, including the 2021 tabular statement
6. *Minutes*, which are distributed after the conclusion of Yearly Meeting.

All documents will be available online at www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

Many Friends will read the documents online, but if you need printed documents, they will be in a printer-friendly PDF format. We ask Friends to print their own copies or to seek assistance from someone in their meeting. This will help us to save costs, and reduce the environmental impact of Yearly Meeting.

If you require accessible documents, please request these when booking for Yearly Meeting. If these do not meet your accessibility needs, or the needs of someone you know, please email ym@quaker.org.uk.

All *Quaker faith & practice* references are to the fifth edition, which can be found online at www.quaker.org.uk/qfp.

You can read about Yearly Meeting in chapter 6 of *Quaker faith & practice*. Alternatively, contact Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee on 020 7663 1040 or at ym@quaker.org.uk, or go to www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

1 Introduction and information

1.1 Introduction

Yearly Meeting is when Quakers in Britain come together to worship, make decisions and spend time as a community.

This year it will be a blended event, meaning some Friends will participate online, while others will be physically present at Friends House in London. We all need to approach this new style of event with care, patience and compassion.

Yearly Meeting is also when we can learn, practise, improve, and take back to our local meetings ways of conducting business that are rooted in Quaker tradition and our own experience, yet also meet contemporary challenges.

The purposes and functions of Yearly Meeting are described in *Quaker faith & practice* 6.02–6.11, which also gives the background to the business agenda.

Yearly Meeting

Yearly Meeting 2022 will open on Saturday 21 May, and a range of online preparatory events will be held during the following week.

Formal business sessions will be held from 27 to 30 May and will be blended.

There are different types of sessions taking place. Details of Yearly Meeting in session and theme- related preparatory sessions are included in this document.

To access the full schedule of events you first need to have registered to attend Yearly Meeting. You can do this online at <https://forms.quaker.org.uk/ym2022>.

Once your registration has been confirmed you will be sent a link to the online Yearly Meeting Planner. Please refer to the Planner for details of lectures and other sessions (namely: orientation, worship, Faith in Action sessions) at: <http://ym2022.sched.com>.

1.2 Contact details

Yearly Meeting Arrangements

Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee Friends House,
173 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BJ

Please send comments on business or the agenda to Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee at arrangements@quaker.org.uk.

General enquiries

Quaker Church Affairs (previously known as Events & Committee Services)

Telephone: 020 7663 1040 Email: ym@quaker.org.uk

Website: www.quaker.org.uk/ym Twitter: [#bymeevent #YM22](https://twitter.com/bymeevent)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/bymeevent

Yearly Meeting 2022

◆ Yearly Meeting documents, are available on the [YM website](#). Minutes, recorded introductions and other materials will be added there as they become available.



Schedule ▾

[Groups](#)
[Help, Pastoral Care, Contacts](#)
[Attendees](#)


Schedule or Peop

Saturday, May 21

11:00am BST

● **Opening of Yearly Meeting** **Spaces available**
Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee

12:30pm BST

● **A reflective walk - connecting to faith in action (offline workshop)** **Spaces available**
Quaker Peace & Social Witness • QPSW Faith in Action Team

1:00pm BST

● **Could you be a Quaker Prison Chaplain?** **Spaces available**
Quaker Life

2:00pm BST

● **Supporting online discernment: centring down and upholding from home** **Spaces available**
Woodbrooke

● **How can schools teach climate justice?** **Spaces available**
Quaker Peace & Social Witness • QPSW Peace Education

● **Local development work in your area** **Spaces available**
Quaker Life

2:30pm BST

● **Community, faith, action: including disabled people** **Spaces available**
Quaker Disability Equality Group

● **Friends Fellowship of Healing** **Spaces available**
Friends Fellowship of Healing

4:00pm BST

● **Friends House Moscow : an international Quaker collaboration putting faith into action across continents and time zones** **Spaces available**
Friends House Moscow

5:00pm BST

● **Brummana High School - a Quaker presence amidst numerous crises in Lebanon.** **Spaces available**
Quaker International Educational Trust - Brummana High School Lebanon

Timezone

Europe/London ▾

Filter By Date

May 21 - Jun 1, 2022

Filter By Venue

Venues

Filter By Type

Faith in Action Meeting

Orientation

Worship

Yearly Meeting Session

YM Theme preparation

Age

2 How does Yearly Meeting work?

2.1 Discipline of Yearly Meeting sessions

The principles of the Quaker business method are the same for Yearly Meeting as for area and local meetings. Please read the guidance found in chapter 3 of *Quaker faith & practice*.

“In our meetings for worship we seek through the stillness to know God’s will for ourselves and for the gathered group. Our meetings for church affairs, in which we conduct our business, are also meetings for worship based on silence, and they carry the same expectation that God’s guidance can be discerned if we are truly listening together and to each other and are not blinkered by preconceived opinions.”

Quaker faith & practice 3.02

Community Agreement

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee asks all of us to share responsibility for creating a safe and loving community by upholding Quaker discipline at this

blended Yearly Meeting. When registering to attend Yearly Meeting, all Friends were asked to agree to a seven-point Community Agreement – a copy is available at

www.quaker.org.uk/documents/our-community-agreement-1.

Yearly Meeting has a large number of Friends present, and this can be a powerful spiritual experience. With large numbers, it is usually the case that not everyone who wishes to give spoken ministry is called. The clerks will seek to ensure that different voices are heard. It is useful to remember this:

‘Not all who attend a meeting for church affairs will necessarily speak: those who are silent can help to develop the sense of the meeting if they listen in a spirit of worship.’

Quaker faith & practice 3.05

The agenda gives the timings of sessions. Published starting times indicate when the clerk will formally open the sessions; please aim to arrive before that time, so the meeting can gather in silence

beforehand. To help create and maintain a gathered blended meeting, it would be helpful if Friends arrive in good time and avoid arriving late, leaving early, or moving around.

Quaker business method is a discipline in which all present should be focusing on worship and discernment of the matter at hand. Please avoid any activity that detracts from this discipline. This includes knitting and unsuitable use of electronic devices.

However, Friends are aware that some people with particular needs will find it easier to concentrate if using their hands. If this is the case, please let elders know by emailing ym@quaker.org.uk, and they will be in touch prior to Yearly Meeting.

You can use electronic devices to access Yearly Meeting documents, but please make sure you do not disturb others. Please ensure your device is on 'silent'.

Resist the temptation to check emails or post on social networks while in sessions.

Outside sessions, please think carefully about public posts to social networking sites. What stage have we reached in our discernment? Are you being tempted to anticipate a decision? Remember, ministry given in session has been offered in the context of a gathered meeting for worship and therefore might not be appropriate to share in a public forum.

Covid-19 expectations

The following section sets out the action we will take to safeguard the wellbeing of the most vulnerable members of our community.

We ask that you take the following measures and precautions before arriving:

- It is no longer mandatory to wear a mask or face covering on public transport in London. However, at the time of writing, Transport for London (TfL) “strongly recommends” the use of face coverings when travelling on its network, and we ask you to follow this advice when making your way to Friends House (unless you are exempt).
- Please take a lateral flow test (LFT) on Friday 27 May, before travelling to Friends House.

Please do not travel to Yearly Meeting:

- if your LFT is positive
- if you are waiting for the results of a Covid-19 PCR test
- if you, or anyone in your household or support bubble:
 - have Covid-19
 - have the symptoms of the Omicron variant (runny nose, headache, fatigue, sneezing and sore throat)
 - have the symptoms of Covid-19

(see www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms).

Action that we will all take during Yearly Meeting:

- We will provide a socially distanced seating area.
- We ask that you wear a face mask if you are able to in all shared indoor areas (except when you are eating and taking refreshments).
- We will not be asking you to refrain from physical contact, but please always check with individuals whether they are comfortable with hugging or shaking hands.
- Please follow good hygiene procedures such as regular handwashing for 20 seconds. If you use hand sanitiser, you should use the same method to apply this as when washing your hands, and continue doing so until it dries.
- Please wash/sanitise your hands regularly throughout the event. There will be sanitiser in the meeting rooms and in other locations around the building.

For more details about what is in place at Friends House, please see www.friendshouse.co.uk/covid-19.

2.2 Ministry and practice for online discipline

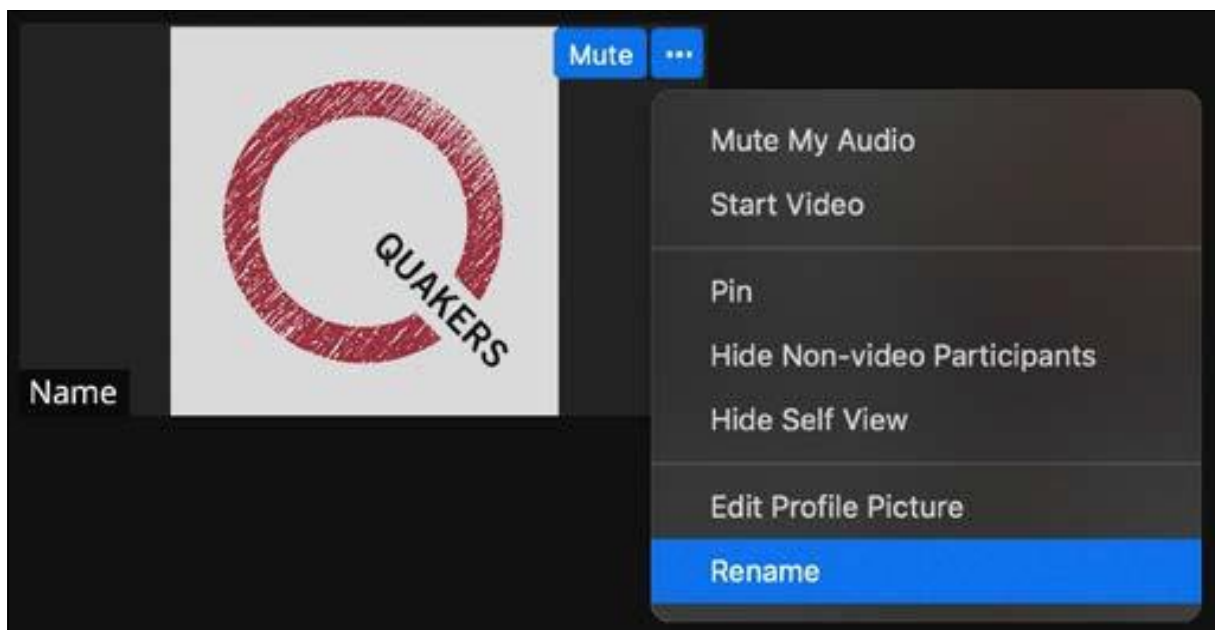
Online meetings will be held using Zoom. Yearly Meeting sessions will open ten minutes before the start time so that the meeting can gather in silence beforehand.

If you are called away from your computer, please turn off your camera.

The following notes explain how Yearly Meeting will be conducted using Zoom

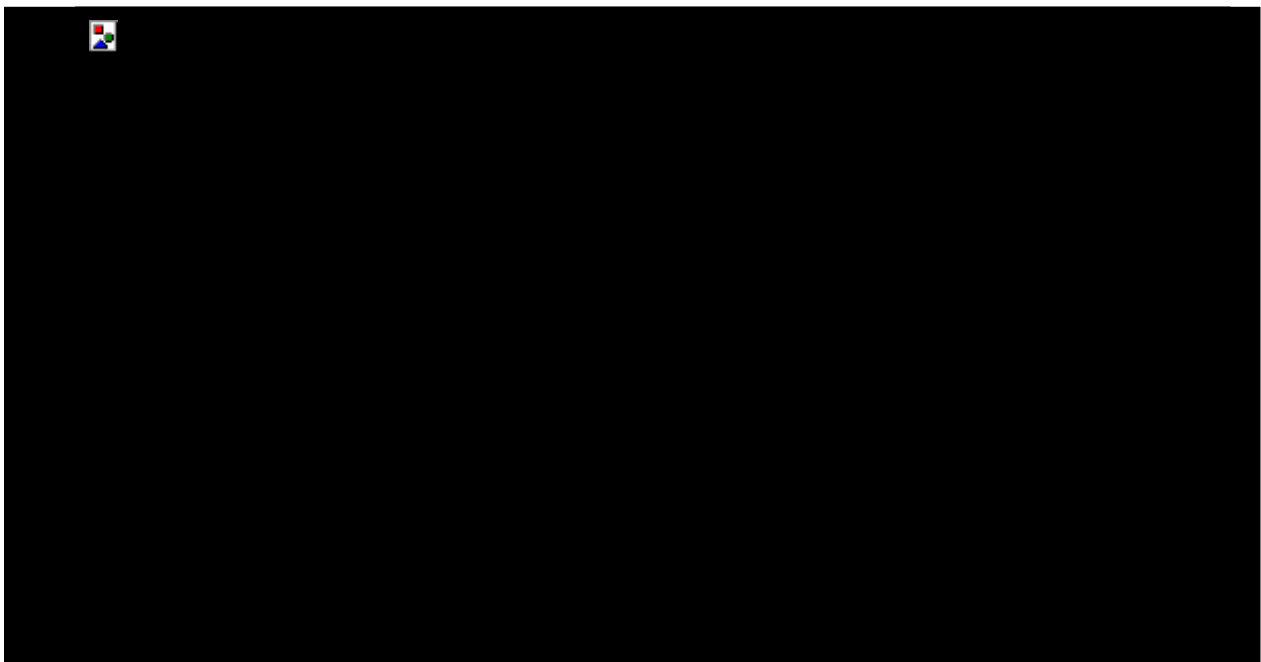
Your name: how it should appear

- Use 'rename' to ensure your screen name includes both your first/personal name and surname/family name.
- or Add the name of your area meeting (attenders can add either their area meeting, if known, or their local meeting or other worshipping community; visitors from other yearly meetings can add the name of their yearly meeting).



How to indicate that you wish to speak

- Use the 'raise hand' feature in Zoom to indicate that you wish to speak or minister. The 'raise hand' feature is usually found by clicking 'Reactions'.
- Wait until you are invited to contribute by a clerk, who will call you by name. If the clerk calls another Friend, all other raised hands will be lowered. If the clerk invites further ministry and you still feel led to minister, you will need to raise your hand again.



- If you are called, you will receive an onscreen message asking you to unmute; click 'unmute' and you may then speak. Please tell everyone who you are and where you worship before you begin your ministry (e.g. 'x area meeting' or 'attending xx local meeting or worshipping community').
- When offering spoken ministry, "try to sum up what you have to say in as few words as possible. Speak simply and audibly, but do not speak for effect." (*Quaker faith & practice 3.10*)
- When you have finished, your microphone will be muted and your hand lowered by technical support staff.

Note about microphone controls

- A red diagonal line through the microphone shows your microphone is muted and you cannot be heard. A microphone without a diagonal line shows your microphone is 'live' and you can be heard.
- For Friends who are familiar with using Zoom, at Yearly Meeting you will not be able to 'mute/ unmute' your own microphone unless invited by a technical support staff member on instruction from a clerk.

How the meeting will agree minutes

- Clerks will offer draft minutes and ask if they are acceptable. If you have tested your ministry and feel that the meeting

needs to hear it in order to reach unity, use the 'raise hand' feature and wait until you are invited to speak by a clerk.

- If you are called, you will receive an onscreen message asking you to unmute; click 'unmute' and you may then speak. Please tell everyone who you are and where you worship before you begin speaking (e.g. 'x area meeting' or 'attending xx local meeting or worshipping community').
- When you have finished, your microphone will be muted and your hand lowered by technical support staff.
- If the clerk offers a draft minute and there are no raised hands, the minute will be considered acceptable to the meeting.

“When we unite with a minute offered by our clerk, we express, not a sudden agreement of everyone present with the prevailing view, but rather a confidence in our tried and tested way of seeking to recognise God’s will. We act as a community, whose members love and trust each other.”

Quaker faith & practice 3.06

2.3 Ministry and practice for in-person discipline

Entering late or leaving early can disturb other Friends. If you need to do so, please wait for a shuffle break or, if necessary, leave at the end of an item of business. Please avoid leaving or entering when the clerk is standing or a Friend is ministering.

The clerk will aim to conclude sessions by published closing times, but if it is necessary to extend sessions, the clerk will indicate when those who need to meet participants in the children's programme, or who have other pressing matters, can leave.

One door only will be used for latecomers, so please follow the directions of doorkeepers and wait quietly until a doorkeeper indicates you can enter.

Friends will be reminded at regular intervals to turn off mobile phones. Please do so. Even a phone set to vibrate can be distracting to Friends sitting near you. The exception to this rule will be parents or guardians with children in the Youth, Children & Families programmes, who need to be contactable in case of emergency.

We meet in a large room and therefore rely on the use of microphones. If you feel called to minister, please stand, or if unable to stand please raise your hand and wait for a microphone.

If you rise, and another is called, please sit down.

If you are called, please share your name and you worship before you begin your ministry (e.g. 'x area meeting' or 'attending xx local meeting or worshipping community').

When offering spoken ministry, “try to sum up what you have to say in as few words as possible. Speak simply and audibly, but do not speak for effect.” (*Quaker faith & practice 3.10*)

Each contribution should be heard in silence. Audible indications of approval or disapproval of spoken ministry are not part of the discipline of Britain Yearly Meeting.

After each contribution, there will be a pause to allow reflection. Please do not stand at this time.

When the clerk feels the time is right for a further contribution, they will say so. If you have tested your ministry and feel that the meeting needs to hear it in order to reach unity, you should stand at this point.

When the clerk discerns that the time is right, they will say they are ready to draft a minute. At this point, any Friend standing should sit down. While the minute is being drafted, please uphold the clerks in prayerful silence.

When the clerk asks if a minute is acceptable, Friends can answer “I hope so” or stand to be called. Please reflect on whether the minute is good enough. If you are clear that an amendment is necessary, stand and wait to be called; however, do not present fresh material at this point.

2.4 Elders and pastoral support at Yearly Meeting

The role of elders at Yearly Meeting is one of service, offering a ministry of presence during Yearly Meeting sessions and upholding our clerks throughout.

The team of appointed elders will provide a rota of attentive care for our meeting for worship for business during sessions and ensure active support to clerks between these. Elders are available between sessions to Friends who wish to consult them on the conduct of Yearly Meeting.

You can contact Yearly Meeting Elders online through the Yearly Meeting Planner.

Pastoral support

In the preparation week, pastoral care will be available in an online room accessed via the Yearly Meeting Planner, at the following times:

- Saturday 21 May to Monday 23 May from 18:00 to 20:00;
- Tuesday 24 May to Thursday 26 May from 20:00 to 22:00.

During Yearly Meeting, pastoral care will be available in person within the Community Hub, which is in the Waldo Williams suite. Friends joining online can contact pastoral care through the Yearly Meeting Planner, or by calling 07856 611 609.

Yearly Meeting is rather different this year. Supporting each other is an important part of our community's witness, and we hope that

local/area meetings will seek to support their own participants as far as possible.

In all cases we will provide a listening ear and seek to signpost to longer-term support where relevant. Clearly, we cannot provide long-term befriending or support. However, we hope overseers/pastoral care Friends in your local meeting will be able to advise on local support.

Holding a blended Yearly Meeting is new to all of us, and we won't always get it right, but we will do our best to respond to your needs and to help make our community a loving and inclusive one.

Help desk

For general help about Yearly Meeting, or if you have been unsuccessful using the above contact details, please contact the help desk via email at ym@quaker.org.uk or by calling 020 7663 1040.

2.5 Orientation

Woodbrooke will be hosting online orientation sessions leading up to Yearly Meeting sessions as follows:

Supporting online discernment

Joining hundreds of Quakers on Zoom can be exciting, but it's also very different from meeting and discerning together in person. It can feel disconnected, and other things might distract us

when we worship from home. In this session, we will talk about what it means to centre down in worship and to uphold the discernment process. We'll

think about the practical aspects of joining Yearly Meeting online this year and share tips on connecting spiritually in any space.

- Saturday 21 May, 14:00–15:00
- Wednesday 25 May, 12:30–13:30

How does Yearly Meeting work?

You may have been to Yearly Meeting before, whether in person or online, attended other online gatherings, or be completely new to this. Yearly Meeting as a blended gathering will be unfamiliar to all of us. In this session, Woodbrooke staff will guide you through the way Quaker business method will work for this year's Yearly Meeting. They will talk about other events happening during Yearly Meeting, offer practical tips on getting the best from our blended sessions and provide a chance to ask any questions that are on your mind. There is no such thing as a silly question!

- Sunday 22 May, 17:00–18:00
- Monday 23 May, 20:00–21:00
- Friday 27 May, 16:30–17:30 (this will be a blended event, for those attending online and at Friends House)

Please refer to the online Yearly Meeting Planner for full details and to book.

Orientation material from these sessions will also be recorded and available on the Yearly Meeting website at www.quaker.org.uk/ym/programme.

2.6 Spiritual preparation and theme- related sessions

In the document Preparing for Yearly Meeting, Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee introduced the theme and suggested some spiritual preparation and resources on each of the three strands of the theme (see www.quaker.org.uk/documents/preparing-for-yearly-meeting-2022).

In the week leading up to Yearly Meeting, there will also be theme-related sessions and media to help prepare Friends for discernment at the

Yearly Meeting sessions. In some cases, additional background materials will be provided for some of these sessions. If relevant, these will be made available to you after booking online via the Yearly Meeting Planner.

Please refer to the online Yearly Meeting Planner for full details and to book.

Theme preparation: Faith: How? Why? What?

- Tuesday 24 May 2022, 19:00–20:30

A workshop exploring what Quaker faith means to us, sharing what it means to others, and ending with a period of worship.

Theme preparation: What sustains us? Reflecting on our Quaker communities

- Wednesday 25 May, 19:00–20:30

In this preparatory session, we will hear stories from meetings around Britain that have made innovative and effective changes within their worshipping communities, to better know each other and work together. Some have invested in themselves, some in their neighbouring communities and some in work in the wider world. All have discerned what sustains them as a community.

There will be time for discussion in smaller groups, to hear about each other's experiences of building

and sustaining thriving worshipping communities. This session will be facilitated by Woodbrooke.

Theme preparation: Action: uncomfortable Quaker histories

- Thursday 26 May, 19:00–20:30

What can we learn from past successes and failures, as we now see them, of individual Quakers and Quaker communities? In facing up to unwelcome truths, can we nevertheless find inspiration in our messy and complicated history as we continue to follow God's leadings today?

In this preparation session, two Friends who have researched uncomfortable aspects of Quaker history will share their findings.

There will be an opportunity to ask questions and a period of worship-sharing to conclude.

Friends planning to attend are encouraged to read and watch spiritual preparation materials ('Flawed Quaker heroes' and 'Reconsidering reparations'), listed in [Preparing for Yearly Meeting](#), and the additional paper 'Lancaster Quakers engaged in the slave trade', prepared for this session by Ann Morgan. Read the Preparing for Yearly Meeting document at

www.quaker.org.uk/documents/preparing-for-yearly-meeting-2022.

Further details will be made available via the Yearly Meeting Planner, after booking.

3 Explanation of business to be taken at Yearly Meeting

3.1 Nominations and appointments

Nominations and appointments

Each year, Yearly Meeting appoints Friends to serve in different capacities at that Yearly Meeting and to

serve on committees and groups working throughout the year

Yearly Meeting nominations and appointments

Yearly Meeting itself will nominate and appoint Friends to serve on Yearly Meeting Nominating Group (see *Quaker faith & practice* 6.22). To nominate Friends, please complete the short form at <https://forms.quaker.org.uk/ymnoms>, or visit the Nominations section of the Yearly Meeting Planner.

You will need permission from the Friend(s) you are nominating, along with up-to-date contact information. You can only nominate Friends in membership who will be present at Yearly Meeting (online or in person). A list of nominated Friends will be shared with the yearly meeting on the planner website, and any objections should be made to Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee (at nominations@quaker.org.uk) before 17:00 on Sunday 29 May.

An online meeting of all interested and nominated Friends will be held online, on Monday 23 May, 17:00–18:00, to explain the role, answer questions, and collectively agree the final group. The nominations will then be brought to Yearly Meeting in session.

Nominations from Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees nominate the Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees and the Yearly Meeting Treasurer.

Nominations from nominating committees

For the remaining vacancies, two different nominating committees bring the names of Friends to Yearly Meeting: Central Nominations Committee and Yearly Meeting Nominating Group.

These Friends have been identified after a careful and prayerful process of discernment. Their names will be published in the Schedule of nominations, which will be available on the Yearly Meeting website at www.quaker.org.uk/ym before Yearly Meeting.

If you see a problem with the service of any of the Friends nominated, you should contact Penny Elliott, Nominations Secretary, either by email at nominations@quaker.org.uk or by calling 020 7663 1106. This should happen as soon as possible and in good time before the session involved.

3.2 Nominations and appointments

Yearly Meeting is the final constitutional authority of the Religious Society of Friends. Consequently, Yearly Meeting receives the annual reports of the committees appointed to carry out its business between Yearly Meetings. These reports are from the following groups:

- Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees are responsible to the yearly meeting for the right stewardship of the centrally managed work and the assets and property of the yearly meeting. See *Quaker faith & practice* 8.17–8.20. Trustees are accountable to both the yearly meeting and the charity regulators.
- Central Nominations Committee is responsible for bringing the names of Friends for service to both Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings. Consequently, they have an overview of the number of Friends who have offered their service and are involved in encouraging Friends to consider service. See *Quaker faith & practice* 6.21.
- Friends Trusts Ltd is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. It is the denominational trust corporation for the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain and in this capacity holds property and investments as custodian trustee or nominee for meetings and other bodies within Britain Yearly Meeting. It receives legacies which are to benefit some aspect of

the Society or its work and manages a number of Quaker trusts.
See *Quaker faith & practice* 14.45.

Friends Trusts Ltd's audit will not take place until after Yearly Meeting, so no report is included in these documents. The report will be available on the website together with the company's annual report and financial statements when they have been approved by the directors.

- Meeting for Sufferings is the body entrusted with the general care of matters affecting Britain Yearly Meeting and, in the intervals between Yearly Meetings, the making of decisions and issuing of statements in the name of Britain Yearly Meeting. See *Quaker faith & practice* 7.02–7.06.
- Quaker Housing Trust is the yearly meeting's own national housing charity. It makes grants and loans to social housing projects. Independent of Britain Yearly Meeting funds, its income comes directly from Friends and meetings. See *Quaker faith & practice* 8.15.
- Quaker Stewardship Committee gives help and guidance to area meetings in meeting the requirements of charity law in the stewardship of finance and property. They are also required to certify annually to Yearly Meeting that every

part of Britain Yearly Meeting is producing proper financial accounts and property records. See *Quaker faith & practice* 14.36–14.42. The

2021 Yearly Meeting minute 27 (Review of Quaker Stewardship Committee) agreed to lay down QSC from the rise of YM 2022 with its advice and guidance functions transferred to QLCC.

- Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee is responsible for planning the agenda for and use of premises during each Yearly Meeting. At the beginning of each Yearly Meeting, Agenda Committee reports on the planning of that Yearly Meeting and sets the agenda in context. See *Quaker faith & practice* 6.18.

3.3 Yearly Meeting Epistle

The Yearly Meeting Epistle is the letter sent from this Yearly Meeting for Friends everywhere: to other yearly meetings worldwide and to local meetings in Britain. It is sent to all local meetings immediately after Yearly Meeting so that it can be read out at meeting for worship at the first available opportunity.

Quaker faith & practice 6.23 outlines the process for creating the epistle. The details for our blended Yearly Meeting are set out below.

1. Any Friend may give written advice on the content of the epistle by contacting the Epistle Drafting Committee, before 17:30 on Sunday 29 May (either by placing it in the box on the information desk in Friends House, or via the Epistle Drafting Committee box in the Yearly Meeting Planner online).

2. The Epistle Drafting Committee will then produce a Draft Epistle, which will be made available to Friends on the morning of Monday 30 May (on the information desk in Friends House and on the Yearly Meeting Planner online).
3. Comments on the content, text, style, grammar, language, etc. of the Draft Epistle should be sent to the Epistle Drafting Committee no later than 12:15 on Monday 30 May.
4. A revised Draft Epistle will be presented at the final session on Monday 30 May, 14:00–16:00, when no further revision (except perhaps excision) will be invited.

4 Agenda and notes

4.1 Preparation online

There will be three theme preparation sessions between 24 and 26 May. These will be offered online only. See 2.6 above for full details.

Between 21 and 26 May there will be a range of Faith in Action meetings offered by Quaker Recognised Bodies and some committees and work programmes of Britain Yearly Meeting. For further details of these, and of the Groups Fair, see the Yearly Meeting Planner online.

4.2 Throughout the weekend

Friends House opening hours

Friends House will open for registration on Friday 27 May at 15:00. Saturday 28 May and Sunday 29 May opening times are 8:30 (doors open) to 21:40 (doors close), and on Monday 30 May the building will close at 17:00.

Young Adults at Yearly Meeting

Sessions throughout Yearly Meeting for 18- to 35-year-olds offer a way to be part of Yearly Meeting and to be in a smaller community. This gives those participating the chance to prepare for and reflect

on their own experience of Yearly Meeting. During Yearly Meeting, there will be a hub on the second floor for all those aged 18–35 to gather informally and for scheduled activities.

Youth, Children & Families programmes

The Youth, Children & Families programmes are a central part of Yearly Meeting. They follow the themes of Yearly Meeting, using Quaker approaches and practices to encourage the faith formation and spiritual development of participants. There is an emphasis on building an exciting, challenging and creative community. All under-18s attending Yearly Meeting need to be booked onto their age-appropriate programme by a parent or guardian.

- The Children’s Programme (ages 0 to 11). The Programme runs in the mornings and afternoons from Saturday to Monday as well as a programme for 5- to 11-year-olds running alongside the Swarthmore Lecture.
- The Young People’s Programme (YPP) (ages 11 to 15) is arranged by a group of young people, with the support of adult volunteers and staff. YPP runs from Friday evening until Monday afternoon, running as a residential at Felden Lodge and concluding on Monday at Friends House.
- Accompanying is available for 15- to 18-year-olds to meet up socially at Yearly Meeting and attend Yearly Meeting in session. During the Yearly Meeting we will be based in the Margaret Fell room.

4.3 Events

Britain Yearly Meeting and Woodbrooke stands

East Corridor

The Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) stand and the Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre stand will be in the East Corridor all weekend. Members of staff from BYM staff and trustees from Woodbrooke will be available at various times of the day to meet and ask any questions about the work. It will also be possible to ask questions and post a comment via the Yearly Meeting Planner.

Community Hub

Waldo Williams Suite

The community hub offers a warm and welcoming space to have time out from YM, to sit quietly and be occupied, with jigsaw puzzles, knitting and craft materials, or to have quiet conversation. It will share a space with pastoral care.

The hub will be open throughout Yearly Meeting and will have a host present as follows:

- Friday, 15:00–21:00
- Saturday, 09:30–17:15
- Sunday, 09:30–17:15
- Monday, 09:30–16:00.

New to Yearly Meeting?

Waldo Williams Suite

If this is your first time at Yearly Meeting, welcome! We recognise that this is a busy event where everyone may seem to know each other. If you are new and would like to meet other new people, Gillie, a volunteer with the fundraising team, will be in the community hub during break times on Friday and prior to the Swarthmore Lecture on Saturday. She'd love to meet you!

Café

At the times below there will be space in the courtyard, bookshop and café to meet and have a coffee:

- Friday, 15:00–21:00
- Saturday, 09:30–17:15
- Sunday, 09:30–17:15
- Monday, 09:30–16:00.

The Library

The Library will be open throughout the weekend and you are welcome to come in, whether to talk to staff, look at our displays and resources, or simply find a moment of quiet.

We'd like to invite you to contribute to our research about Quaker experiences of the pandemic, to hear what your day-to-day experiences have been like for the past two years, including how your Quakerism has been part of this. Ask at the Library desk for details.

In Yearly Meeting Session 4, Anne Morgan will share her research into the involvement in slavery by Lancaster Friends. A guide to this will be available in the Library.

Worship

There will be opportunities to worship (online and in person) at the start and end of each day as follows:

- Friday 27 May, 21:00–21:30 – stations on our spiritual journey
- Saturday 28 May, 08:30–09:00 – worship with Friends from around the world
- Saturday 28 May, 21:00–21:30 – worship with Friends from around the world
- Sunday 29 May, 08:30–09:00 – worship with Friends from around the world
- Sunday 29 May, 21:00–21:30 – worship with Friends from around the world
- Monday 30 May, 08:30–09:00 – stations on our spiritual journey.

Worship with Friends from around the world: an opportunity to worship with Friends from different parts of the world and experience different kinds of Quaker worship. Each meeting for worship will be hosted by Friends from a different section of the Friends World Committee for Consultation. All are welcome.

Stations on our spiritual journey: individual Friends will lead the worship by describing the landscape of their spiritual journey and where they are now. Each spoken contribution of 7–10 minutes will be followed by stillness and worship-sharing.

Further details of worship sessions will be available on the Yearly Meeting Planner.

Saturday 21 May: 11:00–12:00, Opening of Yearly Meeting

Welcome to Yearly Meeting

Please join this short informal online session to meet the Yearly Meeting Clerks and come together with Friends to mark the start of our Yearly Meeting. We will have a chance to see one another's (screen) faces and hear some ideas for making the most of Yearly Meeting – join in person or online, whether you plan to attend as much as possible, or just dip in and out of sessions.

Friday 27 May: 19:00–20:30, Yearly Meeting Session 1 – Opening session

In our opening session we expect to take some formal opening business, hear introductions and consider nominations. We will hear a report from Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee and consider our theme:

- **Faith:** How do we experience worship, community and witness?
- **Community:** How can we build Quaker communities that respond to challenges and put faith into action?
- **Action:** How can we transform thinking and action in Quaker communities and wider society?

1. Appointment of clerks

Central Nominations Committee nominates the following Friends

to serve as clerk and assistant clerks for Yearly Meeting 2022, serving until the first session of Yearly Meeting 2023:

- Clerk, Siobhán Haire, North London AM
- First Assistant Clerk, Adwoa Burnley, East Scotland AM
- Second Assistant Clerk, Fred Langridge, Sheffield and Balby AM

2. Welcome to all

3. Youth, Children & Families Programmes

The clerk will outline the age-related programmes happening in parallel with main Yearly Meeting sessions and identify times when we will all come together.

4. Explanation of practicalities

5. Central Nominations Committee – nominations required

Central Nominations Committee brings forward nominations to Yearly Meeting 2023 as specified in Table 4 of the Schedule of Nominations. Friends should refer to guidance in section 3.2.

6. Report of Yearly Meeting Nominating Group (2021–2022)

7. Agenda introduction

The Clerk of Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee will introduce the report of Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee. The report can be found at Appendix A and Friends should refer to section 3.2 for an explanation of the role of the committee.

8. Appointment of Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees and Yearly Meeting Treasurer

Nominations from Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees for Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees and for Yearly Meeting Treasurer are listed in Table 2 of the Schedule of Nominations. Friends should refer to guidance in section 3.

Friday 27 May: 19:00–20:30, Yearly Meeting Session 1 – Opening session, continued

9. Receipt of other reports

We will formally receive the following reports:

- Quaker Housing Trust (Appendix B)

10. Matters arising

Saturday 28 May: 9:30–12:00, Yearly Meeting Session 2 – Faith: learning, waiting, changing

11. Faith: Learning, waiting, changing

The challenge of faith raises many questions. What difference does the Quaker way make to us? What difference does it make in the world? What needs do we bring to our journey through life, and how does being a Quaker answer those needs? What does our faith offer us when we need to discern a

way forward? What do we do when we don't know what comes next?

We will hear how one Friend's journey prompted them to look at these questions. Their story is one where faith took hold of them, pushing them to re-assess their view of the world and themselves. Waiting on God led them to unexpected places of meaning and connection, and a deep sense of peace.

See section 2.5 for details of spiritual preparation and theme-related events to prepare for this session.

12. Eldership and Pastoral Care at Yearly Meeting

Saturday 28 May: 14:00–17:00, Yearly Meeting Session 3 – Our Quaker communities: grounded in faith and challenging us to act

13. Our Quaker communities: grounded in faith and challenging us to act

How do we build Quaker communities that can respond to challenges and enable us to put our faith into action?

God comes to us in the midst of human need, and the most pressing needs of our time demand community in response. How can I participate in a fairer distribution of resources unless I live in a community which makes it possible to consume less?

How can I learn accountability unless I live in a

community where my acts and their consequences are visible to all?

How can I learn to share power unless I live in a community where hierarchy is unnatural? How can I take the risks which right action demands unless I belong to a community which gives support?

How can I learn the sanctity of each life unless I live in a community where we can be persons not roles to one another?

Parker J Palmer, 1977 (*Quaker faith & practice* 23.48)

Our Quaker communities include local meetings, informal worshipping groups, and Quaker Recognised Bodies. We face challenges from the pandemic, from the world around us and from our own needs.

In the introduction to this session, we will consider different experiences of what it means to be a Quaker community and how that can challenge and support us to put our faith into action.

See section 2.6 for details of spiritual preparation and theme-related events to prepare for this session.

This session has a trigger warning: one of the introducers will discuss chronic mental health problems and suicide.

Saturday 28 May: 14:00–17:00, Yearly Meeting Session 3 – Our Quaker communities: grounded in faith and challenging us to act, continued

14. Receipt of other reports

We will formally note receipt of the following reports:

- Central Nominations Committee (Appendix C)
- Tabular Statement (www.quaker.org.uk/ym/documents)

Friends should refer to section 2.3 for an explanation of the role of the committees.

15. Receipt of other reports

We will formally note receipt of the following reports:

- The work of Quaker Stewardship Committee: receipt of annual report
- The written report can be found at Appendix D, and Friends should refer to section 2.3 for an explanation of the role of the committee.

Saturday 28 May: 19:00–20:15, Swarthmore Lecture 2022 – ‘Perceiving the temperature of the water’

This year’s Swarthmore Lecture will be given by Helen Minnis. Helen will speak from her experience as a scientist and a Quaker, addressing issues of white privilege within the Quaker movement and scientific community. The lecture will prompt

Friends to address these issues, and we hope it will be a spark for future work as part of the yearly meeting's ongoing engagement with the topic and our journey to becoming an anti-racist faith community.

The Swarthmore Lecture will be held on 28 May at 19:00 in person at Friends House, and live-streamed via YouTube – please see www.woodbrooke.org.uk/swarthmore for details and to sign up to be sent the link for the livestream.

Woodbrooke is offering a range of materials to help Friends prepare for the lecture – videos, articles, blogs and courses. These will enable individuals and groups to engage with the themes of the lecture.

Visit www.woodbrooke.org.uk/swarthmore for more information. All Swarthmore Lecture preparatory videos will also be listed at bit.ly/SLprep2022.

There will be another opportunity to watch the Swarthmore Lecture as a YouTube Premiere on 30 May 2022 at 19:00. Friends are invited to watch together at that time, and discuss with others via YouTube's live comments. After it has premiered, the lecture will be available to watch in your own time via www.woodbrooke.org.uk/swarthmore.

The Swarthmore Lecture is part of the work of Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre.

Sunday 29 May: 10:30–11:30, Yearly Meeting – All-together worship

This will be a huge meeting for worship, taking place across Britain in homes, meeting places and at Friends House. We will come together as a single loving, inclusive and all-age community across the length and breadth of Britain Yearly Meeting.

As well as individuals joining online from home, local Quaker communities are invited to take part via a live link. We hope those unable to connect online will either join others connecting online locally, or worship with us together in spirit.

Worship will start together with children, during which there will be a reading. Children will then be able to continue their worship through a range of activities reflecting on the reading.

A shared reading will be circulated in May to support this session, together with materials for those supporting children's worship. We hope to make available a list of participating meetings so that those wishing to attend in person can do so wherever they are in the country. For details, see www.quaker.org.uk/ym/programme.

If individuals wish to join All-together worship from home, please register for Yearly Meeting.

Sunday 29 May: 12:00–13:00, Yearly Meeting Session 4

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

The main business in this session will be to receive and consider a

report of the work of BYM Trustees. Their report includes work on anti-racism, and how the centrally managed work of BYM is supporting thriving Quaker communities, building a sustainable and

peaceful world, and simplifying our structures and practices.

They will also tell us about the impact of Covid-19 on our work and finances.

16. The work of our trustees: receipt of annual report from Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

The annual report including financial statements is published as a separate document – see www.quaker.org.uk/annualreport.

Sunday 29 May, 15:00–17:30: Yearly Meeting Session 5 – Action: learning uncomfortable lessons and taking forward our witness

17. Action: learning uncomfortable lessons and taking forward our witness

Adapt yourselves no longer to the pattern of this present world, but let your minds be remade and your whole nature thus transformed. Then you will be able to discern the will of God, and to know what is good, acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:2 *New English Bible*

How can I learn accountability unless I live in a community where my acts and their consequences are visible to all?

Parker J Palmer, 1977 (*Quaker faith & practice* 23.48)

How do we make radical transitions in thinking and action in Quaker communities and wider society? This session will start with the uncomfortable history of some Quakers who continued to trade in enslaved people long after the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade had been advocated by London Yearly Meeting. From this example, what lessons can we learn about transformations of society and community? If we fail to live up to what we say we are, and as we continue to benefit from

unjust structures, when are apology and reparation appropriate and what form should they take?

What are the implications for our accountability to one another as we take forward our witness on anti-racism, privilege, gender diversity, and climate change?

It would be helpful if Friends planning to attend this session also read and watch the spiritual preparation material

(www.quaker.org.uk/documents/preparing-for-yearly-meeting-2022), and attend the online preparatory event on the evening of Thursday 26 May. Please refer to the online Yearly Meeting Planner for full details and to book.

Sunday 29 May, 19:00–20:00: Meet the Swarthmore Lecturer – online and in the Light

An opportunity to join Helen Minnis for a session including reflections, questions and answers. In her lecture on Saturday (see page 16) Helen will speak from her experience as a scientist and a Quaker, addressing issues of white privilege within the Quaker movement and scientific community.

There will be two opportunities to ‘meet the Swarthmore Lecturer’ – one on the evening of Sunday 29 May at 19:00 (blended) and one on Wednesday 1 June at 19:00 (online only). Please refer to the online Yearly Meeting Planner for full details

and to book. Please only sign up for one event to allow as many people as possible to participate.

The Swarthmore Lecture is part of the work of Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre.

Monday 30 May, 9:30–12:00: Yearly Meeting Session 6 – Required Business, as led

18. Yearly Meeting Nominating Group: appointment

19. The work of our national representative body: receipt of annual report from Meeting for Suffering

In this session we will receive and consider a report of the work of our national representative body, Meeting for Sufferings, which acts on our behalf between Yearly Meetings. Its report includes work on anti-racism, sustainability and assisted dying. The written report can be found at Appendix E.

Monday 30 May, 14:00–16:00: Yearly Meeting Session 7 – Our all-age community, Closing session

Receipt of the Yearly Meeting Epistle, time as led, and closing business.

Today is the final day for Youth, Children & Families programmes. We will take the opportunity to come together as

an all-age community and hear minutes from the Youth, Children & Families programmes, and the Junior Yearly Meeting Epistle. The session will conclude with worship for all ages.

- 20. Receipt of the Yearly Meeting Draft Epistle**
- 21. Yearly Meeting Nominating Group 2022–2023**
- 22. Minute of Record: Epistles**
- 23. Minute of Record: Testimonies**
- 24. Minute of Record: Friends from other yearly meetings**
- 25. Minute of Record: Inter- church and interfaith visitors**
- 26. Reading and signing of the Yearly Meeting Epistle**
- 27. Receipt of minutes from the Children & Families and Young People's Programmes**
- 28. Receipt of Junior Yearly Meeting Epistle**
- 29. Meeting for worship with those participating in the Children & Families and Young People's Programmes**
- 30. Thanks**
- 31. Naming of clerks for Yearly Meeting 2023**

5 Appendices

A: Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee (YMAC) annual report

“Should nothing occur to prevent...” words that brought tears to my eyes at the close of Yearly Meeting 2021.

We don't know how things will be in our world. This is causing many of us to find life, worship and work tricky. At YMAC we are hearing that some Meetings and individual Friends are managing well with blended worship whilst others are not. We hear that there is a need to be gentle with one another and to reach out if we can. To understand that for many being able to link with other Quakers online is just not working or possible, whilst for others it is a much-needed lifeline.

In our work to plan for Yearly Meeting 2022 we are clear that our aim is to try to find a balance for all. We are aiming for an event where there is no distinction between those joining online and those in person at Friends House. A tall order, this takes prayer, communication and a great deal of work.

We are supported by a staff team that regularly goes above and beyond, particularly in these difficult working conditions.

Our committee works with representatives from all central committees and with other bodies such as Woodbrooke and Young Friends General Meeting to listen together to try to discern content for the coming Yearly Meeting. We also work very closely with Junior

Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee. The Clerks of JYM Arrangements Committee join our clerks in break out rooms for minute writing and discernment. Their input is invaluable. We work for many hours trying to discern all aspects of the event. From preparatory materials to volunteers needed, from theme content to required business, from the needs of all to the restrictions we may or may not be dealing with. We are, and will continue to, do our very best!

Our considerations on possible theme content are shaped by the recognition that we sense tension between focusing on restoring our faith communities in difficult times, and holding ourselves accountable for our commitment to do challenging work internally in our Society and in the wider world.

Our theme for our Yearly Meeting 2022 is Faith, Community and Action. As I write this in February, we are working to organise introducers for each strand, therefore content is still a work in progress. However, I would like to give you a flavour of what we expect to shape the sessions around.

Faith: How do we see our faith through our experience of worship, community and witness?

Community: How can we build Quaker communities that respond to challenges and put faith into action?

Action: How can we make radical transitions in thinking and action in Quaker communities and wider society?

I hope you are looking forward to experiencing how this work on your behalf will develop!

We recognise that some Friends feel centred in Local Meetings and distant from YM priorities and discernments. We hope that providing such a vast blended event will lessen this distance. After all...

before, during and after serving on YMAC, we are all Local Friends.

As Quakers we are guided by God to search together. We are seeking in Meeting for Worship for Business to take steps that follow our Testimonies.

YMAC often returns to the document Our Faith in The Future. One of our priorities is to ensure Yearly Meeting is inclusive. We work hard on all aspects of this. Your responses in the evaluation surveys each year guide and help us with this. Thank you.

If we believe in our discipline and have faith, we will be moved as a whole community. We can acknowledge tensions and still move forward together.

Adwoa Burnley

Clerk of Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee

B: Quaker Housing Trust annual report

Having a safe and secure home has never been more important as the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have continued, requiring many of us to stay at home for prolonged periods and sometimes self-isolate.

More than ever, having a decent and safe home has been fundamental for our health and wellbeing.

However, in our increasingly unequal society, many people in Britain do not have the luxury of safe and secure housing.

Since its inception in 1967 Quaker Housing Trust has been turning Friends' concern and money into help for social housing projects by providing grants and interest-free loans to grassroots charities delivering homes for those in the greatest need.

Following an extremely successful year in 2020, when we disbursed almost all available funds to charities working effectively to ameliorate the housing crisis, 2021 has been a lower key year following our decision in 2020 to suspend grant making until our funds had been replenished with new donations and repayments from our portfolio of loans.

Our efforts to increase donations to the Trust have had limited effect, despite awareness raising activities within the Quaker community, such as adverts in *The Friend* and two special interest groups at Yearly Meeting Gathering. We will have to redouble our efforts in 2022 to raise funds if we are to continue with the mission given to us

in 1967 arising from the concern among Quakers in Britain about the housing crisis. In almost 50 years, the housing crisis and housing inequality have not gone away, and in recent years have become worse.

2021 was also a year to say goodbye to our Secretary, Simon Phillips, who left us in August. Due to internal HR processes within BYM, we were unable to immediately recruit, due to potential redeployment of other BYM staff facing redundancy. However, we interviewed external candidates in early December, and our new Secretary, Jennifer Allott (member of York Friargate Meeting) was appointed to the role and began work in February 2022. We also said farewell to a longstanding and very active trustee, Malcolm Bowker, who helped bridge the gap between Secretaries until his departure in November 2021.

In the efforts to cut our costs so that even more of our income can be directed to funding housing projects, we were successful in our attempts to find pro-bono legal representation (which we require to secure our larger grants and loans). CMS, a large corporate legal firm with offices across the UK are now working on our behalf, for which we are really grateful.

Our new website www.qht.org.uk was launched in the spring of 2021, showcasing case studies of successful and effective funded projects and the impact that they have on the lives of those with real housing

need. Trustee Oli Griffiths is thanked for his support communicating our work.

We hosted a very well-attended session at Yearly Meeting Gathering on the topic of energy efficiency in housing. QHT has built our testimony about environmental stewardship into our application criteria requiring all our newly funded projects to reach a minimum Fuel energy efficiency standard (C rating or above) in refurbished buildings and even higher (B rating or above) in new builds. Energy efficiency in housing contributes to reductions in greenhouse gases and reduces the likelihood that those living in them will be affected by fuel poverty. Reducing fossil fuel usage also reduces causes and funding for war.

The two projects we have supported in 2021 reflect this focus:

- £26,000 to the Boaz Trust, which is based in Manchester and runs twenty properties providing accommodation to refugees and asylum seekers, to implement a range of energy efficiency and safety measures in a number of properties in their housing stock portfolio
- £9,964 to Pathways for All People (based Bournemouth providing accommodation for people experiencing addiction, domestic violence and abuse, severe depression and anxiety and in need of emergency housing) to implement energy efficiency measures in a house that they are refurbishing.

Everyone needs a home and Quaker Housing Trust is helping to provide funds to charities to offer homes to, among others, people seeking asylum, survivors of domestic abuse, and those escaping street homelessness. Please support us.

C: Central Nominations Committee annual report

Our report to Yearly Meeting usually begins by reminding Friends of what we do, and some idea of how we try to do it.

Who we are and what we do

The committee should be made up of 18 members and 2 clerks, but we are at present under strength.

We are responsible for seeking names to bring to Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings for nearly 30 committees, groups, and roles, so that at any given time, well over 200 Friends may be serving the Society at national level, let alone the service we all undertake to support the life and work of Quakers at local and regional level, whether formally or informally. In addition to the regular cycle of Friends coming to the end of a term of service, which may be not far short of 100 in any given year, there are always extra names to find, when Friends, for very good reasons, have to ask to be released early.

As we reported last year, we have set up standing search groups, each of which is responsible for a particular committee or role, and every member of Central Nominations will be serving on several search groups. We hope that by having standing search groups, even though the membership of the group changes, the search group can build an ongoing relation with the committees to have a better understanding of their needs, and the changes in those needs. These groups can also co-opt others from outside Central

Nominations, who have particular knowledge and experience of the work, to support the initial work of establishing what is needed. We have been supporting BYM Trustees in their new role discerning the Clerk to Trustees, as we also learn from the experience of Committee on Clerks in discerning names for the Clerks and Assistant Clerks of Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings.

Since Yearly Meeting Gathering in 2021, we have managed one in-person meeting at Friends' House, but otherwise all our meetings have been online.

For some of our group, the in-person meeting was the first time they were able to meet each other. In addition to the meetings of the full committee, all the search groups meet regularly online, to discern the names they hope to bring to the full committee, for the discernment of the committee as a whole.

How we work is as important, as its outcome, and we are conscious of the need to give enough time to let us discern truly, and without feeling the pressure of workload.

Meeting online has been invaluable over the last two years, and Quakers have benefited from resources like Zoom. It makes our meetings more sustainable with less travel and other costs, but it does mean we have to work harder to build the relationships and connections that help us work and worship together more effectively.

How you can help us

...At this Yearly Meeting Gathering Friends have

considered the theme 'For our comfort and discomfort: living equality and truth in a time of crisis'.

We have been wrestling with what it will mean to be truly committed to anti-racism and faith-based action for climate justice. We have thought about how to better affirm gender diversity in our meetings.

We have discovered the challenges of attempting to make statements as a unified 'we' in a way that acknowledges the different experiences among us....

Yearly Meeting Epistle,
Yearly Meeting Gathering BYM 2021

As a Yearly Meeting, we have to acknowledge that we are not as diverse as the wider society around us, but even so, we are not reflecting even the level of diversity we have, in the membership of the committees supporting our central work.

Committees are asking us to bring names reflecting that wider diversity, but often we simply don't have the information to do that.

Whereas on a local or area meeting nominations committee, there is a fair chance that most members of the committee, between them, will know most of those in the pool of names, that isn't true for us. It is important we don't just look at the names of those we know. As part of our wider consideration, we are also trying not to take what might be the easy option, of almost automatically re-nominating

those serving, for a second term, but making sure that that name is still the best one for the Friend and the service.

We don't, and can't, know everyone in the Yearly Meeting, so we are dependent on what you tell us about yourselves and what you are interested in, or passionate about. It is not just about CNC

knowing about you, but trying to ensure that Friends everywhere know about the work being done in their name, which they might want to help take forward.

The existing Quaker service information forms, known variously as the yellow forms, QSIFs, and the more recent expression of interest forms, exist, but only a small proportion of Friends have filled them in. On the whole less than 7% of those listed for an Area Meeting. And yes, we do know that the official numbers for our Areas Meetings in the tabular statements each year, are an optimistic version of the numbers we see regularly.

We have spent time thinking about the barriers which prevent more Friends offering to support the work and concerns. Part of that barrier must be how engage with all those, both members and attenders, who are part of our Meetings, not just those who we already know, or who come to us. But we also need to find ways to be more flexible in how we – both CNC, and the central committees, work. It might involve seeking Friends to support particular shorter-term projects, rather than committing to three years of service, when the vicissitudes of life don't make long term commitments viable. It is

always a balancing act: how often have you thought, at the end of a triennium, that you are just beginning to understand what the role is, and how best to fulfil it.

So, as a committee, we have been exploring two issues in particular: firstly, why Friends are reluctant to fill in the forms, and secondly whether the forms, even when they are filled in, actually meet our needs. Starting with the second question, we are very clear they are no longer fit for purpose, and we are taking the time to try to be much clearer about what we would like to know about you, and what is the best way for you to tell us what you want us to know.

As to the first issue – the forms are not very user friendly, and seem to focus on professional experience and qualifications, and a string of tick boxes. They don't necessarily give you the best chance to tell us what you can do, and have learnt in your life, or about those issues you are passionate about. Serving the Society is not just to take forward the work, but, at its best, to help us all grow and develop in our lives as Quakers. There are so many areas of work and concern, which Quakers are engaged with, and there maybe something you would like to help develop and grow.

Inevitably, there is a worry, with our often complex lives, with many facets juggling for our time and energy, that once we fill in such a form offering service, we may be deluged with nominations committees descending on us, with competing demands to take what limited time and energy we have to spare. At its best, service should

enrich both those serving and the purpose, and help both flourish, and we hope that the work we are doing now will help us all achieve that aim. What we seek to find for others, we also gain from our own service on CNC. Although nominations can sometimes be challenging, it is also deeply rewarding and we also learn and grow. So, thank you for appointing us to this service.

D: Quaker Stewardship Committee annual report (including compliance report)

For the 2008 Swarthmore Lecture, Christine Davis wrote: as Friends, we try to weave together worship and work so that both feed and bear fruit from the other.

Role and purpose

Quaker Stewardship Committee is a standing committee of Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM).

The purpose of Quaker Stewardship Committee (QSC) is to support area meetings in their stewardship and co-ordinate the relationship between (all parts of) the yearly meeting and those administering charity law (*Quaker faith & practice* 14.36). It exists to give help and guidance to meetings to enable them to meet the requirements of charity law in the stewardship of their finance and property; encouraging openness, accountability, transparency and integrity in all our affairs (*Quaker faith & practice* 14.38).

The committee met five times during the year, all by video conference.

The responsibilities of the committee are given in *Quaker faith & practice* 14.39. These responsibilities have been undertaken as follows:

Sustainability

During the year, the sustainability sections of each area meeting's annual report were collated for the annual report to Meeting for Sufferings on sustainability work in area meetings (MfS paper 2021 12 10c). The paper included the following sections: activities and progress made in becoming a low carbon community; measures of energy consumption/ greenhouse gas emission; and future plans.

Support for trustees

Our area meetings are continuing to adopt diverse charitable structures. According to their annual reports, 3 area meetings were companies limited by guarantee, 11 were charitable incorporated organisations (CIOs), 38 were registered charities and 18 were unregistered charities. Each has different reporting requirements and can own property in different ways.

The unregistered area meetings are 'excepted charities', meaning that they do not have to report to the Charity Commission annually. An article covering registration of excepted charities was published in The Friend on 12 March 2021 under the heading: Meeting the challenge: all Friends in an area meeting need to think about its future.

An updated version of the advice *Should area meetings consider becoming Charitable Incorporated Organisations or Companies?* was added to the BYM website.

Provide property advice and guidance

Property guidance sheets were updated in 2019; advice and guidance are now provided by a property advice e-group.

Support for treasurers

The Association of Church Accountants and Treasurers (ACAT) has online materials and emails its newsletter directly to individuals. All Quaker treasurers and clerks to trustees can receive updates and information on the short courses that ACAT runs in locations across the country.

To help ensure every part of Britain Yearly Meeting is producing proper annual reports, QSC has continued to review the reports and accounts of area meetings and has offered guidance and support to meetings in their production.

A summary of the reserve and cash holding status for registered area meetings showed that reserves which were higher than might be recommended were up

£2.4 million to nearly £17 million in 2020.

A survey of area and local meeting accounting packages concluded that whether an accounting package is recommended is as much about the user as the functionality of the software.

Ensure education and training are available

Two online events, on Blended meetings and on Burial grounds, were held in February 2021, and one on non-viable meeting houses

in March. An online event with Quaker Life on Safeguarding was hosted in April and then repeated in May due to the numbers asking to attend. For Yearly Meeting Gathering in July, separate events were organised for area meeting trustees and treasurers: treasurers discussed the impact of recent events on finances and organisation; trustees discussed a QSC paper on changes to the administrative framework of local and area meetings (Emerging forms of Quaker organisation).

Enable meetings to act within the law

The committee continued to update the agreed checklist for trustees' annual reports and accounts in line with Charity Commission and Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator requirements.

A communication Taking action to reduce the risk of fraud was published in Trustees & Treasurers News (www.quaker.org.uk/documents/ttn-issue20-summer2021).

Disseminate good practice

Trustees & Treasurers News, which shares good practice and provides news of changes in the regulatory framework, was published in March, July and November a final edition is planned in 2022.

QSC responded to queries from area and regional meetings on a variety of topics, and added an updated version of the advice Should Area Meetings consider becoming Charitable Incorporated Organisations or Companies? to the BYM website.

Future work

Revision of the trustees' handbook, in the form of guidance sheets, is now planned for 2022.

The 2021 Yearly Meeting minute 27 Review of Quaker Stewardship Committee, agreed to lay down QSC from the rise of YM 2022 with its advice and guidance functions transferred to QLCC.

Compliance report

As a standing committee of Britain Yearly Meeting, QSC reports to Yearly Meeting in session (*Quaker faith & practice* 14.37). QSC are asked to certify that every part of Britain Yearly Meeting is producing proper financial accounts and property registers that have been professionally audited or examined as defined in *Quaker faith & practice* 14.39e. This task is carried out using an agreed checklist for all area meetings.

The 2020 reports mainly met the basic requirements of the checklist, but the quality was variable.

All but one of the registered area meeting charities have submitted their accounts to the Charity Commission or Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

E: Meeting for Sufferings annual report

Meeting for Sufferings is tasked with several duties set out in *Quaker faith and practice* 7.02 and keeps these under review by listing in tabular form how our business fits with those responsibilities. This appears in the papers for each session of Meeting for Sufferings.

Unlike many other churches, it is not our customary practice to offer liturgically authorised prayers for the world, but the faithful attention of Friends to the details of social and ethical issues is surely an analogous practice. On that basis, Meeting for Sufferings engages in prayerful intercession for the world each time it meets. We have scheduled several items for discernment of how the Truth prospers in our meetings, reflecting on the insights afforded by the pandemic and the response to it.

One of the priorities for Meeting for Sufferings is to further the spiritual life of the yearly meeting and its prophetic role in society. One of our most interesting items in this regard was an analysis of trends in membership over the last several years as revealed in the annual tabular statements (MfS 2021-02-07). Far from being a dry statistical exercise, this was a fascinating and inspiring glimpse into the life of our yearly meeting highlighting some of the difficulties we face but also revealing signs of creativity and growth.

Having previously set up a group to revise our book of discipline, we have continued to receive reports of its work giving us an opportunity to comment and clarify as necessary. This has been

another inspiring item of business. We have also received our usual report (MfS/2021-12-10) from our Sustainability Monitoring Group on how, as a yearly meeting, we are meeting the commitment we made at our Canterbury Yearly Meeting Gathering in 2011 to build a low-carbon, sustainable community, measuring our practice in each of five areas of our corporate life identified by Meeting for Sufferings. It is clear that much good work is being done at both national and local level to take us towards that goal. There is still considerable scope for improvement. Events of the last two years have, of necessity, accelerated our use of online meetings and reduced our own carbon footprint.

In 2019, we had received minutes from a few area meetings expressing a concern with the issue of assisted dying. In 2021, this issue having also come to parliament, we finally brought a long process of deliberation to an interim conclusion. We were unable to reach unity on a statement of principle, and the issue thus remains one of the many that are left to the consciences of individual Friends, but we were keen to emphasise that Friends should be supported however they were led and that we perhaps had a ministry to other faith groups in maintaining that it is not necessary to have a defined corporate position on every matter.

Another concern that had been referred to us was the use of the term “overseer”, which many Friends have found unhelpful. As Friends also grappled with the realisation of systemic racism within our own community, the echoes of slave-owning which some

Friends hear in the word made the question particularly pointed. Meeting for Sufferings recognised that local Quaker practice has already begun to experiment with alternatives. We have encouraged this and await a report on the terminology that has developed. This also relates to the ongoing work on “simpler meetings” and the question of whether our system of church officers has become overly burdensome.

As part of the governance process of the Yearly Meeting, Meeting for Sufferings is tasked with making a contribution to setting the priorities for the centrally managed work. In 2021, we received and commented on the strategies for the work of Quaker Life and Quaker Peace and Social Witness, Quaker World Relations Committee, and Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations.

We are also authorised to issue statements on behalf of the yearly meeting and in 2021, we supported the Recording Clerk’s Office in making a statement critical of the proposed Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, drawing on our minutes. We also requested a statement addressing the issues of climate justice in response to the hosting of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26) in Glasgow, which was signed off by the Clerks in accordance with our established process.

Meeting for Sufferings receives regular reports from the Yearly Meeting trustees, so that we are kept informed about developments in the centrally managed work. In 2021, we perhaps worked more

closely than usual with the trustee body as we each addressed the demands of developing “a simple church supported by a simple charity”. We recognise that this may involve making hard choices and Meeting for Sufferings has struggled with some of this. Meeting for Sufferings is overseeing some of this work and will continue to receive reports as work continues. We hope that the fruit of this work might be ready to bring to Yearly Meeting in 2023.

Meeting for Sufferings must also review, evaluate, and adapt its own practices to ensure faithfulness in carrying out our work. In 2021, we have received a review of our own Arrangements Group, which, while emphasising the good work that it does, recommended some changes to appointments to improve continuity and encouraged a more pro- active handling of business. Meeting for Sufferings has been exercised for several years by the need to improve the diversity of our membership and

participation. In 2021, we completed our experiment of reserving places for young adult Friends (MfS/2021-07-09).

The pandemic has had a major impact on the way in which we have conducted business as a yearly meeting, and Meeting for Sufferings has been explicitly charged with undertaking certain tasks on behalf of the Yearly Meeting.

In addition to these headline activities, Meeting for Sufferings has continued its faithful work of maintaining the court and prison register, appointing representatives to attend other yearly meetings,

monitoring, and approving changes to the composition of our local Quaker communities, and other routine activities. There are also some concerns that we are holding until they are ripe for further consideration. One of these is the question of non-geographic membership. This issue was referred to Quaker Life in 2019, before Friends throughout BYM had such wide experience of holding meetings for worship online. Many have welcomed worshippers from outside their specific locality. We look forward to hearing from Quaker Life in the coming year/in due course.

2021 has been a challenging year: procedurally as we continued to develop ways of working under the restrictions imposed by the pandemic; and theologically, as we faced up to the less edifying aspects of our community's history and present practice. We have been reminded of our task to be faithful in heeding the promptings of love and truth and not making idols of our established ways of doing things, however much we may cherish them.

Robert Card

Assistant Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings 13 February 2022

F: Quaker initialisms

This list is not exhaustive, but we hope it helps.

AM	Area Meeting
BYM	Britain Yearly Meeting
BYMT	Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees
CNC	Central Nominations Committee
FWCC	Friends World Committee for Consultation
LM	Local Meeting
MfS	Meeting for Sufferings
QARN	Quaker Action on Refugees Network
QCA	Quaker Church Affairs
QCCIR	Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations
QCEA	Quaker Council for European Affairs
<i>Qf&p</i>	<i>Quaker faith & practice</i>
QGSDC	Quaker Gender & Sexual Diversity Community
QHT	Quaker Housing Trust
QiB	Quakers in Britain
QL	Quaker Life
QLCC	Quaker Life Central Committee
QLRC	Quaker Life Representative Council
QPSW	Quaker Peace & Social Witness

QPSWCC Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee

QSA Quaker Social Action

QSC Quaker Stewardship Committee

QUNO Quaker United Nations Office

QWRC Quaker World Relations Committee

YCF Youth, Children & Families

YM Yearly Meeting

YMAC Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee
(alternatively, Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee)

YMG Yearly Meeting Gathering

YMNG Yearly Meeting Nominating Group

Quakers share a way of life, not a set of beliefs. Quaker unity is based on shared understanding and a shared practice of silent worship – a communal stillness.

Quakers seek to experience God directly – internally, in relationships with others, and with the world. Local meetings for worship are open to all who wish to attend.

Quakers try to live with honesty and integrity. This means speaking truth to all, including people in positions of power. The Quaker commitment to peace arises from the conviction that love is at the heart of existence and that all human beings are unique and equal.

This leads Quakers to put faith into action by working locally and globally to change the systems that cause injustice and violent conflict.

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