

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

# Agenda & notes

Compiled for Yearly Meeting Gathering,  
Online 19 July–8 August 2021



## Proceedings

A number of documents will help us meet with hearts and minds prepared. These are the *Proceedings of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain 2021*.

The full set comprises:

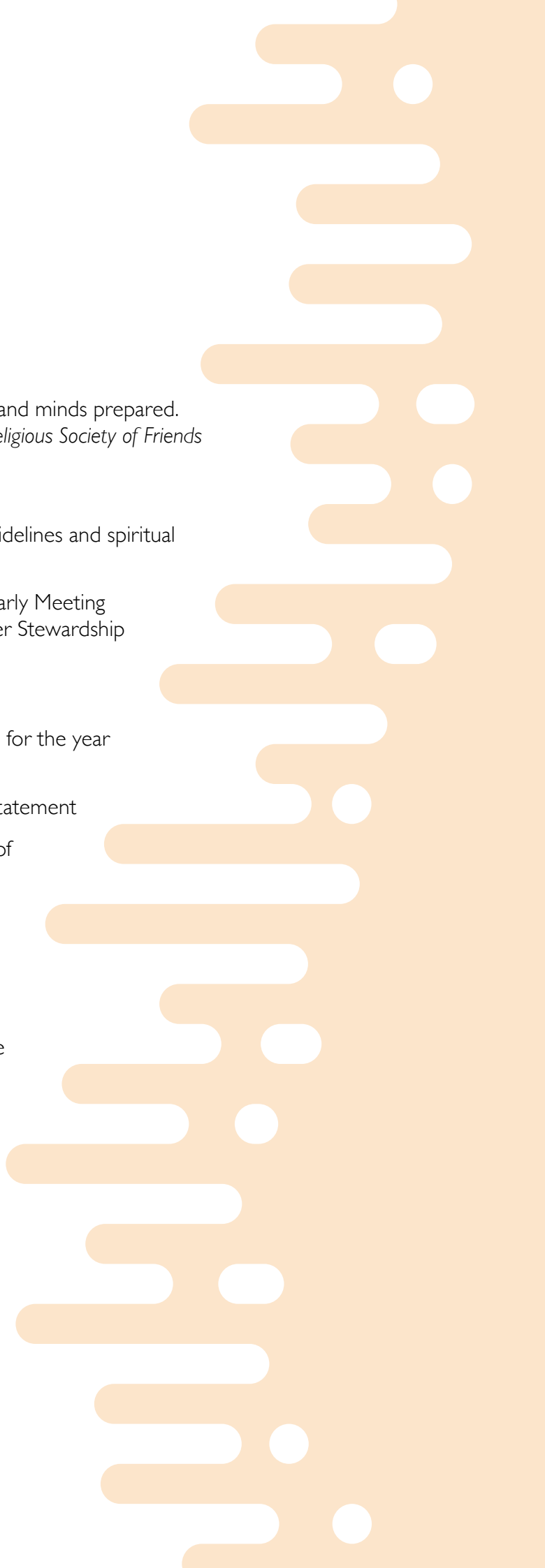
1. *Preparing for Yearly Meeting*, including community guidelines and spiritual preparation
2. *Agenda and notes*, with introductory material for Yearly Meeting and annual reports of Meeting for Sufferings, Quaker Stewardship Committee and other related bodies
3. *Testimonies*, including index of epistles
4. *Trustees' annual report*, including financial statements for the year ended December 2020
5. *Patterns of membership*, including the 2020 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](http://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, especially while we are unable to print and send copies from Friends House.

If you require accessible documents, please request these when booking for Yearly Meeting Gathering. If these do not meet your accessibility needs, or the needs of someone you know, please email [ym@quaker.org.uk](mailto: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](http://www.quaker.org.uk/qfp).

You can read about Yearly Meeting in chapter 6 of *Quaker faith & practice*. Alternatively, contact Events & Committee Services on 020 7663 1040 or at [ym@quaker.org.uk](mailto:ym@quaker.org.uk), or go to [www.quaker.org.uk/ym](http://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 we will meet online – in a way our forebears could not imagine – knowing that being together reinforces the sense of community in our meetings and in Britain Yearly Meeting.

Yearly Meeting is also when we can learn, practise, improve, and take back to our local meetings ways of conducting business which 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 Gathering

Yearly Meeting Gathering is taking place online over three weeks, with Yearly Meeting sessions timetabled over two weekends. Events have been spaced to allow for breaks and Friends will be able to choose how many sessions to attend.

There are different types of session 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 Gathering. You can do this online at <https://forms.quaker.org.uk/ymg2021>.

Once your registration has been confirmed you will be sent a link to the online **Yearly Meeting Gathering Planner**. Please refer to the Planner for details of lectures and other sessions (namely: orientation, worship, fringe and community sessions). If you have already signed in you can access the planner at: <http://ymg2021.sched.com>.

## 1.2 Contact details

### Comments on business or the agenda

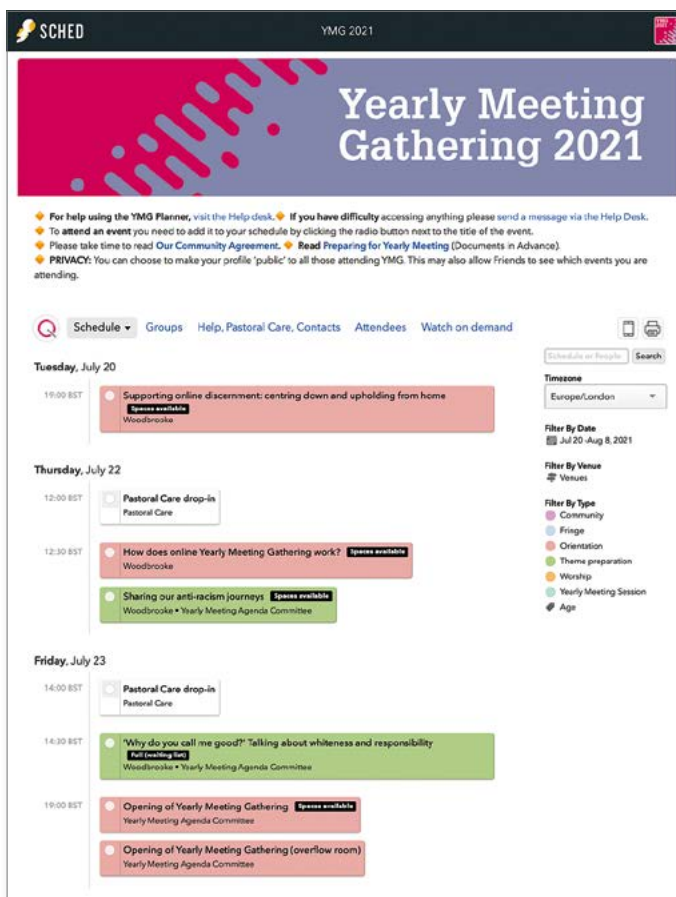
Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee  
[arrangements@quaker.org.uk](mailto:arrangements@quaker.org.uk)

### General enquiries

Events & Committee Services

Telephone: 020 7663 1040  
 Email: [ym@quaker.org.uk](mailto:ym@quaker.org.uk)

Website: [www.quaker.org.uk/ym](http://www.quaker.org.uk/ym)  
 Facebook: [www.facebook.com/bymevent](https://www.facebook.com/bymevent)  
 Twitter: [#bymevent #YM2021](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

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

### 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 online Yearly Meeting Gathering. 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](http://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/our-community-agreement-1).

## 2.2 Elders and pastoral support at Yearly Meeting

### Yearly Meeting Elders

The role of elders at Yearly Meeting Gathering 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 the Yearly Meeting.

You can contact Yearly Meeting Elders through the [Yearly Meeting Gathering Planner](#).

### Pastoral support

Like everything else, arrangements for pastoral care at Yearly Meeting Gathering are rather different this year. Supporting each other is an important part of our community's witness and we hope that local and area meetings will seek to support their own participants as far as possible.

However, we know that many Quakers have had to face difficult times in the last year and may feel fragile as they approach Yearly Meeting Gathering. Some may have suffered bereavement or significant illness, been isolated and lonely, been active in responding to racism, or struggled financially. All these underlying issues can make the Gathering daunting, especially as we approach challenging topics in the theme.

Pastoral care will be there to help. Our team of ten Friends, plus volunteers, will seek to provide a listening ear during the event. We will have a pastoral care 'desk' (a secure and confidential online meeting room) where we will be present to greet you at certain times. There will be an online form which will allow you to request support and we will ensure that the pastoral care team reads messages promptly and responds urgently if needed.

The times that the 'desk' will be open are yet to be finalised but we are aiming for a morning and a late

afternoon/evening slot each day, as well as cover during main sessions and theme-related events.

You can contact the pastoral care team on the [Yearly Meeting Gathering Planner](#).

We are aware that some Gathering sessions, particularly those dealing with racial and gender inequalities, might require specific experience. We will strive to offer support and access to pastoral care Friends who can provide this.

In all cases we will provide a listening ear and seek to signpost 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 the Gathering online 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.

Sue, Yvonne, Jo and the Pastoral Care Team

## 2.3 Ministry and practice for online discipline

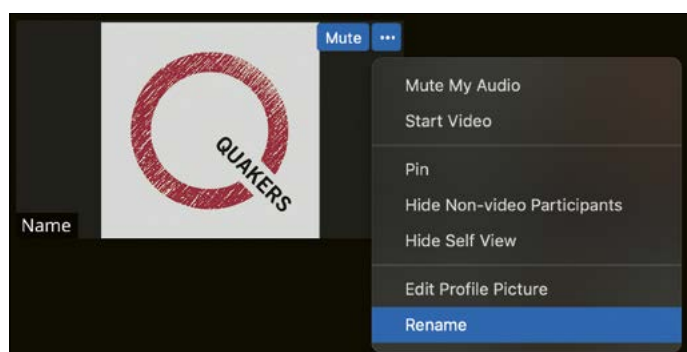
Online meetings will be held using Zoom. To help create and maintain a gathered meeting online, it would be helpful if Friends arrive in good time and avoid arriving late, leaving early, or moving around. The Quaker business method is a discipline in which all present should be focusing on worship and discernment of the matter at hand. Please avoid any activity that detracts from this discipline. If you are called away from your computer, please turn off your camera.

Yearly Meeting sessions will open 10 minutes before the start time so that the meeting can gather in silence beforehand.

The following notes explain how Yearly Meeting will be conducted through Zoom.

### Your name: how it should appear

- Use 'rename' to ensure your screen name

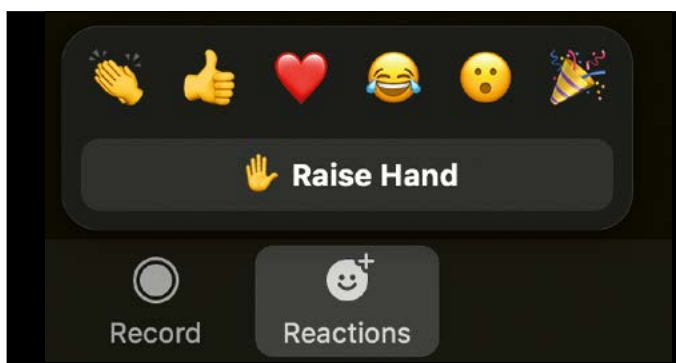


includes both your first name and surname/family name.

- Add the name of your area meeting (attenders can add either their area meeting if known or local meeting or other worshipping community, visitors from other yearly meetings can add the name of their yearly meeting).

### How to indicate you wish to speak

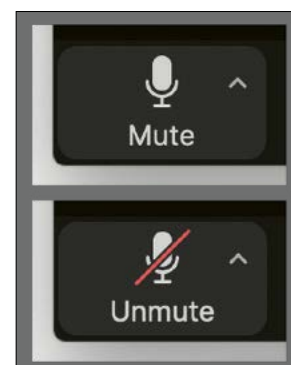
- Use the raise hand feature in Zoom to indicate you wish to speak or minister. The raise hand feature is usually found by clicking 'Reactions'.



- Wait until 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 then you may 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 are clear that an amendment is necessary, use the raise hand feature and wait until invited to speak by a clerk.

- If you are called, you will receive an onscreen message asking you to unmute, click 'unmute' and then you may 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

## 2.4 Orientation

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

Supporting online discernment

- Tuesday 20 July, 19.00–20:30
- Thursday 29 July, 10.30–12:00
- Thursday 5 August, 12.30–13.30

How does online Yearly Meeting Gathering work

- Thursday 22 July, 12.30–14:00
- Monday 26 July, 16.30–18:00
- Wednesday 28 July, 19:00–20:30

Please refer to the online [Yearly Meeting Gathering Planner](http://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/preparing-for-yearly-meeting-2021) for full details and to book.

## 2.5 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. [www.quaker.org.uk/documents/preparing-for-yearly-meeting-2021](http://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/preparing-for-yearly-meeting-2021)

At the Gathering, there will also be theme-related sessions and media to help prepare Friends for discernment at the Yearly Meeting sessions.

Please refer to the online '[Yearly Meeting Gathering Planner](http://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/preparing-for-yearly-meeting-2021)' for full details and to book.

### Why do you call me good? – talking about whiteness and responsibility

- Friday 23 July, 14:30–16:00
- Wednesday 28 July, 16:30–18:00
- Tuesday 3 August, 16:30–18:00

This session will explore how Quakers speak about evil, sin and goodness, and how this helps or hinders our anti-racist work. This event will be facilitated by Woodbrooke.

### Video: "Why do you call me good?"

This talk will be offered several times throughout the Yearly Meeting Gathering, as part of preparation for Yearly Meeting session on 31 July. If you are unable to attend one of the live sessions hosted by Woodbrooke, you can access a video of the pre-recorded talk by Mark Russ from 19 July via the [Yearly Meeting Gathering Planner](http://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/preparing-for-yearly-meeting-2021).

### Sharing our anti-racism journeys

- Thursday 22 July, 12:30–14:00
- Saturday 24 July, 19.00–20.30
- Thursday 29 July, 16:30–18:00
- Friday 30 July, 10:30–12:00

This is an opportunity to hear from other Friends about their anti-racist work, share your own journey with anti-racism, and be inspired to keep going. This session will involve discussion in small groups, and worship-sharing. This workshop will be facilitated by Woodbrooke.

## Quakers in conversation: doing our anti-racist work

- Tuesday 27 July, 19:00–20:30

This live panel discussion will allow Friends to hear from Quakers around the country who are involved in the work of racial equality. Speaking from their varied and unique perspectives we will get a sense of the issues involved and the different ways they are being tackled. There will be the opportunity to ask questions and share the learning. The panel will be introduced and chaired by Edwina Peart, Inclusion & Diversity Coordinator for Quakers in Britain.

## Canterbury: Ten years on

- Monday 2 August, 16:30–18:00

At this event Friends will review progress towards becoming a low carbon sustainable community, as envisaged in Minute 36 of Yearly Meeting 2011. We will look at case studies and share our own stories in small groups. This session will also examine how Quaker witness over the past ten years has grown from individual carbon reduction to include consideration of wider systemic issues underlying the climate crisis. The introduction will be provided by members of the Sustainability Monitoring Group.

## Climate Justice: living equality and truth in a time of crisis

- Thursday 5 August, 19:00–20:30

“The environmental crisis is enmeshed with global economic injustice and we must face our responsibility as one of the nations which has unfairly benefited at others’ expense, to redress inequalities which, in William Penn’s words, are ‘wretched and blasphemous.’”

Yearly Meeting 2011

This event will enable Friends to explore their understanding of climate justice, given our Quaker testimonies to truth and equality, and to consider how this understanding contributes to our actions, including political engagement. Introductions will be followed by consideration in small breakout groups and then worship sharing together.

In addition to spiritual preparation resources already published in [Preparing for Yearly Meeting](#), Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee recommends the following resources relating to climate justice:

- *Canterbury Commitment* – Minute 36 of Yearly Meeting 2011. [www.quaker.org.uk/documents/minute-36-leaflet-2011](http://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/minute-36-leaflet-2011)

- Kabarak call for peace and eco-justice, from 6th World Conference of Friends, Kabarak, Kenya in 2012. [www.quaker.org.uk/documents/kabarak-call](http://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/kabarak-call)
- *The Future We Choose*, 2021. Christiana Figueres and Tom Rivett-Carnac 175pp. Available from the Quaker bookshop: [https://bookshop.quaker.org.uk/The-Future-We-Choose-Surviving-the-Clim\\_9781838770822](https://bookshop.quaker.org.uk/The-Future-We-Choose-Surviving-the-Clim_9781838770822). Also available online as an e-book. Subtitled “the stubborn optimist’s guide to the climate crisis” this is an up-to-date summary of the mindsets and actions needed, from two people directly involved in reaching the Paris Agreement.
- *Climate Justice*, 2018, Mary Robinson 144 pp. Also available online as an e-book. Bringing to the debate voices of marginalised people on the front line of climate change.

## Theme-related media

### Video: “Acknowledging and welcoming gender diverse people”

As part of preparation for Yearly Meeting in session, please watch this video about acknowledging and welcoming gender diverse people. Friends were given the opportunity to contribute to this video, speaking from the heart about their experiences relating to their own gender, or about encountering gender diversity in their relationships, family or community. Please watch this video in advance of Yearly Meeting session on 7 August. Access the video via the [Yearly Meeting Gathering Planner](#).

### Presentation: “Gender diversity: Background and information”

This downloadable PDF has been produced to enable all Friends to understand language, terms and acronyms used when discussing gender diversity, as well as the work undertaken so far in relation to gender diversity within Britain Yearly Meeting. This is an explanatory presentation and you are encouraged to view it in advance of the Yearly Meeting session on 7 August. We hope this presentation helps to create a clear basis on which we can take our Quaker discernment forward. Access the presentation via the [Yearly Meeting Gathering Planner](#).

# 3 Explanation of business to be taken at Yearly Meeting

## 3.1 Amendments to Quaker faith & practice

Yearly Meeting agreed in 2018 to start the process to produce a new book of discipline. While this is being prepared, Yearly Meeting delegated responsibility for minor factual amendments to *Quaker faith & practice* to Meeting for Sufferings (Yearly Meeting 2019, minute 21) while any substantive matters of our Quaker discipline should continue to be brought to Yearly Meeting in session.

Meeting for Sufferings is asked to include in its annual report updates made on behalf of Yearly Meeting and this year's report includes a record of minor changes (see [Appendix B](#)). These changes are provided for Yearly Meeting's information and have been made to the online published version.

## 3.2 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 on [Yearly Meeting Gathering Planner](#) – you will need permission from the Friend(s) you are nominating, their name, their Area Meeting and their email address. You can only nominate Friends in membership who will be present at Yearly Meeting. A list of Friends nominated will be shared with the Yearly Meeting on the [Yearly Meeting Gathering Planner](#) and any objections should be made to Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee ([nominations@quaker.org.uk](mailto:nominations@quaker.org.uk)) before 17:00 on Tuesday 3 August. An online meeting of all nominated Friends will be held on Wednesday 4 August, 17:00–18:00 to explain the role, answer questions and solve any problems of over-nomination

and geographical spread. The nominations will then be brought to Yearly Meeting in session on Sunday 8 August at 14:30.

### 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 2021 until Yearly Meeting 2024. 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 2020.

### 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 the 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 our website [www.quaker.org.uk/ym](http://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 either by email at [nominations@quaker.org.uk](mailto:nominations@quaker.org.uk) or telephone 020 7663 1106

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



### 3.3 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:

- **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 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.
- **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.

### 3.4 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.

#### Procedure for the Yearly Meeting Epistle

*Quaker faith & practice* 6.23 outlines the process for creating the epistle. The details for our online Gathering are set out below. Please use the [Yearly Meeting Gathering Planner](#) to contact the Epistle Drafting Committee and to see the Draft Epistle when available.

1. Any Friend may give written advice on the content of the epistle by contacting the Epistle Drafting Committee.
2. Epistle Drafting Committee will then produce a Draft Epistle which will be made available to Friends on the morning of Sunday 8 August.
3. Written 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 Sunday 8 August.
4. A revised Draft Epistle will be presented at the final session on Sunday 8 August, 14:30–16:00, when no further revision (except perhaps excision) will be invited.

# 4 Agenda and notes

23 Jul.

## Friday 23 July: 19:00–20:00, Opening of Yearly Meeting Gathering

### Opening of Yearly Meeting Gathering

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

30 Jul.

## Friday 30 July: 19:00–20:30, Yearly Meeting Session 1 – Opening session

In our opening session we expect to take some formal opening business, some introductions and nominations. We will hear a report from the Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee and consider our theme: For our comfort and discomfort: living equality and truth in a time of crisis.

### 1. Appointment of clerks

The Central Nominations Committee nominates the following Friends to serve as clerk and assistant clerks for Yearly Meeting 2021, serving until the first session of Yearly Meeting 2022:

Clerk, Clare Scott Booth, London West AM

First Assistant Clerk, Siobhán Haire, North London AM

Second Assistant Clerk, Adwoa Bittle, East Scotland AM

### 2. Welcome to all

### 3. Children & Young People's Programmes and Junior Yearly Meeting

The clerk will refer to 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. Report of Central Nominations Committee

Central Nominations Committee brings forward nominations to Yearly Meeting 2021 as specified in Table 3 of the Schedule of Nominations. Friends should refer to guidance on [page 8](#).

### 6. Central Nominations Committee – nominations required

We ask Central Nominations Committee to bring nominations to Yearly Meeting 2022 as specified in Table 4 of the Schedule of Nominations. Friends should refer to guidance on [page 8](#).

### 7. Report of Yearly Meeting Nominating Group (2020–2021)

The Nominating Group appointed at Yearly Meeting 2020 brings forward nominations as specified in Table 5 of the Schedule of Nominations.

### 8. Nominations to the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group (2021–2022)

### 9. 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 9](#) for an explanation of the role of the committee.

4 Agenda and notes

## Saturday 31 July: 10:30–12:00, Yearly Meeting Session 2

### Our national representative body

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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. Their report includes work on anti-racism, sustainability, and assisted dying. Yearly Meeting delegated authority to Meeting for Sufferings for minor factual amendments to *Quaker faith & practice*; their report includes a report of changes made since Yearly Meeting 2019.

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#### 10. Eldership and Pastoral Care at Yearly Meeting

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

The written report can be found at [Appendix B](#) and Friends should refer to [page 9](#) for an explanation of the role of the body.

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##### 12. 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 8](#).

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##### 13. 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 on [page 8](#).

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## Saturday 31 July: 14:30–16:00, Yearly Meeting Session 3

### For our comfort and discomfort: living equality and truth in a time of crisis (1)

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#### Anti-racism: our Quaker journey

Are we ready to commit to being an anti-racist faith community? And if so, what does this mean? Our Quaker testimonies to equality and truth imply that Friends welcome everyone and reject discrimination. Preparatory events at the Gathering have allowed time for us to reflect on Quaker responses to racism. An introduction to this session will remind Friends of the commitment to anti-racism made by Meeting for Sufferings and explain the purpose of bringing this matter before the Yearly Meeting as a whole.

See section 2.5 on [page 6](#) for details of spiritual preparation and theme-related events to prepare for this session.

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## Sunday 1 August: 10:30–12:00, Yearly Meeting Session 4 – Meeting for worship

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Worship is the foundation of our gathering and most of this session will take the form of a Meeting for Worship. After worshipping together, we may welcome visitors and see to some small items of other business.

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## Sunday 1 August: 14:30–16:00, Yearly Meeting Session 5 Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

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The main business in this session will be to receive and consider a report of the work of the 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.

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### 14. The work of our yearly meeting trustees: Receipt of annual report from Britain Yearly Meeting trustees

The annual report including financial statements is published as a separate document [www.quaker.org.uk/annualreport](http://www.quaker.org.uk/annualreport).

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## Friday 6 August: 16:30–18:00, Yearly Meeting Session 6 – Our all-age community

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Today is the final day for Junior Yearly Meeting, Young People and Children & Families programmes. We will take the opportunity to come together as an all-age community. The session will begin with worship for all ages, and we will also hear minutes from the Children & Families and Young People's programmes, and the Junior Yearly Meeting Epistle.

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### 15. Meeting for worship with those participating in the children's programmes

The all age worship will focus on a faith and play story (in the manner of Godly Play). The story is about Quaker faith and witness. It tells the story of Elizabeth Fry and how she used her privileged position in life to help others less fortunate than her. It demonstrates how it is possible to see that of God in all people. The story poses some wondering questions that families and individuals can think about. Friends may want to use pens, paper and crayons to write or draw your responses to the story.

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### 16. Receipt of minutes from the Children & Families and Young People's Programmes

### 17. Receipt of Junior Yearly Meeting Epistle

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## Friday 6 August: 19:00–20:30, Yearly Meeting Session 7

### Stewardship and required business

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In this session we expect to receive and consider a report from Quaker Stewardship Committee and a report from the group reviewing Quaker Stewardship Committee and the terms of reference of BYM trustees. There may be other required business.

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#### 18. Report from the review of Quaker Stewardship Committee

Yearly Meeting 2018 asked Meeting for Sufferings to review Quaker Stewardship Committee (minute 14). A review group was commissioned and its report can be found in [Appendix C](#). (Note: the same review group was also commissioned to review the terms of reference for Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees – the next item on the agenda – and its report covers both reviews.)

The recommendations have been endorsed by Meeting for Sufferings (minute MfS-20-10-12 to Yearly Meeting in the annex to the report in Appendix C). These recommendations are now before Yearly Meeting for decision.

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#### 19. Report from the review of the terms of reference of Britain Yearly Meeting trustees

Yearly Meeting 2018 asked Quaker Stewardship Committee to review the terms of reference of BYM trustees (minute 35). A review group was commissioned and its report can be found at [Appendix C](#). (Note: the same review group was also commissioned to review Quaker Stewardship Committee – the previous item on the agenda – and its report covers both reviews.)

The recommended changes have been endorsed by Quaker Stewardship Committee (minute QSC-2020-09-04 to Yearly Meeting in the annex to the report in Appendix C). These changes are now before Yearly Meeting for decision.

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#### 20. The work of Quaker Stewardship Committee: Receipt of annual report

The written report can be found at [Appendix D](#) and Friends should refer to [page 9](#) for an explanation of the role of the committee.

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#### 21. Receipt of other reports

We will formally note receipt of the following reports:

- Central Nominations Committee ([Appendix E](#))
- Quaker Housing Trust ([Appendix F](#))
- Tabular Statement ([www.quaker.org.uk/ym/documents](http://www.quaker.org.uk/ym/documents))

Friends should refer to [page 9](#) for an explanation of the role of the committees.

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## Saturday 7 August: 10:30–12:00, Yearly Meeting Session 8

### For our comfort and discomfort: living equality and truth in a time of crisis (2)

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#### Acknowledging and welcoming gender diverse people

Can we as a Yearly Meeting acknowledge and welcome gender diverse people who are or would like to be among us?

Quakers in Britain are at an early stage of discernment on gender diversity and there is a wide range of views and points of conflict in the Quaker community, as well as in wider society.

Although many gender diverse people do feel very welcome within BYM the step of praying together and following God's leadings may enable more people to be welcoming and more people to feel welcome.

Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee is aware that some Friends are unsure about our planned session on acknowledging and welcoming gender diverse people. We hope that we can move forward over the next few months and years in love and respect. We feel it is important to start this discernment in a place of willingness to keep searching together.

Some conversations in recent years have been prompted by the UK government's consultations and accompanying public debates. Our consideration in Yearly Meeting is not, at this time, about government or civil society policy; it is internal, about the life of our own community. We need steady foundations before we can build up to work in the world.

We hope that the Yearly Meeting will be able to name the places where there is unity: acknowledge that there are trans and gender diverse people in our Quaker communities, and others who would like to be welcomed here; and extend a warm welcome to all.

See section 2.5 on [page 6](#) for details of spiritual preparation and theme-related events to prepare for this session.

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## Saturday 7 August: 14:30–16:00, Yearly Meeting Session 9

### For our comfort and discomfort: living equality and truth in a time of crisis (3)

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#### Faith-based action for climate justice

Ten years on from the Canterbury Commitment (Minute 36 of Yearly Meeting 2011), what are we called to do now? This session aims to inform, inspire, and encourage faith-based action, bringing threads from our preparatory events together to focus on what our faith requires of us and how we can work with others in acting for climate justice.

See section 2.5 on [page 6](#) for details of spiritual preparation and theme-related events to prepare for this session.

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## Sunday 8 August: 10:30–12:00, Yearly Meeting Session 10

### For our comfort and discomfort: living equality and truth in a time of crisis (4)

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22. Further discernment as led  
around our theme

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## Sunday 8 August: 14:30–16:00, Yearly Meeting Session 11 – Closing session

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

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23. Yearly Meeting Nominating  
Group 2021–2022

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24. Minute of Record: Epistles

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25. Minute of Record: Testimonies

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26. Minute of Record: Friends  
from other yearly meetings

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

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28. Reading and signing of the  
Yearly Meeting Epistle

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29. Thanks

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30. Naming of clerks for Yearly  
Meeting 2022

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# 5 Appendices

## A: Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee (YMAC) annual report

Well Friends, it has been a year, hasn't it? I last reported to you in 2019, when we were giddy with excitement for our upcoming gathering in Bath.

Instead of meeting together for a week, we have stayed apart for over a year. It's hard to overstate how difficult this time was for many of us. Bereavement, illness, anxiety, separation from our loved ones, in some cases a long period of proximity to our loved ones, economic uncertainty, loss of jobs, loneliness. The pandemic intensified inequality and put people and families who were just about coping into an economic and emotional tailspin.

It also showed us, in some ways, a different way to live. For me, it clarified that proximity to family, friends and nature were more important than I had previously thought, that connections with neighbours are important, that overseas travel is a luxury, that actual "key workers" weren't just the groups we first thought of, that it certainly does take a village to raise a child (and it's pretty dreadful when the village shuts up shop).

I don't think the silver linings redeem the cloud, and I don't think this learning reduces the pain of the last year, but they are things that we have learnt, and we can choose to take them forward into the post-pandemic world, or not.

For 6 months, YMAC fell into hibernation. It was clear from very early on that Yearly Meeting Gathering in Bath wouldn't take place as planned in August 2020. A very small group of clerks and staff then planned for a short online Yearly Meeting in October 2020, lasting only 2 hours. Although we were unsure about how such a large group worshipping together online would work, we drew confidence from all the successful and innovative events which had taken place during the Spring and Summer of 2020 – friends were used to

online worship at their local meetings and through Woodbrooke, other Yearly Meetings and groups such as EMES proved that larger gatherings could work successfully, the QPSW summer series, and online young people's activities all showed that new methods could lead to gathered worship, deep discernment and a sense of connection. Some Friends became adept at online intervisitation.

It was so moving to see so many familiar faces at Yearly Meeting in 2020. Physically distanced, there was a palpable sense of spiritual gathering. We didn't quite believe how tender the session felt.

It therefore fell to us to plan something more ambitious for summer 2021, something which would replicate more of our usual gathering. Since 2019 we had been planning for a gathering engaging with climate justice, anti-racism and gender diversity, and if truth be told, it felt (and still feels) like a daunting task. None of these issues on their own feel simple or without the possibility of difficulty and pain, and it may not be immediately obvious how all three fit together. However, in hindsight, I think the additional planning time has helped us to approach them with greater clarity than we would otherwise have done.

Agenda committee has this difficult combination of tasks: we have to bring issues of concern to Quakers in Britain before the Yearly Meeting, whilst also delivering an event which allows us to feel fellowship, community - God's love. It is a task calling for the right measures of comfort and discomfort. It requires us to bring the best of ourselves to our corporate discernment so that we can be generous when someone uses an unfortunate or awkward turn of phrase and listen to the intention behind what they have said, overcome our urge to roll our eyes at ministry which we disagree with in the first instance, test ourselves rigorously on whether a message is just



for us, or for everyone, and humbly consider, at all times that we might be wrong.

That is partly why, this year, we have introduced a Community Agreement, which you will all have seen and, I hope, read as you registered for this event. We think that the time has come for this, not simply because this is an online event, although I do think that the inability to speak in person increases the chances of poor communication, but in response to our growing sense that we need to do more than rely on good intentions to make sure that our yearly meeting is a community in which everyone is valued and can feel safe. I had to work really hard not to say “a safe space” – I don’t think any sincere search for the will of God can be truly safe – I’m not sure that safety is high on the holy spirit’s list of priorities. But I want each of us to be able to participate fully in that sincere search in the knowledge that we are held and cared for by this community.

Katie Evans, who was on Agenda Committee several years ago and convened our pastoral care group, said it so well that I’d like, with her advance permission to share her words in Yearly Meeting session again:

I expect that, to a greater or lesser extent, many of us come with this question: is this a community I can trust? Can I be my whole self here without being taken advantage of, derided or rejected? If I am hurt, will I be met with compassion?

A lot hinges on this question. Our Yearly Meeting is about discerning together God’s call, a call to transformation. The more each of us can trust this community, the more we can:

- Share our insights and experience, perhaps bringing to light what has been hidden or oppressed
- Go beyond our comfort zones to meet what we do not know
- Risk the sort of human vulnerability that enables deep connection
- Acknowledge that we may be mistaken
- Be open to change and inspiration

Friends, our Community Agreement is one part of the answer to Katie’s question – can I be my whole self here, without being taken advantage of, derided or rejected?

Our gathering is entitled: For our comfort and discomfort: living equality and truth in a time of crisis. You will have seen from documents in advance, that in our preparation activities and sessions we have

sought to prepare Friends to seek God’s will in the following areas:

### **Anti-racism: our Quaker journey**

Tackling systemic racism is a spiritual imperative. Can Quakers commit to being an actively anti-racist church?

### **Acknowledging and welcoming gender diverse people**

We are at an early stage of discernment on gender diversity and there is a wide range of views and points of conflict in our community, as well as in wider society. Might we together name the places where there is unity, acknowledge that there are trans people in Quaker communities and state that they are welcome?

### **Faith-based action for climate justice**

Time to review ten years since Quakers committed to becoming a low-carbon community, look forward to COP26 and consider what faith requires in relation to climate justice.

You could be forgiven for thinking that maybe one of these areas for discernment could have been enough for us. At times, we thought this ourselves. But we have also felt the conviction in our discernment that in these times, faced with these issues, how could we ignore any of them?

You cannot truthfully discuss a response to climate injustice without considering the role of geography and race in our response to mass migration, or the history of conquest and colonialism which underpins industrialisation. You cannot truthfully consider anti-racism, without considering what radical equality and inclusion means for gender diversity. At the heart, for me, of all of these issues and injustices, is our tendency to see our fellow people, or our natural world, as other.

If I can see you as other, I can ignore your lived experience, your pain, your truth – because that couldn’t happen to me.

If I can see you as like me, it will be deeply discomfiting, but your truth and your pain becomes mine, and I can ally myself with you.

Siobhán Haire

Clerk, Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee

## B: Meeting for Sufferings annual report

Meeting for Sufferings is charged by *Quaker faith & practice* 7:03 to report on its activities to Yearly Meeting on the duties laid upon it in 7:02. Throughout the year, a record is kept by the Arrangements Group of how the business of MfS aligns with its role.

The period covered by this report is, of course, dominated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, our April 2020 meeting was cancelled, and members of Meeting for Sufferings received the papers intended for the meeting but had no opportunity at that time to consider them corporately. In June, Meeting for Sufferings experimented with an online meeting for worship for church affairs. This had a significantly pared back agenda, concentrating on some formal reports and procedural decisions, but was generally felt to be positive. On the strength of that experience, Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group felt encouraged to experiment with the use of online meetings to enrich the life of Meeting for Sufferings. Meeting for Sufferings as a whole has continued to meet online, growing in confidence throughout the period, and has also found value in pre-meeting threshing sessions to explore topics prior to formal discernment.

In October, which had originally been planned as a residential weekend, Meeting for Sufferings was held in a number of online sessions over the course of the three days. We heard about the development of the Quaker Peace and Social Witness strategy, including the ongoing work on sustainability and climate justice and how these were being placed more centrally in the strategic thinking of QPSW. At the same meeting we received a full report from the Sustainability Monitoring Group, which confirmed how the Recommendations for Action agreed by Meeting for Sufferings in 2017 are being taken forward. We noted there is much to celebrate, but we are keen to understand more about the impact of our actions, and for Quakers to collaborate with other organisations. In advance of the meeting, we also offered a special interest session on the work of Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations. Trustees brought to us their concern about racism in the Religious Society of Friends, and, specifically, about the suitability of rooms in Friends House being named in commemoration of Quakers with links to slavery. This initiated a process of discernment in Meeting for Sufferings, as part of our continuing work on diversity and inclusion, which continued over several meetings. We also received a report on the process of the Book of Discipline

review, which was warmly received.

In December, we received a report on the work of Quaker World Relations Committee, again preceded by an optional meeting where Friends could engage more closely with the work of the Committee. Young people from around the country joined Meeting for Sufferings and in parallel sessions, the meeting reflected widely on racism in the Society of Friends and, in particular, on the way in which history is recounted by subsequent generations. Meeting for Sufferings recorded that “we are called to commit to becoming an actively anti-racist church” and encouraged individual Friends and Area Meetings to join in the process of overcoming our own racism.

In February 2021, we received the report of the group set up to review the work of Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group. We also heard from trustees on progress towards developing “a simple church supported by a simple charity” and an engaging presentation from the Recording Clerk explaining what is revealed by the data collected by the tabular statement over the years. We also received the completed strategy for the work of Quaker Peace and Social Witness, focussing on climate justice. The Meeting also approved a review of the principle that only Friends in formal membership of the Society may be appointed to central committees.

Throughout the year we have had sessions in Meeting for Sufferings where Friends have been encouraged to reflect together on “how the truth prospers amongst you”, sometimes in small groups and sometimes in plenary session. This has perhaps offered the meeting a chance to take a more reflective stance rather than being dominated by formal receipt and approval of reports and strategy documents. It has been a strange and stressful year in many ways but, for Meeting for Sufferings, also a richly rewarding one.

### Amendments to Quaker faith & practice

While a new Book of Discipline is being prepared, Yearly Meeting delegated responsibility for minor factual amendments to *Quaker faith & practice* to Meeting for Sufferings (YM 2019 minute 21 and our minute MfS/2019/07/05 refer).

In December 2019, Meeting for Sufferings agreed to changes on the recommendation of Church Government Advisory Group to the following sections:

Section	New text	Previous text	Reason
4.05	<p>Other appointments which may be found helpful to the area meeting include:</p> <p>an additional assistant clerk to deal with membership matters;</p> <p>an assistant treasurer or finance committee;</p> <p>a children and young people's work advocate (guidance available from Quaker Life);</p> <p>a children and young people's committee;</p> <p>an outreach committee;</p> <p>a warden(s) and premises committee, where the area meeting is the employing body (and see 13.39);</p> <p>Friends to advise on funerals (see 17.07, 17.08, 17.14).</p> <p>In addition appointments will be needed to other bodies with which the area meeting has a relationship (see in particular 4.16, 4.17).</p>	<p>Other appointments which may be found helpful are:</p> <p>an additional assistant clerk to deal with membership matters;</p> <p>an assistant treasurer or finance committee;</p> <p>a children and young people's committee;</p> <p>an outreach committee;</p> <p>a warden(s) and premises committee, where the area meeting is the employing body (and see 13.39);</p> <p>Friends to advise on funerals (see 17.07, 17.08, 17.14).</p> <p>Other appointments may also be helpful to the area meeting. In addition appointments will be needed to other bodies with which the area meeting has a relationship (see in particular 4.16, 4.17).</p>	<p>QLCC recommended that area meetings appoint CYP Work Advocates, and that the role should be added to the list of recommended roles in <i>Quaker faith &amp; practice</i>.</p> <p>The preamble read "Other appointments which may be found helpful are: ..." This was followed by a list of roles. Beneath the list, the paragraph stated, "Other appointments may also be helpful to the area meeting." The revised preamble allowed the sentence following the list to be deleted, as it would be clear the list is not an exhaustive one.</p>

The Library Committee was laid down by Quaker Life Central Committee in June 2018. This was reported to Meeting for Sufferings in November 2018 within the Quaker Life annual report. There are various references to the Library Committee in *Quaker faith & practice*.

4.39	<p>Area and general meetings should appoint a Friend to act as a custodian of their records, or else appoint a committee for the purpose. Area meetings should take responsibility for the records of their constituent meetings, ensuring their timely transfer to the custodian of records. They are advised in particular to ensure that the records of any local meeting which has been laid down are collected together. The Library of the Society of Friends publishes guidance for clerks and custodians on the creation, care and custody of records (4.43), and see the BYM website (new window).</p>	<p>Area and general meetings should appoint a Friend to act as a custodian of their records, or else appoint a committee for the purpose. Area meetings should take responsibility for the records of their constituent meetings, ensuring their timely transfer to the custodian of records. They are advised in particular to ensure that the records of any local meeting which has been laid down are collected together. The Library Committee of Quaker Life publishes guidance for clerks and custodians on the creation, care and custody of records (4.43), and see the BYM website (new window).</p>	
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Changes to amend references to the Library Committee in *Quaker faith & practice*, continued.

4.43	Meetings requiring advice or information on the handling of their records are encouraged to get in touch with the Library of the Society of Friends at Friends House.	Meetings requiring advice or information on the handling of their records are encouraged to get in touch with the Library Committee through the Librarian at Friends House. The Library Committee maintains a central catalogue of local meeting records, and it should be notified of any change in the place where they are deposited.	Library staff advised removing the second sentence about maintaining a central catalogue of local meeting records. Meetings rarely sent this information, so they were not able to keep those records up to date. Most of the archive services holding local Quaker records have online catalogues now and this information is much more readily available than it used to be. There are better ways now of gathering information about where Quaker records are held than maintaining paper catalogues here.
4.44	Meetings have sometimes been approached by an outside body and offered the opportunity to put old records on microfilm. This may be primarily for the benefit of those making the offer. The area meeting is responsible for deciding whether it would also be of benefit to the meeting and is strongly advised to seek guidance from the Library of the Society of Friends (4.43). The Library should be kept informed of decisions made so that the relevant experience may be shared with other area meetings.	Meetings have sometimes been approached by an outside body and offered the opportunity to put old records on microfilm. This may be primarily for the benefit of those making the offer. The area meeting is responsible for deciding whether it would also be of benefit to the meeting and is strongly advised to seek guidance from the Library Committee (4.43). The Library Committee should be kept informed of decisions made so that the relevant experience may be shared with other area meetings.	

Changes to amend references to the Library Committee in *Quaker faith & practice*, continued.

13.41	<p>Area meetings are required to keep under regular review the maintenance and use of libraries in local meetings (see 4.10r); they should encourage any meetings which do not have their own library to establish one. The running of the library, however, remains the responsibility of the local meeting. Most local meetings appoint a librarian, who will need the support of the meeting and a budget for the purchase of books. In some meetings this task is shared by a number of Friends. Some area meetings draw their librarians together from time to time to share their experience. Help and advice are also available from the Library of the Society of Friends.</p>	<p>Area meetings are required to keep under regular review the maintenance and use of libraries in local meetings (see 4.10.r); they should encourage any meetings which do not have their own library to establish one. The running of the library, however, remains the responsibility of the local meeting. Most local meetings appoint a librarian, who will need the support of the meeting and a budget for the purchase of books. In some meetings this task is shared by a number of Friends. Some area meetings draw their librarians together from time to time to share their experience. Help and advice are also available from the Library Committee of Quaker Life.</p>	
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# C: Report from Group appointed to review: (1) Quaker Stewardship Committee and (2) the terms of reference for Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

## Summary

This Report covers two separate but related reviews – one focusing on the Quaker Stewardship Committee (QSC), and one on the terms of reference of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees (BYM Trustees). After two initial Parts on the background to, and context of, the reviews, we report separately on each of the two elements in our brief.

For the QSC element, the Report sets out the many achievements of the Committee over the approximately 17 years of its life. However, as time and circumstances have changed, there is now a case for significant change in the way that matters currently handled by QSC are dealt with. We describe how they might be better tackled in future. If the Review Group's recommendations are accepted, then this would logically lead to QSC being laid down by Yearly Meeting in 2021, and completing its service with effect from Yearly Meeting in 2022.

In reviewing the terms of reference (ToRs) of BYM Trustees, we have concluded that while some relatively minor revision (simplification) is desirable, BYM Trustees are working successfully according to their current terms of reference, and the governing document. Our proposed re-draft of the ToRs is in Part 4 of this Report.

*Throughout our work, we have been exceptionally well-supported by Friends' House staff, especially Neil Jarvis (Governance Manager), to whom we are enormously grateful.*

## Part one: Background to the Review

**1.1** The Group to review QSC<sup>1</sup> and its terms of reference (henceforth 'the Group') was initiated in 2018 but the three Group members were not appointed by Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) until 2019. Almost immediately after, the Group was asked to include a review of the terms of reference of BYM Trustees<sup>2</sup> – a task for which QSC had been asked to take responsibility. We have thus been charged with examining two of the major governance bodies of

Quakers in Britain. We have found that the two tasks have been to a degree complementary, and some of the underlying issues apply to both. We met for the first time as a Group on 15 April 2019.

**1.2** Although this review focuses on administrative and functional matters, we have been reminded that the way in which Quakers work together speaks loudly of who Friends are. It should reflect Friends' understanding of God's purposes and enable the Spirit to shine through Quaker structures and meetings. We have experienced a sense of commitment and joy in looking at possible change, even when feeling quite daunted by the scale and detail of what we had been asked to do. Some of the changes we are proposing can be put in place easily; some will take time to work through.

**1.3 A note on terminology:** In this Report, we have tried as far as possible to use the terminology recommended by BYM Trustees<sup>3</sup>. Thus, where we mean the church, we use 'Quakers in Britain'. Where we refer to the charity, we use 'Britain Yearly Meeting' (or BYM). Where we mean the annual event, and the body of Quakers in attendance, we use 'Yearly Meeting'. Where we refer to General Meeting for Scotland, we use the abbreviation 'GMS'

**1.4 How the Group carried out the Review:** We have sought and received responses, in writing and in conversation, from:

- Members of QSC, and BYM Trustees;
- Key staff members, relevant clerks and other Friends;
- Woodbrooke trainers of trustees and treasurers;
- AM clerks and clerks of trustees, and some individual Friends who responded to an invitation which was –
  - posted in the MfS mailing;
  - sent to the Area Meeting (AM) clerks email list;

1. A description of QSC and how it works with area meetings can be found in *Quaker faith & practice* 14.36-42.

NB All references to *Quaker faith & practice* in this Report are to the online version: <https://qfp.quaker.org.uk> as at 21 July 2020.

2. For a description of the work of BYM Trustees see, *Ibid* 8.17 & 8.18.

3. See BYM Trustees' minute 2017-06-09.

- included in a letter in The Friend.

Altogether some 60 people have contributed to this consultation. We are grateful to all of them.

During the spring of 2020, we tested our conclusions with those most closely involved, including members of the two groups being reviewed, relevant staff members, and those involved in training at Woodbrooke and under the auspices of Quaker Life. We sent an interim report to MfS. We received useful feedback which has helped to shape our conclusions.

## Part two: The context within Quakers in Britain, and the issues this raises

**2.1 Demographics:** While the burden of work and consequent organisational complexity has not apparently reduced, the Religious Society of Friends in Britain has been diminishing in numbers – by over a third since 1991, the most recent high point. Its profile is an ageing one. In 2019, the Society comprised<sup>4</sup>:

- 20,746 members and recognised attenders in –
- 469 local meetings for worship within –
- 70 area meeting charities, plus –
- the national charity (BYM) that supports Quakerism locally and manages central assets and services, and activities which witness to Quaker testimony and spiritual leadings.

**2.2 A simple church supported by a simple charity:** This review comes at a time when MfS has endorsed BYM's strategic priorities with the overriding objective of:

- “A simple church supported by a simple charity to re-invigorate Quakerism, which should be distinctively Quaker, integrated, and well governed<sup>5</sup>.”

This underpins all the Group's recommendations. We want to help to simplify the governance structure of our centrally managed work<sup>6</sup> so that it becomes more transparent and easier to work within.

**2.3 The Simpler Meetings project:** The Group has been reminded that, as well as our money and property, stewardship of Friends' time is important

– freeing up more time to spend on the spiritual lives and witness of our Quaker communities will be important if we want to reinvigorate Quakerism. Alongside simplification in our centrally managed work, the Simpler Meetings project has been enthusiastically welcomed by some area and regional meetings. Many AMs are actively engaged with the project and some regions are looking at ways in which functions might be combined across AMs.

**2.4 A Meeting-Centred approach to supporting Quaker Communities:** Since 2016, the Vibrancy Project has experimented with Local Development Workers (LDWs) in four regions of Britain. Having evaluated the Project, BYM and Woodbrooke have decided to extend meeting-centred support throughout the country over the next five years<sup>7</sup>. As it is rolled out, this will profoundly affect the way in which support is offered and received by Friends, through LDWs who can work alongside trustees and treasurers, as well as other role-holders within meetings.

**2.5 Authority and accountability:** Our consultation has revealed differences of view about who exercises authority within Quakers in Britain, and how it is exercised. Yearly Meeting is seen as the ‘ultimate’ authority. However, as a body which can hold to account those reporting to it, it has its limitations, such as agenda time available and lack of opportunity for ongoing scrutiny. When QSC has been able to talk informally with AM representatives through MfS, this has generated a greater sense of engagement.

**2.6 Strategic planning:** We heard differences of view as to where the main responsibility for strategic planning should lie, and indeed different views of what is meant by strategic planning. We take it to mean the process of setting a broad direction of travel. The review of MfS and BYM Trustees<sup>8</sup>, which reported to Yearly Meeting in 2011, encouraged Friends to see MfS as, in effect, ‘the church’, operating between Yearly Meeting in session. Thus, the task of agreeing the vision for Quakers in Britain – the church – rests with MfS. To achieve this vision by setting the direction and consequent planning for the charity rests with BYM Trustees. We have learned how MfS and BYM Trustees achieved this effective liaison in more than one session during 2018,

4. Figures drawn from 2019 Tabular Statement, as yet unpublished.

5. See <https://tinyurl.com/y8gd4756> MfS paper 2018 11 14b at page 90 (of 111) and MfS paper 2018 11 14a at page 87 (of 111).

6. See chart at *Quaker faith & practice* 8.05.

7. See <https://tinyurl.com/ydaemve8> minute MfS/19/07/12 page 10 and <https://tinyurl.com/ybnxyrw2> page 22.

8. Report available on request from the Recording Clerk's Office [enquiries@quakers.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@quakers.org.uk) paragraph 1.1.

through the agreement of BYM's strategic priorities for centrally managed work for the following 5-10 years (referred to in section 2.2 above)<sup>9</sup>. The Group has sought to define the roles of MfS and BYM Trustees in strategic planning more clearly in our proposed BYM Trustees' Terms of Reference<sup>10</sup>. We have used the duality between church and charity to show how the different parts of our governance complement one another, recognising that the two parts, although in some respects distinct, are also inextricably intertwined. We hope that this duality can be explained more clearly in the newly revised book of discipline (see para 2.8 below).

### 2.7 Centralisation and regionalisation:

Quakers in Britain is 'one church but many charities'<sup>11</sup>. Each AM is a charity, but all are subject to the authority of the church. However, increasingly in many matters – for example, safeguarding – BYM, as the overarching charity, carries the reputational risk for the whole church; a failure in one local meeting runs the risk of reflecting poorly on the whole church. Some Friends have traditionally resisted a top-down approach, but how do Quakers in Britain hold their differences within a firm framework? What can we in Britain learn from Friends worldwide in this respect?

### 2.8 Quaker discernment and church government for the next twenty years:

In 2018, Yearly Meeting decided to review the book of discipline, starting with the church government sections, which are acknowledged as no longer fit for purpose<sup>12</sup>. The Group hopes that the revision process will help Quakers in Britain to rediscover the essence of the Quaker Business Method. Specifically, we hope that it will help Friends to see how the testimony to integrity can be reflected in well-governed and Spirit-led meetings, locally and nationally. The Group welcomes the call for ways of working that enable a greater diversity of Friends – especially younger people – to contribute to Quaker governance. We also endorse the potential for appropriate use of technology to improve the effectiveness of our work.

### 2.9 Transparency, openness and integrity:

One of the main motives for setting up QSC in 2003 was to demonstrate transparency and integrity in Quaker business affairs. Since then, QSC has assisted AMs and other Quaker bodies to conform to charity

law. Compliance generally, not just in finance and property, but in terms of employment, safeguarding, data protection etc, is now seen as vital across the whole charity sector. Quaker bodies do not have to operate by themselves – the Charity Commission, the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and other charity support services offer helpful and up-to-date guidance, training and support.

## Part three: Quaker Stewardship Committee

### 3.1 Achievements

**3.1.1 Registration and legal compliance:** As indicated above, QSC was formed to ensure that all parts of Quakers in Britain were complying with the law in relation to finance, property and reporting regulation. Over the past 17 years, it has –

- liaised with the Charity Commission and OSCR over drawing up model governing documents based upon *Quaker faith & practice*;
- supported the registration of the first tranche of AMs and regional meetings, and of BYM itself;
- drawn up Terms of Reference for BYM Trustees.

There are still 22 unregistered AMs in England and Wales – they fall below the current financial threshold for registration (all AMs in Scotland are registered with OSCR). As well as engaging proactively with those remaining meetings, in recent years QSC has offered alternative models for AMs which wish to become Companies Limited by Guarantee, or Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIOs)<sup>13</sup>. AMs do submit their reports and accounts to QSC, so that QSC may report annually to Yearly Meeting. However, use of, and compliance with, QSC/Charity Commission/OSCR checklists and guidance is still variable, as is the ability of QSC members to respond with appropriate guidance in all cases.

### 3.1.2 Stewardship is a Spiritual concern:

Through annual reports, keynote talks at conferences, and its regularly updated Advices and Queries on Stewardship, QSC has consistently reminded Friends that stewardship is a spiritual imperative, and not just a legal requirement. It has tried to ensure that Friends do not compartmentalise their witness, but

9. See <https://tinyurl.com/y6ftfjir>.

10. See 4.3 below.

11. See <https://tinyurl.com/y8d355p5>.

12. Yearly Meeting 2018, minute 21.

13. For the variety of models adopted, see QSC-2020-02-06b (Revised 2).



carry their lived faith through into the way they conduct their AM affairs – for example, it has asked AMs to report on their work on sustainability, and encouraged them to follow BYM in divesting from fossil fuels.

**3.1.3 Support, guidance and training:** During our consultation the Group heard much praise for the support and guidance QSC has offered, and especially for the constant and friendly route to advice through the Committee's secretary. Support has included –

- conferences for trustees and treasurers;
- handbooks and regular bulletins;
- guidance from Link Friends and other committee members and staff on specific issues;
- peer support via email groups; and
- working with Woodbrooke to provide training and support for trustees and treasurers, both on- and off-site, including new initiatives such as 'Writing brilliant reports', and training for clerks of trustees.

**3.1.4 Working patterns:** QSC members have found it to be a welcoming committee, rooted in Quaker principles. They welcomed the division of its main responsibilities into three subgroups – concentrating on Annual Reports and Accounts, Governance, and Training and Support. These have enabled those serving to contribute their particular skills and expertise effectively.

## 3.2 The need for change

### 3.2.1 The Religious Society of Friends in Britain has changed, and so has the charity sector:

Although QSC is seen to be effective in many ways, there was widespread recognition of the need for change, mainly for reasons outside the committee's control.

**3.2.2 Training, guidance and support:** QSC does not have responsibility for staff working in this area. As a result, the support it offers to Friends is not always well-coordinated with other sources of support, which are mainly the responsibility of Quaker Life (which does oversee staff working in its area of responsibility, including LDWs), and Woodbrooke. This makes for a confusing situation in respect of governance. To be effective and consistent in approach, support for trustees and treasurers should be integrated with support for clerks and other office holders. For the next five years, ending

in 2025, Quaker Life Central Committee has adopted a new strategy which supports a 'meeting-centred' approach to supporting Quaker communities. This covers work done by BYM and Woodbrooke, and 'aims for all [their] work to be relevant and responsive to what meetings and other Quaker communities need to help them thrive'<sup>14</sup>. In consequence, all Quaker meetings will have an LDW somewhere near them within the next five years. This should facilitate peer support for trustees and treasurers, and perhaps ensure that these roles are better understood and supported locally. This would supersede the 'Link Friend' system, which has sometimes been perceived by AMs as too 'bossy'. Link Friends may not always have the time to engage effectively and AMs vary in how actively they are willing to engage with QSC. QSC has always seen trusteeship and good governance as a spiritual priority, but promotion of these ideals is not always easy when the support which QSC gives is divorced from the support provided to other office holders.

### 3.2.3 Broader issues of advice and legal compliance:

**3.2.3.1 AM trustees are now seen to be responsible for compliance over a much wider field than just finance, property and charity law.** Support for these other functions, including (but not necessarily limited to) employment, health and safety, data protection, safeguarding, and record keeping, is distributed amongst staff at Friends House. It may not always be a simple matter to find this support via QSC. Sometimes AM trustees, for lack of consistent advice, have been slow to pick up their responsibilities in these fields. Where, for whatever reason, AM trustees fail to fulfil their responsibilities in respect of compliance, there is no obvious sanction available to BYM.

#### 3.2.3.2 Certifying that all parts of Quakers in Britain are compliant:

It should be recognised that compliance is not always a simple matter of 'right or wrong', but careful judgement by each AM, as part of their risk assessment. The church needs to be sure that all parts of Quakers in Britain are acting with integrity – and not just in financial matters. If MfS was more clearly seen as 'the church acting between Yearly Meetings in session' – the glue that holds us all together in Quaker discipline – there might be better ongoing accountability through AM representatives. This would be part of our witness to openness and transparency on questions about how the Society is flourishing, 'in pondering which, a whole meeting can achieve a corporate examination of conscience'.<sup>15</sup>

14. For more detail on this, see <https://tinyurl.com/ybnxyrw25>.

**3.2.3.3 Charity Law and accounting requirements change regularly, and there is a risk of giving outdated advice.** It is generally best to draw on up-to-date guidance available via the Charity Commission or OSCR websites – or from BYM staff, who are well-placed to keep up to date as the regulators' guidance changes.

**3.2.3.4 Staff support:** While, as mentioned above (3.1.3), the Committee secretary's work has been widely appreciated, many of those we have consulted have told us that, given the wide range of tasks which QSC now undertakes, greater staff support and advice is needed. Over the years, specific advice has been delivered in many different ways, including recently via the short-term legacy posts on property, and Simpler Meetings.

### **3.2.4 Relationships between BYM and AMs**

**3.2.4.1 Monitoring and accountability:** a small group could be set up, as a reference group to a staff member, to monitor an online checklist completed by AMs, as a commitment made under the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) – see following para. This would include, but not be limited to, checking that the Annual Report and Accounts have been received. This checklist should include matters such as compliance in respect of sustainability and diversity.

**3.2.4.2 Memorandum of Understanding:** Just as MoUs have been used to clarify the relationship between area and local meetings, one used here would help to describe the working between AMs and BYM, in the same way that the Quaker recognised bodies<sup>16</sup> have to fulfil certain criteria. MoUs are being developed with other parts of BYM such as GMS and Meeting of Friends in Wales. Such a Memorandum could cover basic legal requirements such as proper accounting, and reporting to the Charity Commission and OSCR – but also AMs' arrangements for worship by, and care of, Friends<sup>17</sup>.

**3.2.4.3 An overarching charity for the whole of Quakers in Britain?** Might this approach free up more time to spend on Friends' witness and worship? The Group does not think Quakers in Britain is ready to take this significant step yet, but it may be time to encourage conversations about the pros and cons, and what it might entail.

## **3.3 Recommendations**

**3.3.1** Lay down QSC in its current form with effect from Yearly Meeting 2022. The recommendations

listed below suggest ways in which QSC's current functions might be continued in other ways under the authority of Quaker Life Central Committee. If this recommendation is agreed at Yearly Meeting in 2021, Friends currently serving on QSC should be encouraged to help to ensure that its current functions, including compliance, and monitoring as discussed in section 3.2 above, are appropriately transferred during their final year of service, up to Yearly Meeting 2022.

**3.3.2** Oversight of compliance is held by MfS acting as the church between Yearly Meetings. MfS should take greater responsibility for the oversight of the certification of AM compliance (across the entire range of compliance matters required of charities). In the present arrangement, Yearly Meeting meets too infrequently and is not held in a way to undertake this task effectively. MfS affords ongoing accountability and representation from all AMs.

**3.3.3** Support and guidance: Consider how the functions of support and guidance, currently offered through QSC, might be offered through a matrix of –

- Staff, including LDWs;
- peer support (email lists and occasional virtual & face-to-face meetings);
- bought-in consultancy;
- The Association of Church Accountants and Treasurers.

The Group recognises that whatever matrix of support is agreed at this time should not be regarded as fixed – it will need to be adapted to changing circumstances, and may in time include other sources of support. In particular, as the LDW scheme 'beds down', it will be necessary to review how the work of LDWs can best be complemented by other sources of support. In line with the meeting-centred approach to supporting Quaker communities, LDWs and other staff will proactively reach out to meetings, listen to what they want and need, and then provide support on that basis.

**3.3.4** Short term projects, such as revision of handbooks, and supporting AMs with registration when required, need staff resource – with, when necessary, an advisory panel or reference group of volunteer Friends who might be recruited via the Quaker Life Network.

15. See *Quaker faith & practice* 1.04.

16. For an overview of Quaker recognised bodies, see <https://tinyurl.com/rjly4f7>.

17. This would require revision of Chapter 4 of *Quaker faith & practice*, which deals with area meetings and local meetings.

**3.3.5** The Conference of Treasurers and Trustees, currently held annually, should be continued on a regular basis, with an arrangements group appointed for each conference, using a similar mechanism as for Quaker Life Representative Council. The Conference could be supplemented by regional events for trustees and treasurers, perhaps using support from the LDWs.

**3.3.6** Responsibility for liaison with the Charity Commission and OSCR over matters of general and collective concern should be given to BYM Trustees, and GMS (liaison with OSCR is already, in effect, delegated to GMS<sup>18</sup>). Liaison between AMs and the Charity Commission or OSCR over matters relating to individual AM charities would be unaffected by this recommendation.

**3.3.7** Significant changes would be required to chapters 14 and 15 of *Quaker faith & practice*,

including the references to the 'Annual Conference of Treasurers' (which are already obsolete). This could be rolled into the existing revision process, which includes provision for supplementary detailed material as required. However, appropriate text may be required in the interim Advice on the Quaker Business Method. This should include specific reference to its current usage in a wide variety of situations – in large meetings such as MfS, and in smaller groups dealing with more detailed matters, such as Trustees.

### 3.4 Timeline and Responsibility for implementation:

The Group has considered how its recommendations, if adopted by Yearly Meeting, might be implemented in broad terms. We advise further discussion with relevant committee clerks and members of Management Meeting.

Area of work and broad steps for implementation	Timing
<p><b>Quaker Life, working with QSC</b></p> <p>We suggest that, following broad acceptance of the report by Meeting for Sufferings, it would be appropriate for QSC to begin to liaise with Quaker Life about the work to ensure continuity, or where appropriate, review and revision. This is particularly important as the experienced staff member supporting QSC retires in 2020. Amongst the functions to consider are:</p> <p><b>Support and guidance</b>            Much of this comes under the integrated strategy for supporting Quaker Communities<sup>19</sup> general support and guidance (see 3.1.3, 3.2.2, 3.3.3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short term projects (see 3.3.4)</li> <li>• Conference of Treasurers and Trustees (3.3.5)</li> </ul> <p><b>Relationship between AMs and BYM</b>            (See 3.2.3, 3.2.4 and 3.3).</p> <p><b>Discussions with QSC</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring and accountability – Compliance and checklists</li> <li>• Memoranda of Understanding with AMs</li> <li>• Transparency and openness</li> </ul> <p><b>Governance</b>            Support to unregistered area meetings in England and Wales with Charity Committee registration (see 3.1.1).</p>	<p>October 2020 to Yearly Meeting 2022</p> <p>October 2020 – Yearly Meeting 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From Yearly Meeting 2021</li> <li>• From 2021</li> </ul> <p>During 2021 to be completed by Yearly Meeting 2022</p> <p>Charity Commission scheduled this to take place in 2021, but it may now be delayed</p>
<p><b>MfS through Church Government Advisory Group</b></p> <p>Temporary changes to <i>Quaker faith &amp; practice</i>. See 3.3.7</p>	<p>Post Yearly Meeting 2021</p>

18. See *Quaker faith & practice* 5.03.

19. See <https://tinyurl.com/ybnxyrw2>.

Area of work and broad steps for implementation, continued		Timing
<i>Church Government advice in the future</i>	Send report to Book of Discipline Revision Committee regarding sections about use of Quaker business methods in smaller groups. See 2.8	From MfS in October 2020
<i>Coordinated by BYMT, and GMS</i>	Liaison with the Charity Commission and OSCR. See 3.3.6	January 2022
<i>Central Nominations Committee</i>	No new appointments made to QSC at Yearly Meeting 2021. CNC formally extend all appointments to QSC, due to end in 2021, until Yearly Meeting 2022.	YM 2021

## Part four: Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees - Review of Terms of Reference

### 4.1 The overwhelming view is that BYM Trustees works successfully according to its current terms of reference:

- Those serving understand their role, and enjoy serving.
- There was particular praise for the slimmed down trustee subgroups, and appropriate involvement of all members of Management Meeting in meetings of trustees.
- The Terms of Reference (ToRs) need to be adjusted in the light of the delegated authority to subgroups and the wider involvement of Management Meeting.

### 4.2 Recommendations:

**4.2.1** To avoid confusion between the church/charity duality or interrelationship, there is the need to spell out clearly the roles of MfS and BYM Trustees in developing a vision and strategic direction for implementing BYM work. We have sought to do this in point 3.1 of the proposed ToR which follow in section 4.3 of this report. (We have also addressed this matter in section 2.6 of this report above.)

**4.2.2** BYM Trustees should be encouraged to make greater use of technology, such as video conferencing, both for accountability and for meetings. They have been doing this successfully during the coronavirus pandemic. The revised ToRs should give specific authority to make decisions by video link (with appropriate safeguards).

**4.2.3** In 3.3.6 above we recommend that if QSC is laid down, responsibility for liaison over matters of general or collective concern with the Charity Commission and OSCR should pass to BYM Trustees in conjunction with GMS.

**4.2.4 How many trustees?** We received several suggestions that the number of BYM Trustees might be reduced. Assuming Yearly Meeting is held in some

form in 2020, it will consider a recommendation that BYM Trustees should take responsibility for nominating their own clerk and the Yearly Meeting Treasurer, who would be appointed, as at present by Yearly Meeting. BYM Trustees would be free to appoint an assistant, if they wish, from amongst the trustee body. This will replace the nomination process via the Committee on Clerks. Trustees' current workload is significant. This includes putting in place the new Meeting-centred support and a series of reviews of standing committees. Trustees are keen to continue including amongst their number Friends of working age – who may have less time to spare – alongside those who are retired. The change in arrangements for appointment of clerks would reduce the number of serving trustees by one, to 14, as follows:

- four trustees nominated by Central Nominations Committee each year for a Triennium; and
- the clerk and treasurer nominated by BYM Trustees, for a Triennium.

Reducing this number by a further three Friends might not be wise at present, but this option should be considered next time BYM Trustees are reviewed. If numbers fall below 15, a change to the governing document is required. This change should reflect the possibility of a further decrease in numbers.

### 4.3 Proposed Revised Terms of Reference for Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

*NB These have been drafted on the basis that –*

- a) the Group's recommendations (in 3.3 above) in respect of QSC are accepted and*
- b) the recommendations of the review of Central Nominations Committee about nomination arrangements for clerks of BYM Trustees and Yearly Meeting Treasurer, recorded in MfS 19/12/15, are accepted by Yearly Meeting<sup>20</sup>.*

## 1. SUMMARY OF PURPOSE

1.1 Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees are accountable to the Yearly Meeting for the right stewardship of its centrally managed work, assets and property and legally responsible for the broad direction, general control and management of the administration of the affairs of the charity, Britain Yearly Meeting, with the objective of enabling the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain to be sustained, witness, flourish and grow .

1.2 In these terms of reference: 'Quakers in Britain' is used to refer to the church; 'Britain Yearly Meeting' (or BYM) is used to refer to the charity; and, 'Yearly Meeting' is used to describe the annual event, and the body of Quakers in attendance.

## 2. AUTHORITY, RELATIONSHIPS AND DELEGATION

2.1 Trustees are responsible for the implementation of the long-term vision articulated by Meeting for Sufferings, consulting that body when work which might impact that vision is being proposed.

2.2 Trustees may establish committees, including standing committees, or trading companies, and delegate to them those aspects of the work of trustees as can be more effectively carried out by such arrangements. All such appointments and delegation shall be in accordance with the provisions set out in the Britain Yearly Meeting governing document<sup>22</sup>.

2.3 Trustees oversee the work of Management Meeting and are the employers of Britain Yearly Meeting staff. They may delegate tasks to staff, whilst holding overall accountability.

2.4 Trustees undertake legal compliance, monitoring and scrutiny functions on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting. They ensure that the centrally managed work is being properly governed and managed consistent with the religious and charitable object of Britain Yearly Meeting.<sup>23</sup>

## 3. DUTIES

### 3.1 *Strategic direction*<sup>24</sup>

Meeting for Sufferings decides on the vision for Quakers in Britain<sup>25</sup>. Trustees should ensure that:

- a. the vision discerned by Meeting for Sufferings, and concerns articulated by Yearly Meeting, are pursued responsibly and within the available resources. Trustees provide strategic direction by establishing priorities and criteria for the development of the centrally managed work programmes, consulting with Meeting for Sufferings for this purpose;
- b. there is multi-year planning, to include an operational plan and budget for the centrally managed work and a process for measuring progress;
- c. they provide regular progress reports on how the centrally managed work is meeting the concerns of Meeting for Sufferings and Yearly Meeting. They should consult and seek guidance from Meeting for Sufferings on changes to the planned work which might impact the agreed vision<sup>26</sup>;
- d. they keep under review the work of the committees reporting to them, monitor their terms of reference and if necessary amend them. Where required, they should bring suggested changes to Meeting for Sufferings, or to Yearly Meeting, for consideration and approval<sup>27</sup>.

20. See <https://tinyurl.com/y9occ6yx>.

21. See *Quaker faith & practice*, 8.17.

22. Constitution adopted 29/05/2006, as amended in 2006, 2008, and 2014 <https://tinyurl.com/y7oaqy2q>.

23. *Quaker faith & practice*, 8.03

24. That is, BYM's 'direction of travel' Ibid 8.17.

25. Ibid 7.02.

26. Ibid 7.03.

27. Ibid 8.18.

**3.2 Stewardship of resources**

Trustees are responsible for:

- a. raising funds for the centrally managed work of Britain Yearly Meeting;
- b. monitoring financial and operational performance against the operational plan;
- c. determining, and ensuring the application of, appropriate policies for accounting and investment;
- d. ensuring that systems are in place to maintain -
  - the sustainable stewardship of assets;
  - the financial probity and solvency of the operations of the centrally managed work;
  - the discharge of the appropriate legal and regulatory obligations;
- e. ensuring the sound management and usage of all assets, property, and systems (e.g. IT) in the ownership of Britain Yearly Meeting.

**3.3 Employment**

Trustees act on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting as the employer of all the staff engaged on the centrally managed work. The Trustees are responsible for:

- a. the recruitment and appointment of senior staff at Management Meeting level, including the Recording Clerk;
- b. the work of the Recording Clerk, through their clerk;
- c. the constitution and oversight of Management Meeting.

**3.4 Governance**

Trustees are responsible for ensuring the good governance and legal compliance of the centrally managed work. They have the duty to:

- a. appoint the external auditors; to consider and approve the *Annual report and accounts* and to present this for information to Meeting for Sufferings and submission to Yearly Meeting. Trustees are responsible for filing the annual report and accounts with the Charity Commission;
- b. ensure that an appropriate process is in place to assess and manage the risks faced by the centrally managed work, and to keep under review systems of governance and internal audit to ensure that necessary standards are maintained, through the adoption and implementation of suitable policies, and in other ways;
- c. liaise with the Charity Commission, the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (through General Meeting for Scotland, working with its constituent area meetings), and other statutory bodies on behalf of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain;
- d. agree Memoranda of Understanding as required for work with other bodies;
- e. undertake any task laid upon them by Yearly Meeting or to report their reasons for failing to do so.

**4. MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE**

- 4.1 Twelve trustees are appointed by Yearly Meeting on the nomination of the Central Nominations Committee, to serve for a three-year period. The period of service will normally begin on 1 January of the year following appointment at Yearly Meeting and end on 31 December of the relevant year. Reappointment is possible for a second term and exceptionally for a third. Trustees may appoint an assistant clerk from within their number if they wish.
- 4.2 In addition to the trustees in 4.1, a clerk is appointed by Yearly Meeting on the nomination of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees. The period of service is normally for a three-year period beginning on 1 January of the year following appointment at Yearly Meeting.

- 4.3 The Yearly Meeting Treasurer will serve *ex-officio* as a trustee, and is appointed by Yearly Meeting on the nomination of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees, normally for a three-year period beginning on 1 January of the year following appointment at Yearly Meeting.
- 4.4 On a vacancy arising by death or request for release, interim appointments may be made by Meeting for Sufferings, on the nomination of Central Nominations Committee, or in the case of the clerk, or Yearly Meeting Treasurer on the nomination of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees, and recorded at the following Yearly Meeting.
- 4.5 Every trustee must comply with the legal requirements for eligibility as a trustee and accept responsibility as a trustee for the centrally managed work of Britain Yearly Meeting.
- 4.6 There will be no remuneration for service as a trustee.
- 4.7 The Recording Clerk, as secretary to the trustees; the Deputy Recording Clerk; and other members of Management Meeting will normally attend meetings of the trustees. Other members of staff may be asked to attend by invitation of the clerk. No member of staff will be designated as carrying trustee responsibility.
- 4.8 All trustees serve *ex officio* on Meeting for Sufferings.

## 5. CONDUCT AND FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

- 5.1 Meetings of Trustees are meetings for worship for business, held in faithful waiting on the Spirit, with the expectation of being guided to uphold the religious imperatives and values of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain.
- 5.2 Trustees shall meet at least twice each year and additionally as required. They may agree to hold some of these meetings by video conference.
- 5.3 Trustees should agree a procedure for making decisions between meetings when necessary.

## 6. AGREEMENT/REVIEW OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 6.1 The terms of reference shall be reviewed in 2026.
- 6.2 Approved by minute [number] of Britain Yearly Meeting held on [date] 2021.

The Group to Review Quaker Stewardship Committee; and the Terms of Reference for Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees:

*Steven Burkeman*

*David M. Robson*

*Deborah Rowlands (Convenor)*

*September 2020*

### **Review group minute 15 July 2020**

When the review group met in July, it reflected on its experience and agreed the following brief minute:

We, as the review group have enjoyed working together on this time-limited task, bringing together our skills and experience from other settings, and

well-supported by staff. By reaching out to a wide variety of Friends, as well as speaking with those most directly involved, it was a genuine process of listening, and hearing what Friends had to say, both in written questionnaires and in conversation. We tested our conclusions also so that there were no shocks and surprises in the final report. We are pleased that those we have reported to so far have sensed that the process has felt Spirit-led. In an email early on in the process, one of our respondents sent us the following, which feels particularly apt:

***We need to guard against under-valuing the material expressions of spiritual things.***

*Quaker faith & practice 27.43*

## Annex: Minutes

### At a meeting of BYM Trustees, 12-14 June 2020

#### BYMT-2020-06-06 Reviews of Quaker Stewardship Committee and the terms of reference for BYM Trustees

Yearly Meeting in 2018 initiated a review of Quaker Stewardship Committee (QSC), reporting to Meeting for Sufferings, and a review of BYM Trustees' terms of reference reporting to QSC. We are joined by Deborah Rowlands and Steven Burkeman – two of the three Friends appointed to complete these reviews. Emma Roberts, Clerk, QLCC, also joins us for this item.

We have received a draft final report (BYMT-2020-06-08) inviting our feedback on its recommendations. We do agree with them and are grateful that they are so clear and well written.

We are pleased to hear from Emma Roberts that QLCC can naturally take over many of QSC's responsibilities as outlined in the report. We note, however, that we need to keep under review the totality of the responsibilities that lie with QLCC.

We are grateful that the report discusses where the main responsibility for strategic planning lies and that it has sought to clarify in our proposed terms of reference that "the task of agreeing the vision for Quakers in Britain – the church – rests with MfS; whereas to achieve this vision by setting the direction and consequent planning for the charity rests with BYM Trustees ... using the duality between church and charity to show how the different parts of our governance complement one another, recognising that the two parts, although in some respects distinct, are also inextricably intertwined". We concur with the hope of the review group that this can be explained clearly in the revised book of discipline.

Caroline Nursey  
Clerk, BYM Trustees

### At a meeting of Quaker Stewardship Committee, 4 July 2020

#### QSC-2020-07-04 Review of Quaker Stewardship Committee and BYMT terms of reference

We have received the review group's draft final report (QSC-2020-07-04(i)) and separated minute BYMT-2020-06-06 Reviews of Quaker Stewardship Committee and terms of reference for BYM Trustees (QSC-2020-07-04(ii)).

Deborah Rowlands introduced the report to us. She

described how the pace of change to a meeting-centred approach for local support has escalated since we considered the review group's interim report. The precise form that the integrated strategy will take is still evolving and she suggested that QSC members could be involved in taking this forward.

Members of the committee raised the continuing need to set risk appetite around compliance, and that area meetings in Scotland currently liaise directly with OSCAR rather than via General Meeting for Scotland. We also noted that each area meeting is related to its local meetings in a single charity, whereas area meetings are part of the church with Meeting for Sufferings as the glue binding it together.

We support the recommendations of the group, in particular that QSC in its current form should be laid down with effect from Yearly Meeting 2022, with its functions being continued under the authority of Quaker Life Central Committee. We anticipate that QSC and QLCC will start the transition process immediately after the review group's report has been approved by Meeting for Sufferings.

Deborah and David Robson introduced the revisions to the terms of reference of BYMT. These seek to more clearly define the relationship with Meeting for Sufferings over strategic direction, to permit decision making by remote methods of meeting, and to reallocate the QSC liaison role with the Charity Commission and OSCAR. No change to the composition of the trustee body other than that expected to be agreed by Yearly Meeting 2020 is proposed. The list of duties has been reorganised into groups corresponding to BYMT's subcommittees.

We have considered at length the description of the role of trustees in setting strategic direction in 3.1a of the terms of reference. We ask the review group to strengthen the wording of this subsection to reflect how BYMT and Meeting for Sufferings work together on strategic planning.

It is essential that the primacy of the authority of the church is evident in the terms of reference.

We ask the group to bring a revised version of the terms of reference to our September meeting.

We are very grateful to the review group for their thorough, supportive and spirit-led work and the clarity of their report.

We agree to forward this minute to Meeting for Sufferings.

Ursula Fuller  
Clerk, Quaker Stewardship Committee



## At a meeting of Quaker Stewardship Committee, 19 September 2020

### QSC-2020-09-04 Review of Quaker Stewardship Committee and BYM Terms of Reference

We have received the review group's final report (QSC-2020-09-04) on the review of BYMT terms of reference. We are happy that this incorporate the revisions suggested when we considered the report at our last meeting on the relationship between BYMT and Meeting for Sufferings. We note that there is guidance on this in *Quaker faith & practice* 7.03.

We agree to accept the BYMT terms of reference and to forward them to Yearly Meeting in accordance with minute 35 of Yearly Meeting 2018.

We agree to forward this minute to Meeting for Sufferings.

Ursula Fuller  
Clerk, Quaker Stewardship Committee

## At a meeting of Meeting for Sufferings, 3 October 2020

### MfS-20-10-12 Review of Quaker Stewardship Committee

In response to minute 14 of Yearly Meeting 2018 (minutes MfS/18/07/15, MfS/19/02/11 and MfS/19/04/10), Meeting for Sufferings appointed a group to review Quaker Stewardship Committee (QSC). We received a report from the group (paper MfS 2020 10 10) and Deborah Rowlands, the group's convenor, introduced it to us.

Friends welcomed the report and accepted its recommendation that QSC should be laid down. Points were raised about the ways in which this change will work in practice and we recognise that MfS may need to give more time to considering the new responsibilities that are being given to it in section 3 between now and Yearly Meeting 2022.

We also ask QSC and Quaker Life Central Committee to begin the preparatory ground work necessary for the smooth transition of responsibilities set out in the report if Yearly Meeting accepts the group's conclusions in 2021.

We forward this minute to Yearly Meeting.

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

## 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).

QSC is responsible for the provision of advice on property matters and for the provision of conferences for treasurers and for trustees. The committee has met four times during the year; once at Friends House and three times 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.

## 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, 9 were charitable incorporated organisations (CIOs), 39 were registered charities and 19 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. This status was due to end in March 2021 and QSC was preparing to support excepted area meetings to register by the deadline. However, because of the coronavirus pandemic, it was recommended that the deadline for registering excepted charities was extended by 10 years, giving QSC the opportunity to proactively

support unregistered area meetings to become CIOs or merge with other area meetings for their governance.

## Provide property advice and guidance

QSC's guidance paper on the ownership of property by CIOs described the options for holding legal title to land and advised that there are significant advantages to Friends Trusts Ltd continuing to hold title and for title documents to be stored in BYM archives.

Property guidance sheets were updated in 2019; the substantive work now for area meetings is to consider their future strategy for buildings management and maintenance resulting from the pandemic and from demographic changes.

## 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 and property registers, QSC has continued to review the reports and accounts of area meetings and has offered guidance and support to meetings in their production.

An analysis of the reserves position of registered area meetings estimated that 10 area meetings have lower reserves and 31 have higher reserves than might be recommended; 10 of these have more than 300% of this level.

The committee is working with BYM staff to develop a way for trustees to assess their level of reserves.

## Ensure education and training are available

QSC continues to work with Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre to provide training on trusteeship, treasurership, writing trustees annual reports and property. During 2020, all training was moved online for the duration of the pandemic.

The 2020 trustees conference and Yearly Meeting session for treasurers could not be held because of the pandemic. An online event for area meeting

trustees and treasurers to discuss current issues and concerns was held in December. More online meetings in smaller groups are planned for 2021.

### **Enable meetings to act within the law**

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

QSC considered a paper on changes to the Charity Commission's guidance on reporting serious incidents, issued in December 2019: this requires a charity to make a serious incident report when an incident has occurred in one of the charity's partners.

### **Disseminate good practice**

Trustees & Treasurers News, which shares good practice and provides news of changes in the regulatory framework, was put on hold for many months until publication could be resumed.

QSC have responded to queries from meetings on a variety of topics, including advising meetings in the London area, and meetings in Wales and the Marches, on ways of working towards a single charity with a single governing document.

### **Future work**

Over the coming year the committee will continue its ongoing work of providing support for trustees

and treasurers and monitoring compliance. Revision of the trustees' handbook, which was delayed by the pandemic, is now planned for 2021.

QSC supports the recommendations of the QSC Review Group, in particular that QSC in its current form should be laid down with effect from Yearly Meeting 2022, with its functions continued under the authority of Quaker Life Central Committee and BYM trustees; the handover of functions will be worked out in 2021.

### **Compliance report**

As a standing committee of Britain Yearly Meeting, QSC reports to Yearly Meeting in session (*Quaker faith & practice* 14.37). QSC is 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 2019 reports mainly met the basic requirements of the checklist, but the quality was variable.

All but 2 of the registered area meeting charities have correctly submitted their accounts to the Charity Commission or Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

# E: Central Nominations Committee annual report

## What does Central Nominations Committee do?

Central Nominations Committee (CNC) finds Friends to serve on the committees of Britain Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings. We nominate 100+ Friends every year for 30+ committees and roles. Finding the right Friends is challenging but really rewarding.

In 2021, we're going to be advertising more vacancies, but it would really help us if you could let us know that you might consider service of some kind by filling in the form here: [www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/giving/quaker-service](http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/giving/quaker-service)

## Introduction

Like everyone else we started 2020 with no idea what was coming, but we've continued our work seeking and discerning Friends to nominate. This is thanks to the dedication, flexibility and hard work of the committee and our wonderful support staff.

Despite the past year's challenges, we've had a fruitful time and made some positive and exciting changes, which we hope you'll get a sense of from this report.

## Starting out...

We held a residential meeting at High Leigh, Hertfordshire in January 2020. The other users of the conference centre that weekend were a Black-led evangelical church, and we had the chance to meet many of their members: it was good to get out of our Quaker bubble.

At High Leigh we began to look in more depth at issues of power, privilege and inclusion – themes we have returned to. This included examining our own unconscious biases, an important topic for a nominating group. We used Quaker and non-Quaker sources including videos, interviews and articles, and heard powerful contributions from CNC members on code switching – modifying e.g. your speech to fit in with a dominant group – and exclusion.

A session considering sustainability led to the foundation of a subgroup to ensure sustainability is embedded in our ways of working. The group has made an impressive start, addressing the more obvious ways to make ourselves and the committee work more sustainably (meetings, travel, food, resources, etc.), but also drawing attention to how careful we need to be to ensure that our solutions do not further exclude disadvantaged Friends.

## Restructuring

We were pleased and grateful that Lucy Parker from Committee on Clerks (ConC) joined us at High Leigh to talk about ConC's work; as Yearly Meeting 2020 agreed to the merger of ConC and CNC, this proved an invaluable insight, and it is a great blessing that Lucy has been appointed as one of our co-clerks to make sure ConC's experience is not lost.

## Introducing Standing Search Groups

Last year's report noted that we were moving to a new way of working, using Standing Search Groups (SSGs) – rather than setting up a search group for each new vacancy. SSGs have worked well, enabling relationships to build up with the target committee, and allowing us to better understand the workings of the committees over time, and their changing needs. Some SSGs have co-opted Friends from outside CNC to help with a search, including recently retired members of the target committee, or Friends with knowledge of communities of Friends currently under-represented on the target committee.

A major strength of this system is that SSGs will have a strong collective memory: in addition to searching for Friends to fill immediate vacancies, SSGs are also building up a pool of possible nominees – Friends who are, in principle, willing to serve on a particular committee at some point. Committee on Clerks has worked with this system for some time, which has been a great encouragement as we implement this change.

## Moving online

In March, we held our last in-person meeting of the year. This meeting was 'blended', with one Friend joining remotely. In a move that now looks prescient, we agreed to try holding a full meeting of the committee online in April as a trial run.

The staff had introduced us to Zoom six months earlier and search groups and CNC clerks had become familiar with using it to meet. This made it much easier for us to move to full online working when it was forced upon us by the pandemic.

We have now settled into a pattern of more frequent but shorter meetings, with the advantage of being less tired for the items coming later in the agenda. In practice, 'full' committee meetings are dedicated to discerning nominees. Other informal meetings are concerned with reflecting upon our practice and considering issues like diversity and inclusion, sustainability and simplification. Our meetings

are also now scheduled according to our availability, rather than purely to fit in with Meeting for Sufferings.

Online meetings work well (though adding to the time commitment of an already heavy workload). Whilst some staff were furloughed and others trying to cover so much more than their normal remits, we could hold informal meetings of the committee without a staff secretary.

The obvious benefit to working online is the dramatically reduced costs and carbon footprint, as well as making committee work more accessible for some.

However, we know that it may exclude others: not everyone has the hardware to work always online; not everyone has private space in which to work; it may impact adversely on those they live with if arrangements need to be made to give the required quiet and privacy; exclusively meeting online also dramatically restricts social contact within the committee.

These social exchanges are more than a pleasant spin-off. We work better and more fluently with people we know, and face-to-face contact helps new members feel engaged. Discussing difficulties with other committee members can be a supportive experience and a chance for the longer serving members to pass on their experience. Chance conversations in the coffee queue sometimes result in small or big changes to the way we work. These drawbacks need creative solutions if the benefits of meeting online are to be retained.

## Looking to the future

Following the merger of CNC and ConC, our committee has increased in size, and set up extra search groups for Meeting for Sufferings clerks and Yearly Meeting clerks, so 2021 will include us learning how to do this work. Since ConC has been laid down, Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees (BYMT) are also now nominating their own clerks and treasurer. This has an impact on us, and will mean CNC work more closely with BYMT nominating group to ensure they have the right committee members to be able to nominate their own clerks.

We have expanded the clerking team (from two co-clerks to two co-clerks and an assistant clerk), to share this increased work.

An important piece of work – how to remove barriers to service for all Friends – will be central to our consideration in the future. For this, we hope that our closer relationship with committee clerks and secretaries (through standing search groups) will be helpful. Part of removing barriers is our responsibility and some of it is for the various committees to look at: what flexibility can be offered to potential appointees

to allow them to serve, and to ensure our discernment is not skewed by emerging from a monoculture.

As part of this, we have considered the issue of nominating attenders for central service and have sent a minute to Meeting for Sufferings asking for them to consider their advice to us. We look forward to seeing the results of the review they will set up.

One issue we have in considering barriers to service, and indeed who is already serving the Society, is data. For example, our Quaker Service Information Forms do not ask Friends about lots of personal characteristics and experiences, and other questions are (understandably) optional, but this can leave us unsure about Friends we're nominating and what perspectives they bring. This question of information about Friends is one we will need to look at in the near future if we are aiming to make sure our central committees are more diverse.

## Conclusion

As a committee we enjoy our rewarding work. However, there is usually a great deal of it, many processes to get to grips with, and virtual ways of working to master. In retrospect our 2020 residential meeting now seems quite seminal. It was an opportunity for us to get to know each other, but also a time when we were able to take a more reflective approach. As well as continuing our work nominating Friends for various roles, we set in motion a lot of new work that has continued through the year.

We look forward to further residential meetings when we can all meet face-to-face, even if much of our work continues to be done online. We have one in-person meeting allotted to us for 2021, and we are looking forward to meeting when it is safe to do so.

Committees work best when they are cohesive worshipping communities who enjoy their work and their meetings. We are grateful for each other, and hugely grateful to our support staff, who help us in doing this. We also would like to particularly thank our former co-clerk, David Beale, who in his service to the committee (up until Yearly Meeting 2020) held and guided our community through enormous changes, including the change to online working with the Covid pandemic, and changes to the clerking team, with love, grace and humour.

We are also always grateful to all Friends who tell us they might be interested in some kind of service. Please consider doing this here: [www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/giving/quaker-service](http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/giving/quaker-service).

Hannah Brock Womack and Lucy Parker (Co-Clerks), and Sandra Horsfall (Assistant Clerk)

# F: Quaker Housing Trust annual report 2020

Over the past year many of us have come to realise the importance of our homes. More than ever, having a decent and safe home has been fundamental for our health and wellbeing.

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.

2020 was a positive year in grant making for the trust. Part of the ethos of Quaker Housing Trust is that we disburse whatever funds are currently available to us at our application meetings. The year marks only the second time in our history that we have disbursed all these funds offering £264,200 to eleven charities to help with buying, renovating and improving properties.

However, the year was not so successful in bringing new funds to the Trust. We have started to address the issue. From 2020 September, one of our trustees, Oli Griffiths, has taken on the role of media consultant on a voluntary basis. We have redesigned our website and put in place a communications strategy and plan. It is hoped these changes will better publicise the good work we put our funds to and bring in new income from Friends.

Furthermore, we took the decision not to invite or accept any further applications until our meeting in September 2021. This will allow for an accrual of the expected loan repayments from projects.

Housing does not exist in a vacuum: stable accommodation provides opportunity for individuals and benefits to the local community. This is best illustrated in one project based in the north east that we have supported over the past few years. Handcrafted Project works with people who because of the complex nature of the issues they face often struggle to engage with conventional avenues of support; They may have suffered homelessness, addiction, or mental health issues, unemployment and have a history of offending, but they genuinely want to turn their lives around and be active, contributing members of the community.

Through purchasing run-down properties ideal for renovation, Handcrafted provide their clients with the opportunity to learn practical construction skills as well as create homes. Furthermore, in bringing old properties up to modern standards they also help

support regeneration of towns that have suffered economically over the past decades.

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.

A full list of the projects we have supported in 2020 is below.

## **South Ayrshire Women's Aid**

Grant of £50,000 towards the costs of converting a property from a shared space into self-contained flats for survivors of domestic abuse.

## **SAHWR, Hertfordshire**

Grant of £10,000 and interest-free loan of £10,000 to help SAHWR buy and refurbish a flat as move-on accommodation for clients leaving its domestic abuse refuge.

## **Street Connect, Glasgow**

Grant of £15,000 and an interest-free loan of £15,000 to help with the costs of purchasing a one-bedroom flat for individuals affected by drug and alcohol addictions who are moving to independent living.

## **Handcrafted Projects**

Grant of £5,000 and an interest-free loan of £30,000 offered to buy and renovate a property for supported accommodation for people with multiple and complex needs.

## **Arisaig Community Trust**

Grant of £20,000 offered to contribute to infrastructure and construction costs of six new houses for affordable rent to local families and individuals in need.

## **Swarthmoor Area Quaker Meeting**

Grant of £9,200 to cover the costs of meeting work required following recommendations from a fire report on accommodation for adults with learning difficulties.

## **Strathglass and Affric Community Company**

Grant of £10,000 and an interest-free loan of up to £20,000 offered to help with the construction costs of two new affordable secure rent homes for local families.

### **Staffin Community Trust**

Grant of £20,000 and an interest-free loan of up to £25,000 offered to help pay for the cost of the timber frames, roofs and windows of two properties, which will provide affordable accommodation to families.

### **StopGap Supported Housing**

Interest-free loan of £21,000 offered to help with the cost of furnishing and equipping accommodation for single homeless adults.

### **Assist Sheffield**

Environmental Assessment grant of up to £6,000 offered to carry out a detailed environmental impact audit of nine properties that will provide accommodation for asylum seekers.

### **Ella's Home**

Grant of up to £8,000 to fund fire safety improvements to two safe homes and to expand accommodation capacity for women exiting trafficking and exploitation

# G: Quaker Acronyms you might come across

**This list is not exclusive, but we hope it helps**

<b>BYM</b>	Britain Yearly Meeting
<b>AM</b>	Area Meeting
<b>BYMT</b>	Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees
<b>CNC</b>	Central Nominations Committee
<b>FWCC</b>	Friends World Committee for Consultation
<b>MfS</b>	Meeting for Sufferings
<b>QARN</b>	Quaker Action on Refugees Network
<b>QCCIR</b>	Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations
<b>QCEA</b>	Quaker Council for European Affairs
<b>QF&amp;P</b>	Quaker Faith & Practice
<b>QGSDC</b>	Quaker Gender & Sexual Diversity Community
<b>QHT</b>	Quaker Housing Trust
<b>QL</b>	Quaker Life
<b>QLCC</b>	Quaker Life Central Committee
<b>QLRC</b>	Quaker Life Representative Council
<b>QPSW</b>	Quaker Peace & Social Witness
<b>QPSWCC</b>	Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee
<b>QSA</b>	Quaker Social Action
<b>QSC</b>	Quaker Stewardship Committee
<b>QUNO</b>	Quaker United Nations Office
<b>QWRC</b>	Quaker World Relations Committee
<b>YMAC</b>	Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee
<b>YMG</b>	Yearly Meeting Gathering





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.

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