

Agenda & notes

Compiled for Yearly Meeting,
Friends House, London and online
26–30 July 2024

Yearly Meeting of Quakers in Britain



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 2024'.

The full set comprises:

1. *Preparing for Yearly Meeting*, including community guidelines.
2. *Agenda and notes*, with introductory material for Yearly Meeting and annual reports of Meeting for Sufferings and other related bodies
3. *Testimonies*, including index of epistles
4. *Trustees' annual report*, including financial statements for the year ended December 2023
5. *Patterns of membership*, including the 2023 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.

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.

Yearly Meeting is a blended event: these allow people to attend the same meeting either online or in the room.

We all need to approach this style of event with care, patience and compassion.

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

The primary business sessions of Yearly Meeting 2024 will be held from Friday 26 July to Tuesday 30 July. A range of online preparatory events will be held before Yearly Meeting, from Friday 5 to Wednesday 10 July.

There are different types of sessions taking place. Details of Yearly Meeting in session and preparatory sessions on the main topics of Yearly Meeting are included in this document.

To access the full schedule of events you first need to register to attend Yearly Meeting. You can do this online at www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

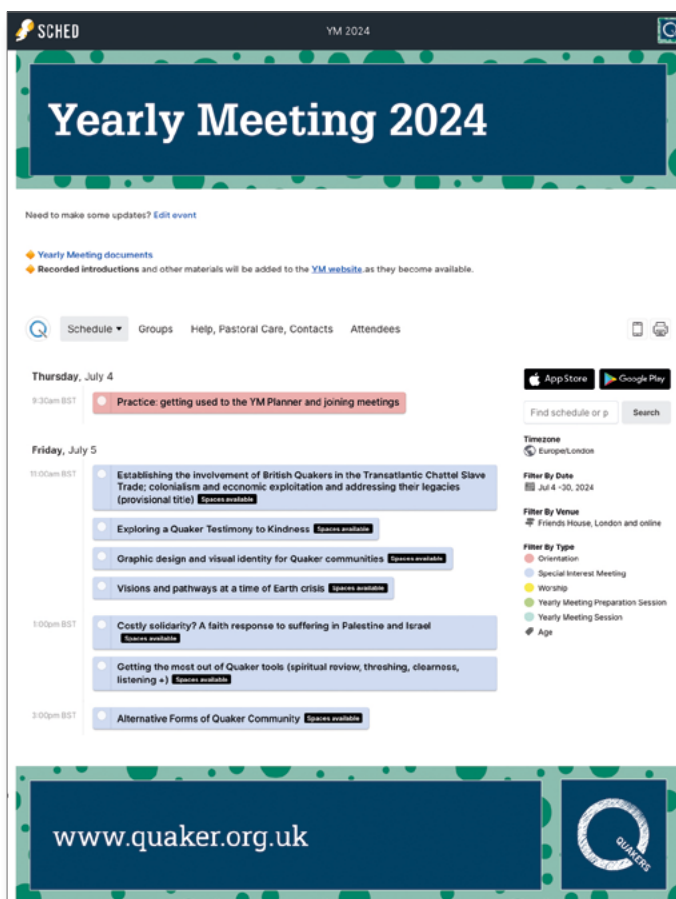
Once your registration has been confirmed you will be sent a link to the online Yearly Meeting Planner. Please refer to the Planner for details of other sessions including the Swarthmore Lecture, orientation, worship, Exploration Sessions, Special Interest Meetings and Yearly Meeting preparation sessions at: <http://ym2024.sched.com>. You will not be able to use this until your registration has been confirmed.

Young Adults at Yearly Meeting

A way for 18 to 35-year-olds to be part of Yearly Meeting throughout and to be in a smaller community. This gives young adults a chance to prepare for and reflect on their own experience of Yearly Meeting. There will be a hub on the lower ground floor of Friends House for young adults who wish to gather informally and for scheduled activities.

Youth, Children & Families programmes

The Children's and Young People's programmes are a central part of Yearly Meeting. The children and young people will also be using Quaker practice and discipline, in ways appropriate for their ages. They will share their discernment with the whole Yearly Meeting through minutes at different sessions. They will build an exciting, challenging and creative



community. All under-18s attending Yearly Meeting need to be registered by their parent or guardian.

Junior Yearly Meeting (ages 15 to 18) is a residential event held as a part of Yearly Meeting from 26 to 30 July. It is arranged by a group of young people, with the support of adult volunteers and staff. Junior Yearly Meeting will be exploring the topic of “How can we nurture love in our actions?”.

Young People @ Yearly Meeting is a programme for ages 11 to 15 held as part of Yearly Meeting. It is arranged by a group of young people, with the support of adult volunteers and staff. Young people can attend one or several of the day programmes and optional evening activities at Friends House. The theme this group is exploring is “The power of Love and Truth”.

The Children's Programme (ages 0 to 11) will be exploring the topic of Love and Truth. The Programme runs each morning Saturday to Tuesday and in the afternoons on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. There is a programme for 5- to 11-year-olds alongside the Swarthmore Lecture on Saturday evening and on Monday evening.

A family space will be available between sessions of the children's programme in the community hub. Children are the responsibility of their own adults at this time.

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
Telephone: 020 7663 1040
Email: ym@quaker.org.uk
Website: www.quaker.org.uk/ym
Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/quakerspace
Twitter: [#BYM2024](https://twitter.com/bymevent)

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 our Community Agreement – a copy is available at www.quaker.org.uk/documents/yearly-meeting-2024-community-agreement.

Yearly Meeting brings together a large number of Friends, 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 is helpful, if at all possible, if Friends avoid arriving late, leaving early, or moving around.

The Quaker business method is a discipline in which all participating should focus on worship and discernment of the matter at hand. Please avoid any activity that detracts from this discipline.

However, Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee is aware that some Friends with particular needs will find it easier to concentrate if using their hands. If this is the case for you, 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 before posting 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. Yearly Meeting has not made a decision until a minute has been agreed.

Safeguarding the health and well-being of our community

The following section sets out the action we will take to safeguard the wellbeing of the most vulnerable members of our community. There are a number of respiratory and flu-like illnesses in circulation.

We encourage you to take the following measures and precautions before arriving:

Please do not attend Yearly Meeting at Friends House:

- if you feel unwell
- if you, or anyone in your household have symptoms such as a new cough, sore throat, high temperature, runny nose, headache, fatigue, sneezing
- if you, or anyone in your household has flu or another contagious illness
- if you have Covid-19 or a positive lateral flow test (LFT).

Action that we will take during Yearly Meeting:

We will provide a socially distanced seating area.

You may consider wearing a face-covering when indoors if you feel more comfortable doing so.

Please always check with individuals whether they are comfortable with hugging or shaking hands before physical contact.

Please follow good hygiene procedures such as regular handwashing for 20 seconds, and coughing/sneezing into your elbow rather than your hand.

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

2.2 Spoken ministry and discipline

How might we encourage ministry that is faithful, loving, and deeply rooted in the Spirit's gathering and guiding presence among us? Clerks and elders have worked with Woodbrooke to draw together Advices & Queries for Yearly Meeting, which can be found at www.quaker.org.uk/ym/documents.

We also invite Friends to consider:

If you feel a prompting to minister, please test this first as you would in any meeting for worship. The following questions may be helpful. Is my message rooted in love for the Friends present? Is it a message for me alone or for others? Does it need to be said now? Will it help the meeting towards faithful and well discerned unity?

Because Yearly Meeting is such a large gathering, unlike at a local business meeting, not everyone who indicates their prompting to minister will be invited to do so. All ministry, whether spoken or unspoken, contributes to the discernment of the meeting.

Section 2.5 sets out the role of elders in relation to ministry and discipline at Yearly Meeting.

2.3 Spoken ministry and discipline: online participation

Friends joining a blended session online will use Zoom. Yearly Meeting sessions will open ten minutes before the start time so that the meeting can gather in silence beforehand.

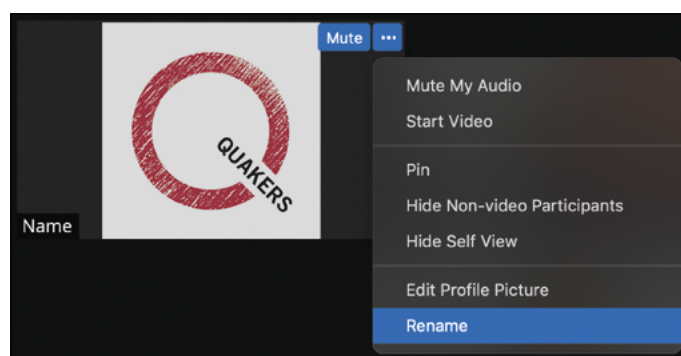
If you need to move from your computer, please turn off your camera.

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. If you are concerned about displaying your full name on screen, please email ym@quaker.org.uk in advance of Yearly Meeting.

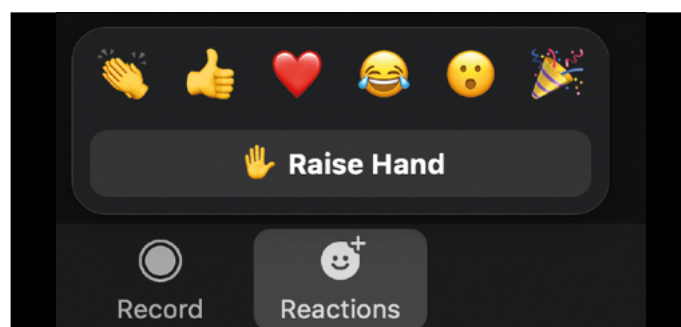
Add the name of your area meeting, if known, or your local meeting or other worshipping community. Visitors from other yearly meetings should add the name of their yearly meeting.



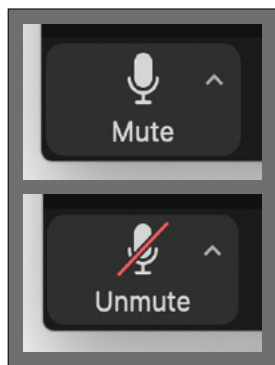
How to indicate that you feel moved to speak

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. Do not raise your hand while someone else is giving ministry.



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 X 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.

After each contribution, there will be a pause to allow reflection. Please do not raise your hand 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 raise your hand at this point.

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 'unmute' your own microphone unless invited by a technical support staff member on instruction from a clerk.

2.3 Spoken ministry and discipline: participation at Friends House

Entering late or leaving early can disturb other Friends. If you need to do so, please wait for a 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 giving spoken ministry.

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 mobile phones to silent. 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 Children & Young People's 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 give spoken ministry, please stand, or raise your hand and wait for a microphone.

If you rise, and another is called, please sit down. Do not rise when someone else is giving ministry.

If you are called, please share your name and where you worship before you begin your ministry (e.g. 'X Area Meeting' or 'attending X 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 BYM (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.

2.4 How Yearly Meeting will agree minutes

When the clerk discerns that the time is right, they will say they are ready to draft a minute. At this point, any Friend in Friends House should sit down or lower their hand; hands raised online will be lowered automatically. While the minute is being drafted, please uphold the clerks in prayerful silence.

When the clerk asks if a minute is acceptable, please reflect on whether the minute is good enough. You may choose to answer "I hope so" or to remain silent. There is no need to indicate active assent. If, after reflection, you are clear that an amendment is necessary, stand or raise your hand and wait to be called; however, do not present fresh material at this point.

2.5 Elders and pastoral support at Yearly Meeting

Elders at Yearly Meeting

The role of elders at Yearly Meeting is one of service for spiritual counsel, 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 if you wish to consult them on the conduct of Yearly Meeting. They can be identified by purple sashes. Elders stay behind after sessions both in person and online for Friends to engage with them.

You can also contact them before and during the event through the Yearly Meeting Planner.

Pastoral support

Pastoral care Friends can be contacted via email (pastoralcare@quaker.org.uk) or via the Yearly Meeting Planner. Please leave your phone number. They will then arrange to contact you.

During Yearly Meeting, pastoral care Friends will be available in Friends House at the following times:

- Friday, 15:00–21:00
- Saturday, 09:30–17:30
- Sunday, 09:30–18:00
- Monday, 09:30–17:30
- Tuesday, 09:30–16:00

You will find them in the Large Meeting House (during and immediately after Yearly Meeting sessions), in the café and around Friends House (and Woburn House). They will be wearing green sashes. You can also phone a pastoral care Friend during Yearly Meeting by calling 07845 696 228.

Supporting each other is an important part of our community's witness, and we hope that Quaker meetings and communities will seek to support their own participants as far as possible. Yearly Meeting pastoral care Friends will provide a listening ear and seek to signpost to support where relevant, but cannot provide long-term befriending or support.

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.

2.6 Photography and video

BYM staff will be taking photos and videos of activities and interactions for use in Quaker communications. These are used to illustrate what happens at Yearly Meeting online or in printed materials to attract new enquirers and encourage people to take part in our activities or contribute to our funds.

Filming takes place in Yearly Meeting sessions. Footage is livestreamed to registered participants and may also be used for Quaker communications purposes to illustrate Yearly Meeting in session. Most recorded video will be used with different sounds (i.e. music or a voiceover), and additional consent will be sought for anyone who might feature prominently in published videos.

If you do not want to appear in Quaker communications after Yearly Meeting you can request a coloured lanyard, so you can be kept out of published images.

2.7 Orientation

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

We all make Yearly Meeting

This session is for everyone, whether you have been a Quaker for many years or have recently found a home with Quakers. It is for both those attending online and at Friends House. We will look at how joining hundreds of Quakers on Zoom can be exciting, but it's also very different from meeting and discerning together in the same location. We will look at the basis of spirit-led discernment; how discernment works at Yearly Meeting in particular; what is different about blended discernment and how to come with hearts and minds prepared but not made up.

- Sunday 7 July, 17:00–18:00 (online)
- Tuesday 9 July, 11:00–12:00 (online)
- Wednesday 10 July, 17:00–18:00 (online)
- Friday 26 July, 15:45–16:45 (blended event, online and in the Sarah Fell room at Friends House)

How does Yearly Meeting work?

In this session, which is suitable for all, we will explore the way the Quaker business method will work for this Yearly Meeting. We 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 you might

have. There is no such thing as a silly question!

- Friday 5 July, 17:00–18:00 (online)
- Saturday 6 July, 13:00–14:00 (online)
- Friday 26 July, 17:15–18:15 (blended event, online and in the Sarah Fell room at Friends House)

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

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

2.8 Spiritual preparation and theme- related sessions

In the document Preparing for Yearly Meeting, Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee introduced the main topics being discerned this year. Preparing for Yearly Meeting also suggested some spiritual preparation and resources (see www.quaker.org.uk/documents/preparing-for-yearly-meeting-2024).

Leading up to Yearly Meeting (Friday 5 to Wednesday 10 July) there will be a variety of sessions and resources 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.

For details and to book please refer to the online Yearly Meeting Planner.

Building and maintaining our Yearly Meeting community

This will be online 17:00–18:00 on Monday 8 July.

At Yearly Meeting we will be discerning whether the changes to our Quaker structures proposed by the review group and supported by Meeting for Sufferings are the right ones to make. The proposal is for a continuing Yearly Meeting that will meet four times per year and be open to all Friends. Area meetings would also be asked to nominate representatives to the continuing Yearly Meeting. Meeting for Sufferings would no longer meet and its functions would be carried out by Yearly Meeting and other bodies like Agenda Committee and central or standing committees. This preparation meeting will focus on how this proposal would help us build and maintain community throughout the year. You can come to just this meeting or both this one and the related one on Wednesday 10 July at 19:00.

Truth and Integrity in Public Life

This will be online 19:00–20:00 on Monday 8 July.

In this session we will hear about work that Friends are doing around this issue. We will share a video made by Friends who work in public life. We will hear from Grace Da Costa, the staff member working on Quakers in Britain's Truth and Integrity project using quiet diplomacy. This offers something different to normal lobbying. It is an approach centred on listening deeply, speaking truthfully, and finding a common way forward. We will hear from the Quaker Truth and Integrity group, a Quaker Recognised Body, about their work. There will be a chaired conversation about this work and how truth is part of this work. There will be opportunity for questions from Friends attending.

This session will be repeated during Yearly Meeting, on Saturday afternoon, when it will be a blended meeting, face to face in Friends' House and online.

Everyone is welcome.

For more information on quiet diplomacy see www.quaker.org.uk/blog/friends-of-the-truth-bringing-quiet-diplomacy-to-westminster.

Strengthening our discernment at Yearly Meeting

This will be online 19:00–20:00 on Wednesday 10 July.

At Yearly Meeting we will be discerning whether the changes to our Quaker structures proposed by the review group and supported by Meeting for Sufferings are the right ones to make. The proposal is for a continuing Yearly Meeting that will meet four times per year and be open to all Friends. Area Meetings would also be asked to nominate representatives to the continuing Yearly Meeting. Meeting for Sufferings would no longer meet and its functions would be carried out by Yearly Meeting and other bodies like Agenda Committee and central or standing committees. This preparation meeting will focus on how this proposal would help us strengthen our discernment. You can come to just this meeting or both this one and the related one on Monday 8 July at 17:00.

3. Explanation of business to be taken at Yearly Meeting

3.1 Nominations and appointments

Yearly Meeting nominations and appointments

Yearly Meeting itself will nominate and appoint Friends to serve on Yearly Meeting Nominating Group and the Committee to Examine Minutes.

Yearly Meeting Nominating Group (YMNG) (see *Quaker faith & practice* 6.22)

To find out more or to nominate somebody, please complete the short form which can be found on the Get Involved section of www.quaker.org.uk/ym or visit the Nominations section of the Yearly Meeting planner.

You will need permission from the Friend(s) you are nominating, and up to date contact information for them.

You can only nominate Friends in membership who will be attending Yearly Meeting. 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 midday Thursday 25 July.

An online meeting of all interested Friends will be held on Wednesday 24 July, 18:00 to 19:00 to explain the role, answer questions, and see if it is possible to nominate the final group. The nominations will then be brought to Yearly Meeting in session.

Committee to Examine Minutes

In recent years, Yearly Meeting clerks have experimented with different approaches to 'dots and commas' - checking minutes for slight inaccuracies.

The current Yearly Meeting clerks find this checking process helpful. For Yearly Meeting 2024, we hope to appoint a Committee to Examine Minutes as described in *Quaker faith & practice* 6.24.

Yearly Meeting will nominate and appoint Friends to serve on the Committee to Examine Minutes. This

operates during Yearly Meeting and is responsible

for checking the minutes at the close of each session and correcting any slight inaccuracies. Friends can be nominated to this committee in advance of Yearly Meeting. Friends must be attending Yearly Meeting to serve and have access to a computer and be comfortable with working with an online document. Further information can be found at www.quaker.org.uk/ym/get-involved. The deadline for nominations is midday Thursday 25 July. If we receive nominations for more than ten Friends, Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee will determine the names to be brought before Yearly Meeting on Friday 26 July.

Nominations from area meetings

In accordance with section 7.06 of *Quaker faith & practice*, area meetings are required to nominate representatives to Meeting for Sufferings for the triennial period beginning Yearly Meeting 2024 until Yearly Meeting 2027. Representation from area meetings is on the basis of two Friends per area meeting, one designated as the representative and the other as an alternate. A call for nominations was made at Yearly Meeting in 2023.

Nominations from BYM Trustees

BYM Trustees nominate the Clerk of BYM 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 the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group.

The Friends named by these committees 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 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 Finch, Nominations Secretary, either by email at nominations@quaker.org.uk or telephone 020 7663 1106.

This should happen as soon as possible and in good time before the session involved.

3.2 Receipt of annual reports

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:

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.

Meeting for Sufferings is the body entrusted with the general care of matters affecting BYM in the intervals between Yearly Meetings, and the making of decisions and issuing of statements in the name of BYM. See *Quaker faith & practice* 7.02–7.06.

BYM Trustees are responsible to 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 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 BYM. 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 be available on the

website together with the company's annual report and financial statements when they have been approved by the directors, shortly before Yearly Meeting. See www.quaker.org.uk/annualreport.

Quaker Housing Trust is the yearly meeting's own national housing charity. It makes grants and loans to social housing projects. Independent of BYM funds, its income comes directly from Friends and meetings. See *Quaker faith & practice* 8.15.

Yearly Meeting Epistle

The Yearly Meeting Epistle is the letter sent from this Yearly Meeting to 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.

Any Friend may give written advice on the content of the epistle by contacting the Epistle Drafting Committee, before 17:30 on Monday 29 July (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).

The Epistle Drafting Committee will then produce a Draft Epistle, which will be made available to Friends on the morning of Tuesday 30 July (on the information desk in Friends House and on the Yearly Meeting Planner online).

Comments on the content, text, style, grammar, language, etc. of the Draft Epistle should be sent to the Epistle Drafting Committee no later than 12:35 on Tuesday 30 July.

A revised Draft Epistle will be presented at the final session on Tuesday 30 July, 14:30–16:00, when no further revision (except perhaps excision) will be invited.

4. Agenda and notes

4.1 Preparation ahead of Yearly Meeting

There will be preparation sessions Friday 5 to Wednesday 10 July. These will be offered online only. See 2.6 above for full details and how to participate.

Ahead of Yearly Meeting there will be a range of Special Interest meetings about Quaker work and witness, offered by Quaker Recognised Bodies and some committees and work programmes of Quakers in Britain. For further details of these, and of the Groups Fair, see the Yearly Meeting Planner online.

4.2 Friends House opening hours

Friends House will open for registration on Friday 26 July at 15:00. There will be a cloakroom available from 12:00. Light refreshments are available in the café from 12:00. For the remainder of Yearly Meeting, doors will open at 08:00.

4.3 Spaces and events

Quakers in Britain and Woodbrooke stands

East Corridor

The Quakers in Britain stand and the Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre stand will be in the East Corridor all weekend. Members of staff from BYM and trustees from Woodbrooke will be available at various times of the day to meet and answer 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 Yearly Meeting, to sit quietly and be occupied, with jigsaw puzzles, knitting and craft materials, or to have quiet conversation. It will be cheerful during the lunchtimes as families with small children are likely to be in the space – do come and join in!

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

- Friday, 15:00–21:00
- Saturday, 09:30–17:30
- Sunday, 09:30–20:00
- Monday, 09:30–17:30
- Tuesday, 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, then please do drop by the Community Hub where the community hosts would 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, 12:00–19:00
- Saturday, 08:00–19:00
- Sunday, 08:00–19:00
- Monday, 08:00–19:30
- Tuesday, 09:30–16:30

The Library

The Library will be open during 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. Please check for exact opening times, which will be displayed outside the door. Please note that the Library will be used for the fairs on Saturday, Sunday and Monday lunchtimes.

Groups Fair

The Groups fair will happen at Friends House (not online) and will be held on Saturday 27 July and Monday 29 July from 12:45 to 14:15. Details of groups present each day and a floor plan will be released closer to the event.

Quakers in Britain Fair

Come and find out more about the work done by Quakers in Britain at this fair held in Friends House (not online) Sunday 28 July from 13:15 to 14:45. There will be displays and literature available and a chance to speak to staff and committee members. Please note that aspects of the work will also be displayed on the permanent Quakers in Britain stand throughout the weekend. Details of information available and a floor plan will be released closer to the event.

Worship

There will be opportunities to worship (online and at Friends House) at the start and end of each day as follows; unless stated otherwise, worship will be held in the Sarah Fell Room:

- Friday 26 July, 21:00–21:30
following directly after the opening session in the Large Meeting House
- Saturday 27 July, 08:30–09:00
worship with Friends from around the world
- Saturday 27 July, 21:00–21:30
worship with Young Friends General Meeting
- Sunday 28 July, 08:30–09:30
waiting worship with Yearly Meeting Elders
- Sunday 28 July, 21:00–21:30
worship with Junior Yearly Meeting
- Monday 29 July, 08:30–09:00
waiting worship with Yearly Meeting Elders
- Monday 29 July, 21:00–21:30
worship with Friends from around the world
- Tuesday 30 July, 08:30–09:00
waiting worship with Yearly Meeting Elders

Worship with Friends from around the world: an opportunity to worship with Friends from other Yearly Meetings.

Waiting worship: unprogrammed worship in the usual manner of Quakers in Britain.

Each worship time will be hosted by elders and, on Saturday and Monday, Friends from Quaker World Relations Committee. All are welcome.

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

Quaker World Relations Committee

This will be in the Sarah Fell room 14:00–14:45 on Sunday 28 July

An opportunity to meet Friends visiting from overseas. Each year, BYM receives visitors from other yearly meetings and Quaker groups. Quaker World Relations Committee is pleased to have an opportunity for these visitors to meet British Friends in an informal setting. Some of our visitors will have participated in an online Special Interest Meeting prior to Yearly Meeting. You are welcome to come to the Sarah Fell room to meet the visitors who will be with us on the Saturday of Yearly Meeting. Do bring your lunch with you and stay for a while to chat and make our visitors feel welcome.

Outdoor silent witness

This will be 17:00–18:00 on Sunday 28 July

On Sunday afternoon we will hold an outdoor silent witness to show that Quakers are here and are holding in the light all victims of conflict. We will start together in the Large Meeting House at 17:00, following which we will move in silence to stand around the outside of Friends House.

We will have folded paper cranes that Friends can hold and possibly hand to passers-by. To explain to passersby why we are there Friends House will provide posters and banners. We ask Friends to note that this isn't a protest and we won't be displaying flags or identifying particular conflicts.

We will start with a briefing in The Large Meeting House at 17.00, so everyone knows what to do. We will then move to encircle Friends House.

The witness will last for 30 minutes. Everyone is very welcome to join the witness for the full time or for just a few minutes, or to come and go. The witness will include Friends House Garden, where there will be chairs set out, so people who feel more comfortable sitting will be able to do so. There will be stewards to make sure everything goes smoothly.

Everyone is welcome to join this witness – but no one should feel pressured to be part of it.

Celebration evening

Blended from the Large Meeting House 19:00–20:45 on Sunday 28 July.

This Celebration evening marks the 400th anniversary of George Fox's birth.

We will start our celebration together, followed by an opportunity for those joining us online to socialise in breakout rooms and those in Friends House to participate in a variety of different games and activities to suit everyone.

Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations

This will be in Sarah Fell 13:30–14:15 on Monday 29 July.

An opportunity to meet our guests from other churches and other faiths. Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations invites guests to Yearly Meeting in session. Guests generally welcome the opportunity to meet with Friends. Some of our guests will have participated in an online Special Interest Meeting prior to Yearly Meeting. You are welcome to come to the Sarah Fell room to meet the guests who will be with us on the Monday of Yearly Meeting. Other guests will be present on other days and you are always welcome to come to chat with them out of session. Do bring your lunch with you and stay for a while to chat and make our visitors feel welcome.

Friday 26 July, 19:00–21:00: Yearly Meeting Session 1 – Opening session

1. Appointment of clerks	Central Nominations Committee nominates the following Friends to serve as clerk and assistant clerks for Yearly Meeting 2024, serving until the first session of Yearly Meeting 2025: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clerk: Adwoa Burnley, East Scotland AM• First Assistant Clerk: Fred Langridge, Sheffield & Balby AM• Second Assistant Clerk: Mary Aiston, Kingston & Wandsworth AM
2. Welcome to all	
3. All-Age Yearly Meeting	The clerk will outline what it means to be an all-age Yearly Meeting, including Exploration Sessions and the age-related programmes happening in parallel with Yearly Meeting sessions, and the times when we will all come together.
4. Appointment of Committee to Examine Minutes	The names of those nominated to serve on the committee will be read out and Yearly Meeting may approve them. Friends should refer to page 10 for an explanation of the nomination process.
5. 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 page 11 for an explanation of the role of the committee.
6. Eldership and Pastoral Care at Yearly Meeting	
7. Central Nominations Committee	We will receive a report of the work of Central Nominations Committee (Appendix B) who are responsible for seeking names to bring to Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings for a number of committees, groups and roles.
8. Central Nominations Committee – nominations received	Central Nominations Committee brings forward nominations to us as specified in Table 3 of the Schedule of Nominations. Friends should refer to guidance on page 10 .
9. Report of Yearly Meeting Nominating Group (2023–2024)	The Nominating Group appointed at Yearly Meeting 2023 brings forward nominations as specified in Table 5 of the Schedule of Nominations.
10. Central Nominations Committee – nominations required	We ask Central Nominations Committee to bring nominations to Yearly Meeting 2025 as specified in Table 4 of the Schedule of Nominations. Friends should refer to guidance on page 10 .
11. Meeting for Sufferings – Appointment new triennium	Nominations from area meetings for representatives and alternates to serve on Meeting for Sufferings are listed in Table 6 of the Schedule of Nominations. Friends should refer to guidance on page 10 .
12. Letters of Greeting	

Saturday 27 July, 09:30–12:30: Yearly Meeting Session 2 – Our Structures

13. Continuing our work on Quaker structures – discerning the future for Yearly Meeting

Yearly Meeting 2023 asked Meeting for Sufferings to bring forward proposals for change to address the overlap in roles, responsibilities and accountability between Yearly Meeting, BYM Trustees and Meeting for Sufferings.

The review group appointed by Meeting for Sufferings recommended that we should move to a continuing Yearly Meeting. This would mean that Yearly Meeting would meet four times a year, giving all Friends the opportunity to participate in spirit-led discernment. Area Meetings would appoint representatives to Yearly Meeting, which would continue to be open to all. Meeting for Sufferings would cease to meet and its functions would be carried out by Yearly Meeting and other bodies like Agenda Committee and central or standing committees. No additional functions would be given to BYM Trustees.

Meeting for Sufferings endorsed this proposal at its meeting in March 2024. You can read the minute from that meeting in [Appendix C](#). Such a significant change to our structures can only be made by Yearly Meeting in session and so the matter has been brought to Yearly Meeting for discernment.

You can learn more about the proposal before Yearly Meeting starts by reading the short summary in [Appendix D](#). You can also attend a preparation session during the Yearly Meeting preparation period 17:00 on Monday 8 July (focusing on how the changes would help build community) and/or 19:00 on Wednesday 10 July (focusing on how the changes would strengthen spirit-led discernment).

During Yearly Meeting there will be two clerked sessions focusing on structural change. There will also be Exploration sessions where you can look at the issues in different ways.

The first clerked session will include a prepared introduction which will help ensure we all know the history and content of the proposals. The second clerked session will give time for discernment and decision.

Saturday 27 July, 14:30–17:30: Exploration Sessions

14. Exploration Sessions

This Summer Yearly Meeting is an experimental one, hoping to find new ways of being and discerning as an all-age community. These Exploration sessions, held online, in Friends House and Woburn House, will offer different ways of approaching the questions we're facing together, about our structures and about truth and integrity.

They are as much a part of Yearly Meeting's discernment as the more traditional minuted sessions. The timetable of Exploration sessions will be confirmed nearer to the time of Yearly Meeting and will be available on the Yearly Meeting Planner. We plan to include creative approaches like art, movement, storytelling and writing, as well as discussion opportunities, reflective practices and Bible study.

14. Exploration Sessions (cont.)

We hope to explore

- centrally-managed and local work springing from our Yearly Meeting commitments to respond to the climate emergency, to become an anti-racist church and start work on reparations, and to welcome and affirm transgender, non-binary and gender diverse people;
- truth and integrity in government;
- Quiet Diplomacy;
- our decision-making as Quakers and the structures we use to make decisions.

You will be invited to sign up for Exploration sessions before Yearly Meeting begins, so that resources, spaces and people can be prepared.

Saturday 27 July: 19:00–20:15, Swarthmore Lecture 2024 – ‘Getting what we deserve?’

Imprisonment and the challenge of doing justice

This year’s Swarthmore Lecture will be given by Ben Jarman.

In this lecture, Ben will explore the myth and reality in how society responds to serious crimes, charting the uses and abuses of society’s responses to crime: retributive punishment, rehabilitative intervention, public protection, and calls for incremental or radical reform. Drawing on personal and professional experiences, Ben will invite Friends to reflect on where current prison conditions belong in the longer flow of Quaker witness on penal reform, and to ask: who (if anyone) gets what they deserve from the institutions we have?

The Swarthmore Lecture will be held on 27 July at 19:00 at Friends House, and live-streamed via YouTube.

For more information and to sign up to be sent the link for the livestream please see www.woodbrooke.org.uk/swarthmore.

There will be another opportunity to watch the Swarthmore Lecture as a YouTube Premiere on Wednesday 31 July 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.

Sunday 28 July, 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 BYM.

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.

This meeting for worship for everyone together, all ages, online and in meeting houses, will include ways to settle into waiting stillness.

Preparation materials for worship will be sent to local and area meetings and those signed up to 'Journeys in the Spirit'. We hope to make available a list of participating meetings so that those wishing to attend a meeting that is taking part can check the list of participating meetings at www.quaker.org.uk/ym/programme.

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

Sunday 28 July, 11:55–13:00: Yearly Meeting Session 3

15. The work of our trustees: report on Trustees' work in 2023

The annual report including financial statements will be published as a separate document shortly before Yearly Meeting, see www.quaker.org.uk/annualreport.

16. Receipt of tabular statement

We will formally receive the Tabular Statement (www.quaker.org.uk/ym/documents)

17. Yearly Meeting Nominating Group: appointment

Sunday 28 July, 15:00–16:15: Yearly Meeting Session 4 – Our Structures, continued

18. Our Structures – continued

See [page 16](#).

Monday 29 July, 09:30–12:30: Yearly Meeting Session 5 – Speaking and Living with Integrity

19. Speaking and Living with Integrity

Do Friends at Yearly Meeting, or who read a Yearly Meeting minute, hear it as a call to personal or collective action?

When we make a commitment at Yearly Meeting, it's a promise, both individually and corporately. In 2011 we promised to become a low-carbon sustainable community. How have you kept that promise? In 2021 and 2022 we promised to become an anti-racist church and to look at reparations for past harms. What has our Quaker community done to keep those promises? In 2021 we promised to welcome and affirm transgender, non-binary and gender-diverse people. How well

19. Speaking and Living with Integrity (cont.)

have we kept our promise? In 2021 we promised that our anger, grief and love would push us forward to renewed action on climate justice. Where have your anger, grief and love taken you since then? How good are we at keeping our promises? Are we able to celebrate our work, or do we need to confess to our inadequacy? How does that make us feel?

We will not have time and do not seek to revisit the text of the minutes relating to the huge issues of climate justice, being an anti-racist church and welcoming transgender, non-binary and gender diverse people. Our focus is on what difference a Yearly Meeting minute has made and what has been done in response.

Monday 29 July, 14:30–17:30: Yearly Meeting Session 6 – Truth and Integrity in Public Life

20. Truth and Integrity in Public Life

In this session we will continue our consideration of Truth and Integrity in public life, introduced at Yearly Meeting 2023. Where and how do we find the truth from contradictory sources? How can we encourage a culture of integrity in media and politics? How do we find kinder ground on which to disagree, and enable a shared quest for truth?

“Seeking truth is a practice of staying open to what we don’t know and haven’t experienced, and to mistakes we have made or are making. When we open ourselves to this listening we find ourselves on ‘kinder ground’.

“We need to listen widely, including to young Friends for their concerns and advice, and to amplify the voices of people from oppressed groups and seek to ‘increase the proximity between us’.

“How are we hearing prophetic witness today? How might we practise our public presence as Quakers? How can we name and claim our Quaker identity and act as public truth tellers?”

Minute 23 of Yearly Meeting 2023

21. As led

Monday 29 July, 19:00–20:00: Meet the Swarthmore Lecturer – online and in the Large Meeting House

22. Meet the Swarthmore Lecturer

An opportunity to join Ben Jarman for a session reflecting on his lecture.

In his lecture on Saturday (see [page 17](#)) Ben will explore the myth and reality in how society responds to serious crimes, charting the uses and abuses of society's responses to crime: retributive punishment, rehabilitative intervention, public protection, and calls for incremental or radical reform. Drawing on personal and professional experiences, Ben will invite Friends to reflect on where current prison conditions belong in the longer flow of Quaker witness on penal reform, and to ask: who (if anyone) gets what they deserve from the institutions we have?

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

The Swarthmore Lecture is part of the work of Woodbrooke.

Tuesday 30 July, 09:30–12:30: Yearly Meeting Session 6 – Required Business; as led

23. Yearly Meeting Nominating Group 2024–2025

We ask Yearly Meeting Nominating Group to bring nominations to Yearly Meeting 2025 as described in *Quaker faith & practice* 6.22.

24. The work of our national representative body: receipt of annual report from Meeting for Sufferings

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. The written report can be found at [Appendix E](#).

25. Receipt of other reports

We will formally receive the following reports

Friends Trusts Limited (www.quaker.org.uk/annualreport)

Quaker Housing Trust ([Appendix F](#))

Tabular Statement (www.quaker.org.uk/ym/documents).

26. As led

Tuesday 30 July 14:30–16:00: Yearly Meeting Session 7 – Our all-age community, closing session

Receipt of the Yearly Meeting Epistle and closing business

We will take the opportunity to come together as an all-age community and hear Epistles from the Children's programme, Young People at Yearly Meeting and Junior Yearly Meeting, which finish today. The session will conclude with worship with all ages.

27. Receipt of the Yearly Meeting Draft Epistle

28. Minute of Record: Epistles

29. Minute of Record: Testimonies

30. Minute of Record: Friends from other yearly meetings

31. Minute of Record: Inter-church and interfaith visitors

32. Minute of Record: Meeting for Sufferings change

33. Reading and signing of the Yearly Meeting Epistle

34. Receipt of Epistles from the Children's programme and Young People at Yearly Meeting

35. Receipt of Junior Yearly Meeting Epistle

36. Meeting for worship with those participating in the Children's programme, Young People at Yearly Meeting and Junior Yearly Meeting

37. Thanks

38. Naming of clerks for Yearly Meeting 2025

Central Nominations Committee brings the following Friends to serve as the nominees designates for Yearly Meeting 2025, serving until the first session of Yearly Meeting 2026:

Clerk, Adwoa Burnley, East Scotland AM

First Assistant Clerk, Fred Langridge, Sheffield & Balby AM

Second Assistant Clerk, Mary Aiston, Kingston & Wandsworth AM

5 Appendices

A: Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee (YMAC) annual report

To prepare the agenda and programme for a Yearly Meeting, Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee (YMAC) must consider the purposes of this gathering (looking particularly at sections 6.02–6.11 of *Quaker faith & practice*), listen to the leadings and concerns of Friends, discerned in a variety of committees, working groups and area meetings, and then prayerfully discern what business should rightly be brought to the Yearly Meeting, given the constraints of the time available and the people needed to make it happen. Agenda Committee has valued the additional support this time of convenors of Yearly Meeting Elders who have joined our discernment and upheld us in worship.

Yearly Meeting committed in 2023 to further considering truth and integrity in public life, and to hear back from the Friends working on our behalf on proposals for changing our shared decision-making structures. In preparing for Yearly Meeting 2024, we also heard urgent calls to return to consideration of the climate emergency, anti-racism, reparations, and welcoming transgender and non-binary people. We have enough here to keep us occupied for several Yearly Meetings in a row - but it's all sufficiently time-sensitive that it needs to be looked at this year.

We discerned a thread running through these matters about the purpose of bringing a topic to Yearly Meeting, and what difference a Yearly Meeting minute makes. We hope that the opportunity to reflect on this will be valuable, and might be a useful lens through which to consider our past commitments.

YMAC has heard calls to spend time on the violence currently happening in the world. While it has not been possible to plan prepared discernment on such rapidly-changing situations, we expect that those affected will be held in the light in our shared worship.

Yearly Meeting 2024 is experimental in several ways. It's a bit longer than a YM in London usually would be, and in the summer: we hope that this will make it possible for people to take part who wouldn't usually be able to. It has a particular focus on all-age inclusion in discernment. We've planned for our discernment to include Exploration sessions, where we can consider the matters on our agenda in different and creative ways. These will include opportunities to look in more detail at work and witness springing from past YM minutes on the climate emergency, anti-racism, reparations, and gender diversity. We hope that these opportunities for creative exploration will enrich the Yearly Meeting's discernment.

As always, the sixteen Friends serving on YMAC and the smaller group of Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee are preparing for our gathering in the knowledge that its final shape is made by all the Friends who take part, those who uphold it from a distance, and by that which inspires and moves us as a community. We look forward to finding out, with you, what this Yearly Meeting will be like.

Fred Langridge
Clerk, Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee

B: Central Nominations Committee annual report

Central Nominations Committee reports to Yearly Meeting every year. First of all, there is the schedule of nominations, published in advance so that if anyone has some concerns, they can let us know in good time. Then there is our written report which will be somewhere at the end of documents in advance, with various other annual reports. Finally, we have a chance to speak to you directly to tell you what we have been doing since the last YM, and how we may need your help. And we do, as always, need your help.

We usually need to find about 100 people a year to serve the YM in a huge range of ways. Yes, some of it is serving on a committee, with regular meetings, which nowadays are often online. But sometimes it is for a specific task, which may be time-limited and/or needing particular skills or experience. Some of you reading this report would be able to help with that task.

Although there is a lot going on to try to simplify our structures, at every level of the Society, and to make them more sustainable, that doesn't change how we work. We have set up search groups for the different committees or roles, which can then form a continuing relationship with the committees and the staff supporting them. In addition, there is one search group which focuses on clerking roles.

Pretty much all our searches start by looking at the forms which have been filled in by about 5% of Quakers, both members and attenders. Then the search group will meet, usually on zoom, to review the information we have, and discern whom they may approach to see if they might be willing, at least in principle. We really want to get the best match we can both for the individual, and the role, because this is about taking forward our ministry as Quakers, and is at the heart of what we do. We don't want it to be a question of taking "who we can get" or calling on "the usual suspects", but always coming from a spirit of worship, which is why we need your help.

At its best Nominations is about enabling Quakers, both by finding Friends and Attenders to do the work, which we, as a Yearly Meeting, have said we wanted to do, but also enabling those Friends and Attenders whom we approach, to help carry forward work or projects they care about and want to see happen.

Sometimes it means trying to find more flexible way for the work to be done, or it may mean discerning the time has come to lay down some work, which may be better carried forward by others.

We are very grateful to Meeting for Sufferings when they discerned the time was right for us to be able to

approach attenders as well as members for a wide range of roles. But whether you are in membership or not, we still need you to tell us about you, so that we can take advantage of this new freedom. We rely heavily on the Quaker service information forms (QSiFs), as a starting point for finding the right person at the right time for a given role. Friends often feel they see the same names coming up for service, and that can be true, but it isn't because we don't want to draw from a wider pool. We need you to populate that pool by filling in a QSiF, and telling us not just what qualifications you have or the work you have done, but also what you are interested in. What Quaker projects you find exciting and would like to help, and as important, what might make offering service difficult for you.

There is no guarantee we will contact you, and even if we do, you don't have to agree. Your own discernment is as important a part of the process as ours. We probably won't know about the things in your life which make this a bad time, so we don't hound people or try to persuade them to agree when they say no.

The fact that we seem to say the same thing year on year doesn't make it any less true. Part of being Quaker is trying to make the world a better place, and deepening our own spiritual journey, from which, both collectively and individually, everything we do, flows.

From the Draft Book of Discipline: Chapter on Nominations

"I would never have dreamed of volunteering for most of the posts for which I have been nominated. Usually, on being approached about a nomination, my response has been to doubt my capabilities and to wonder why on earth they would think of asking me. Of course, it may be that hard-pressed nominations committees have to 'take what we can get'... But I would also like to think that sometimes they have identified some potential in me that could be encouraged to develop through taking on a new role within the Quaker community. This is confirmed to me by the fact that I can't think of a single Quaker 'job' that I have regretted taking on; even though some were extremely challenging, I have always felt enriched by the experience overall. The support of the Friends whom one hopes to serve is crucial in this process; when I have felt upheld by the meeting, I have been able to trust that, with God's help, I will manage to be 'good enough'." *Towards the source, 2014*

David Lewis and Lucy Parker
Clerks, Central Nominations Committee

C: MfS/24/03/13 Review of Meeting for Sufferings

Summary of proposals

The Group to Review Yearly Meeting, Yearly Meeting Gathering and Meeting for Sufferings (GRYYM) has brought a final report on the future of Meeting for Sufferings. We note that minutes on this matter received earlier in this meeting have also been before us.

GRYYM's report recommends we move to 'a continuing Yearly Meeting' and sets out what this means, how it might address some of the concerns we have with our present arrangements and how a continuing Yearly Meeting could work. We have been reminded that at the heart of this proposal is our belief that it will strengthen spirit-led discernment within our Religious Society. By bringing both Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings together in a single continuing Yearly Meeting we can reduce duplication and increase accountability and participation. In particular it clarifies the role of trustees in the yearly meeting.

We welcome the proposals, although some reservations have been expressed. In particular, some Friends have expressed concern that accepting the proposals would mean there is less time for Friends in general to discern together, which deepens the worship and life of the community. We note that the proposals include the recommendation that we retain the practice of appointed area meeting representatives attending the meeting.

We have heard that other yearly meetings have already adopted the practice of a continuing yearly meeting. We have also heard enthusiasm on the part of children, youth and families staff for more frequent opportunities for national gatherings and recognition that a more flexible structure could assist with maintaining the participation of young people if anticipated changes to the school year in England and Wales are realised.

We note that some of the recommendations do not need to wait for structural changes to take effect.

We agree to endorse these proposals and send the report to Yearly Meeting for its discernment in July. We note that, if adopted, this would mean the laying down of the venerable institution of Meeting for Sufferings, which is a sadness for many, and we have heard testimony on the privilege that service on this body has meant to many Friends.

We thank the Friends involved in this process for their care in bringing this report and uphold them in bringing it to Yearly Meeting.

We have been reminded that sometimes we need to experience something before we can appreciate it, and that it will take some years to implement these changes. We recommend that we should hold a review of any changes after a fixed period. Let us live adventurously!

Robert Card, Clerk

D: Continuing our work on Quaker structures – discerning the future for Yearly Meeting

Summary of proposals

Yearly Meeting will be asked to decide whether it is right to move to a continuing Yearly Meeting. This short summary is intended to help Friends prepare for that discernment. Friends who want to see more details can read a longer report at www.quaker.org.uk/documents/gryym-appendix-yearly-meeting-2024.

Background

Work to review Yearly Meeting started in 2019 with meetings and consultations. This work expanded to include a review of Meeting for Sufferings. In 2023 Yearly Meeting asked for proposals for change that were:

Spirit-led: continue to place spirit-led discernment at the heart of all decision-making across BYM.

Simpler: ensure our structures and processes are agile and capable of translating our discernment into action.

Less work: release energy within our Quaker community.

Clearer: clarify the lines of accountability; explain clearly the roles and responsibilities of the different bodies; meet the requirements of charity law, good governance practice and Quaker Gospel order.

More inclusive: promote greater diversity and wider participation in our decision-making.

Better for communications: improve communication between all Friends involved in our meetings and all the different parts of our structures.

What is proposed?

A continuing Yearly Meeting (YM) would meet four times a year – three short meetings and one longer one, including residentials from time to time.

All Friends would be able to come.

Area meetings and other meetings currently represented at Meeting for Sufferings would appoint representatives to continuing YM to ensure continuity of attendance and communication among Friends.

Meeting for Sufferings would no longer meet. Its functions would be carried out by YM or by another committee.

There would be one clerking team for YM and a single committee to plan the agenda for all the sessions.

BYM Trustees would remain accountable to continuing YM and would report to it. None of the current functions of Meeting for Sufferings would be given to Trustees.

New funding arrangements would be put in place so that area meetings would not be prevented from

sending representatives because of financial burden and so that individuals can access bursary support more easily.

Some North American Yearly Meetings (including Philadelphia YM, Baltimore YM and New York YM) already hold continuing YM sessions.

How do these proposals fit the criteria set by YM 2023?

Spirit-led – yes. All Friends will be able to take part in discernment. Although there will be less session time than the current amount for YM and MfS combined, this will be balanced by less need for duplication as the same items would not have to go to both bodies for discernment as they do now. The time allocated to continuing sessions could be flexible to meet the requirements of the business. With more frequent meetings, continuing YM would be able to return to business more quickly without having to ask a smaller group to look at it. An item could be threshed at one session, then considered again at another session a few months later.

Simpler – yes. The system would be clear and easy to explain as it mirrors the way area meetings work.

Less work – in part. Area meetings will still need to find representatives, but as everyone can go to Yearly Meeting the role should be clearer for Friends. Less duplication would mean that the work leads to more impact.

Clearer – yes. There would be two organisations rather than three and a continuing YM would have a clear relationship with trustees.

More inclusive – yes. A continuing YM would be open to all. Important decisions will only be made by an inclusive body with a better chance of it being representative of Quakers today. There will always be a programme for children, young people and families so that everyone can participate.

Better for communications – hopefully. Area meetings would be represented and would receive reports from their representatives and other Friends attending. Any interested Friend can attend YM and those not able to attend could choose to participate in preparation beforehand as well as receiving reports afterwards. Area meetings would still be able to send their minutes to YM as they currently do to Meeting for Sufferings.

E: Meeting for Sufferings annual report

Meeting for Sufferings is a Committee of up to 100 representatives from across the yearly meeting: 70 area meetings, General Meeting for Scotland, Crynwyr Cymru–Quakers in Wales, Central Committees, Standing Committees, Young Friends General Meeting and Yearly Meeting Trustees. It meets four times a year to carry out business on behalf of the yearly meeting such as appointments, updates to the prison and court register, and registration of Quaker Recognised Bodies.

We receive reports from Quaker World Relations Committee and Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations, as well as minutes on matters of concern from area meetings and other bodies, and we are empowered to set up further groups for specific tasks.

In 2015, Meeting for Sufferings approved a vision statement, *Our faith in the future* (available at www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/meeting-for-sufferings/our-faith-in-the-future) providing a point of reference for all Friends to discern their current position and how they might best act to realise that vision. The structure of that document has been adapted to arrange this report.

A future where meeting for worship is the bedrock of living as a Quaker

Worship grounds all our meetings, and this year we had the opportunity of a primarily residential weekend, which offered additional opportunities for worship and fellowship.

We received reports from various review groups, which repeatedly emphasised that Spirit-led discernment is central to our lives as Quakers and giving time to this should always be our priority.

A future where all Friends understand and live by Quaker discipline

We have continued to receive updates from the Book of Discipline Revision Committee and have had opportunities to consider some of the proposed text. Young Friends General Meeting challenged us to consider how our testimony to living under Gospel Order effects our understanding of how we interact with the worldly Powers when they questioned our delivery of a “loyal address” to the monarch.

We returned to the question of nominating Friends to serve on central committees, and agreed that nominating bodies need not be limited to Friends in formal membership when nominating to BYM

committees. We are still looking at the implications for local and area meetings and for roles with specific legal responsibilities such as trustees and registering officers.

A future where Quaker communities are loving, inclusive and all-age

We have continued to hear of work done to make our meetings truly inclusive, including the work of Quaker Life on new patterns of belonging to our meetings. At our December meeting we were once again enriched by parallel sessions for children and young people, some of whom attended the session in which Quaker World Relations Committee reported on our relations with other yearly meetings and the forthcoming plenary meeting of Quaker World Relations Committee (August 2024).

A future where Quaker values are active in the world

We heard from Friends from Lancashire Central & North Area Meeting on their work on “Spirit-led employment practices”; had an opportunity to hear from Quaker chaplains in different settings on their ministry; and received a report on the work of Crynwyr Cymru–Quakers in Wales in living out their faith in the context of Welsh government structures.

In a year where the desperate needs of the world have been so apparent, we have spent significant time on reviewing our internal structures. We can only hope that this work will free Friends up from maintaining our own organisation for more effective ministry beyond our Society.

We have also continued to maintain the Prison and Court Register, a record of Friends acting under Concern to witness to the Gospel Order that rebukes and ultimately redeems the Powers and Principalities of the world.

A future where Quakers work collaboratively

Perhaps the most significant piece of work in this area was a consideration of whether to join the campaign to make ecocide a crime under international law. While Meeting for Sufferings concluded that we would not participate at the national level, the exercise of considering how we might be involved in such work was valuable. It also offered an opportunity for Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee to explore how it might work to support area meetings to pursue a concern that is not part of centrally managed work.

We received the report of Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations and were reminded of the difficult conversations about diversity and inclusion in the nation’s ecumenical instruments.

A future where Quakers are well known and widely understood

For all the questions about the propriety of delivering a “loyal address” to the monarch, this was an opportunity for Quakers to make their voice heard beyond our own community. It was, however, notable, that the structure of the event prevented it from being as effective a form of public ministry as it might have been.

It has been another rich, challenging, and fulfilling year for Meeting for Sufferings. While it can be tempting to hope for easy agreement, it is as we strive to reach unity on matters of dispute that we have the greatest opportunity to realise the peace that surpasses understanding and witness to an alternate ordering.

Robert Card
Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings

F: Quaker Housing Trust annual report

Background

The Quaker Housing Trust (QHT) was set up by Yearly Meeting in 1967 to take forward Friends' concerns on housing and homelessness. With donations from Friends, QHT provides grants and loans for social housing projects for those in genuine housing need. This is typically support to small and medium-sized charities to provide housing for vulnerable people, particularly those at time of transitions in their lives. QHT supports projects which provide comfortable, secure and long-term homes, built to high energy efficiency standards, both so running costs for tenants are lower, but also fulfilling our sustainability testimony.

Work of the Quaker Housing Trust in 2023

In 2023 the Quaker Housing Trust made awards totalling £147,999. Five projects were funded, providing housing for people at periods of transition in their lives, including refugees and asylum seekers, victims of human trafficking and homeless people. Three feasibility studies for provision of affordable housing were funded.

East Kent Area Meeting was awarded a grant and Assist Sheffield was awarded a grant and a loan to provide housing for refugees in their areas. The charity Ella's was given a grant to purchase a safe house for women who have been trafficked. Pathways Housing Solutions was supported in studying the feasibility of using a partnership model to create housing for minority communities.

The Quaker Housing Trust has three separate funding programmes. The main programme supports projects for building or refurbishing accommodation to provide long-term homes to people at transition points in their lives. The Audrey Deacon legacy has been used to support similar projects for older

people. Additionally, QHT supports projects at an early stage, working with organisations to strengthen them and prepare them to undertake a project delivering new or refurbished homes. These feasibility grants are limited to £6000 and can focus on environment assessment or financial feasibility. Our funding programmes are oversubscribed. There are brilliant charities out there creating housing and we would like to support more of them. In recent years, there has been a significant fall in donations made by meetings and Friends in recent years which severely limits our ability to make awards. Twelve meetings held collections for Quaker Housing, however, most of our funds come from repaid loans from earlier awards; in this way, a single donation can fund multiple projects.

We would like Friends to consider their own housing position and their ability to help those in housing need through donating to QHT. Regular donations would increase the number of projects we can fund. Leaving a legacy to QHT would allow Friends to ensure their fortunate housing position can be used to house people who are less fortunate.

Developing our grant and loan making strategy

QHT has revised our grant-giving strategy, with regular discernment of our priorities so we can respond more quickly to new and emerging housing needs in Britain due to crises at home and abroad, as well as targeting areas where we receive fewer applications. We are excited that our new strategy includes having a new strand of work assisting Quaker meetings and Quaker bodies to repurpose and transform some of their little-used assets into social housing with advice and financial support. We have consulted with Local Development Workers and other Quaker bodies to help us shape this new strand of work to create maximum impact.

Friday 26 July – Tuesday 30 July

Schedule at a glance

For full details see *Agenda & notes*

	Friday		Saturday	
08:30			08:30 Worship with QWRC	08:30
09:00			09:15 0–11 drop-off/sign in	09:00
09:30			09:30-12:30 Yearly Meeting session 2 Our Structures (includes 30min break) Blended	09:30
10:00				10:00
10:30				10:30
11:00				11:00
11:30				11:30
12:00	12:00 Café/Cloakroom open			12:00
12:30			12:30-12:45 0–11 pick-up	12:30
13:00			12:45-14:15 Groups fair Friends House	13:00
13:30				13:30
14:00				14:00
14:30			14:30-17:30 Exploration sessions Friends House, Woburn House and online	14:30
15:00	15:00 Registration opens			15:00
15:30				15:30
16:00	15:45 We all make YM Blended – Sarah Fell			16:00
16:30				16:30
17:00		Junior Yearly Meeting (YJM)		17:00
17:30	17:15 How does YM work? Blended – Sarah Fell			17:30
18:00				18:00
18:30			18:45 5–11 drop-off/sign in	18:30
19:00	19:00-21:00 Yearly Meeting session I Opening session Blended	YP@YM	19:00-20:15 Swarthmore Lecture Getting what we deserve Blended	19:00
19:30				19:30
20:00			20:00	
20:30			20:15 5–11 pick-up	20:30
21:00	21:00 Silent worship Waiting worship Blended		21:00 Worship with YFGM Blended	21:00
21:30				21:30
22:00	21:40 Friends House closes		21:40 Friends House closes	22:00

	Sunday		Monday		
08:30	08:30 One hour silent MfW Waiting worship		08:30 Silent Worship		08:30
09:00			09:15 0-11 drop-off/sign in		09:00
09:30			09:30 -12:30 Yearly Meeting session 5 Speaking and Living with Integrity Blended		09:30
10:00					10:00
10:30	10:30 All-together worship				10:30
11:00	11:00 0-11 drop-off/sign in				11:00
11:30					11:30
12:00	11:55-13:00 Yearly Meeting session 3 Blended		12:30-12:45 0-11 pick-up		12:00
12:30			12:45-14:15 Groups fair Friends House		12:30
13:00	13:00-13:15 0-11 pick-up		14:15 0-11 drop-off/sign in		13:00
13:30	13:15-14:45 Quakers in Britain fair Friends House		14:30-17:30 Yearly Meeting session 6 Truth and Integrity in Public Life Blended		13:30
14:00					14:00
14:30	14:45 0-11 drop-off/sign in				14:30
15:00	15:00-16:15 Yearly Meeting session 4 Our Structures, continued Blended				15:00
15:30					15:30
16:00	16:30-16:45 0-11 pick-up				16:00
16:30					16:30
17:00	17:00 Outdoor witness	17:00 Online exploration	17:30-17:45 0-11 pick-up		17:00
17:30					17:30
18:00					18:00
18:30			18:45 5-11 drop-off/sign in		18:30
19:00	19:00-20:15 Celebration evening Friends House and online		19:00-20:00 Meet the Swarthmore lecturer Blended		19:00
19:30					19:30
20:00			20:00-20:15 5-11 pick-up		20:00
20:30					20:30
21:00	21:00 Worship with JYM Blended		21:00 Worship with QWRC Blended		21:00
21:30					21:30
22:00	21:40 Friends House closes		21:40 Friends House closes		22:00

Young People @ Yearly Meeting

Junior Yearly Meeting

Young People @ Yearly Meeting

Junior Yearly Meeting

YP@YM

YP@YM

Tuesday	
08:30	08:30 Silent Worship
09:00	09:15 0–11 drop-off/sign in
09:30	09:30-12:30 Yearly Meeting session 7
10:00	Required business, as led Blended
10:30	
11:00	
11:30	
12:00	
12:30	12:30-12:45 0–11 pick-up
13:00	
13:30	
14:00	14:00 0–11 drop-off/sign in
14:30	14:00-16:00 Yearly Meeting session 8
15:00	Our all-age community, closing session
15:30	Blended
16:00	16:00-16:15 0–11 pick-up
16:30	
17:00	17:00 Friends House closes
17:30	
18:00	
18:30	
19:00	
19:30	
20:00	
20:30	
21:00	
21:30	
22:00	

Colour Key

- Opportunity for worship (all blended)
- Yearly Meeting sessions
- Children
- YP@YM
- Junior Yearly Meeting
- Lectures
- Special events
- Social
- Hospitality

Community Hub

Friday 15:00 – 21:00
 Saturday 09:30 – 17:30
 Sunday 09:30 – 20:00
 Monday 09:30 – 17:30
 Tuesday 09:30 – 16:00

Quaker Centre Cafe

Friday 12:00 – 19:00
 Saturday 08:00 – 19:00
 Sunday 08:00 – 20:00
 Monday 08:00 – 19:00
 Tuesday 08:00 – 16:30

G: 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
Qf&p	<i>Quaker faith & practice</i>
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
QUNO	Quaker United Nations Office
QWRC	Quaker World Relations Committee
YCF	Youth, Children & Families
YM	Yearly Meeting
YMAC	Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee
YMArrC	Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee
YMG	Yearly Meeting Gathering
YMNG	Yearly Meeting Nominating Group

H: Friends House floor plan



2 SECOND FLOOR

- George Fox
- Margaret Fell
- Elizabeth Fry (1 and 2)
- Benjamin Lay (1, 2 and 3)

1 FIRST FLOOR

- Marjorie Sykes
- Hilda Clark (1, 2 and 3)
- Abraham Darby
- Kathleen Lonsdale
- George Bradshaw
- Sarah Fell
- Large Meeting House (Upper Level)
- Courtyard Balconies

G GROUND FLOOR

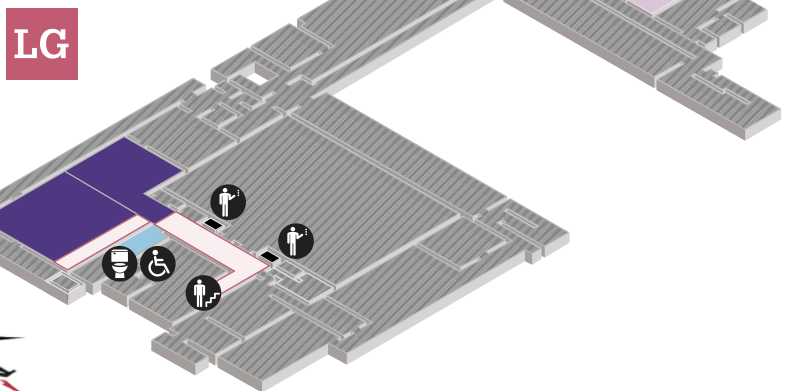
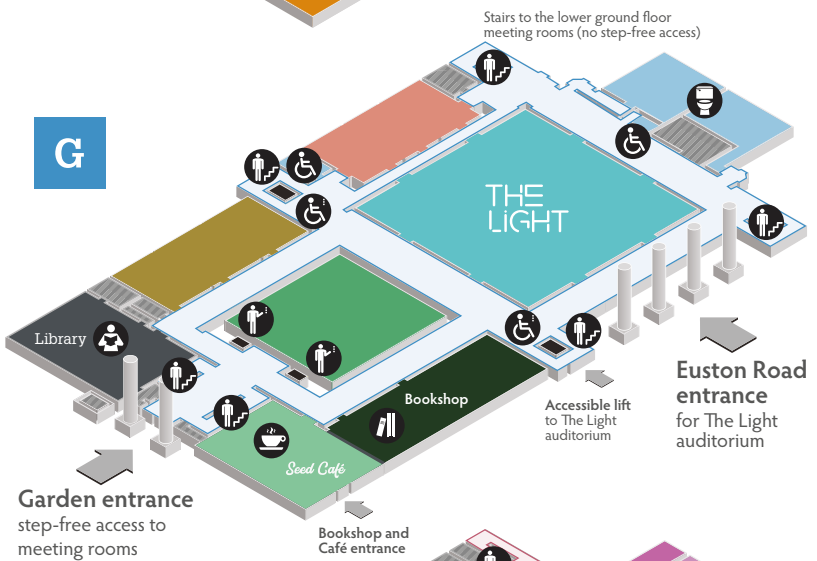
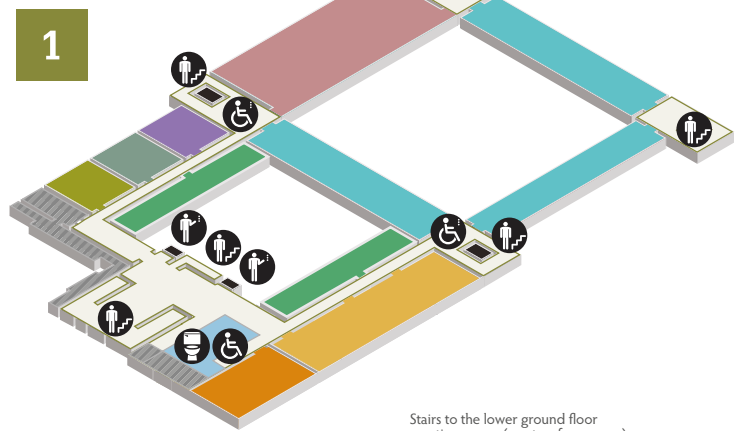
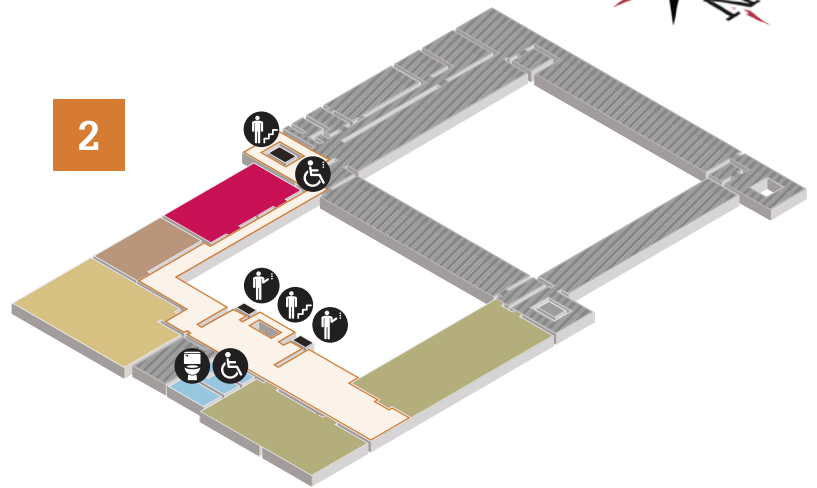
- Waldo Williams (1 and 2)
- Ada Salter (1, 2 and 3)
- Large Meeting House
- Courtyard
- Seed Café (in the Quaker Centre)
- Bookshop (in the Quaker Centre)

LG LOWER GROUND FLOOR

- Bayard Rustin
- Lucretia Mott
- John Woolman
- Leslie Forster and Seed Kitchen

KEY

- Toilets
- Accessible Toilets
- Stairs
- Lifts
- Accessible Lift
- Café
- Bookshop
- Library



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.

Accessible versions of this document are available. Please contact the publications manager at publications@quaker.org.uk or call 020 7663 1162

Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Registered charity number 1127633
Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BJ

Follow us on social media [@BritishQuakers](https://twitter.com/BritishQuakers)

www.quaker.org.uk