



# Britain Yearly Meeting's structure

This is a transcript of the video [Britain Yearly Meeting Structure](#).

## Transcript

So you're interested in Quakerism and want to understand more about how we work? Let us take you on a journey through Britain Yearly Meeting to show how one Friend— that's what Quakers call each other— fits into the wider Quaker community.

### Local meeting

Your local meeting is usually your starting point. This is where most Quakers engage with Quakerism. It's where you would go for regular worship as a community. You might also attend a meeting for worship for business, where concerns that affect the local meeting are raised. Anyone is welcome to be part of a local meeting as an attender. You can then go on to become a member so you can take on roles, join committees, and be more involved in supporting your community. Local meetings are joined to other nearby Quaker meetings as part of a larger area meeting.

### Area meeting

Area meetings are a group of local meetings responsible for the good stewardship of local and area resources, including spiritual and pastoral care and finances. They join together regularly, anywhere between monthly and quarterly, to test concerns from local meetings more widely. Each area meeting is its own charity. If you live in Scotland or Wales, your area meeting will also be part of a general meeting. General Meeting for Scotland and Cynwyr Cymru / Quakers in Wales address concerns that are specific to members in each nation. If you are between the ages of 18 and 30, you can attend Young Friends General Meeting, even if you are not yet a member.

### Yearly meeting

As a member of your area meeting, you will be invited to attend Yearly Meeting. Attenders are welcome by permission, as are other Quakers from around the world. Yearly Meeting is the place where important questions for Quakers in Britain are considered through spirit-led discernment and decision-making as a whole community. It holds the responsibility for considering major changes to our structures and practices, such as the changes to allow same-sex marriage in 2009.

Attending Yearly Meeting provides you and other Quakers from across the country a space to learn and develop a greater understanding of issues in the world. It plays a key role in reinforcing a sense of community for Quakers in Britain. Yearly Meeting is planned by the Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee, who hold responsibility for proposing the agenda and the use of resources during the meeting. Central Nominations Committee works to find names for appointments as requested by Yearly Meeting and other central bodies.

### Other groups

Yearly Meeting also receives reports from meetings and committees that work on its behalf throughout the year, including Meeting for Sufferings and Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees. You can get involved in any central committee by filling in a Quaker Service Information Form. Simply enter what your interests are, and then Nominations Committee can nominate you to a relevant position if they discern your gifts are a good match.

### Meeting for Sufferings

Meeting for Sufferings is a body made up of representatives from area meetings, central and standing committees, Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees, Young Friends General Meeting, General

Meeting for Scotland, and Crynwyr Cymru / Quakers in Wales. Meeting for Sufferings plays an important role in developing the vision of the Yearly Meeting. It also provides space for discernment and oversight of the Yearly Meeting's religious life between the annual meetings. This includes making decisions and issuing statements in the name of Britain Yearly Meeting.

Often, area meetings will send a minute of their concern to Meeting for Sufferings to review and, where appropriate, test them through spirit-led discernment at their meeting. Trustees are asked by Yearly Meeting to take on the role of stewards, ensuring that we use our resources conscientiously. They are also legally defined as responsible for the general control and management of the administration of the affairs of the national charity that works on behalf of Quakers in Britain. This body sits and works alongside Meeting for Sufferings. This means that they update Meeting for Sufferings regularly and ensure they consult them on any work that might need it.

### **BYM Trustees, Management Meeting and staff**

Trustees are responsible for employing our staff. Management Meeting is made up of the senior managers and led by the Recording Clerk. They're accountable to the trustees and give advice to the trustees about any technical or practical aspects of the work that they're doing. The managers in this meeting are responsible for upholding the vision, policies, and the operational plan of the national charity. The charity employs staff to provide resources and expertise to deliver our centrally-managed work.

### **Get involved!**

If you want to bring your expertise to Quakers in Britain, we advertise available roles on our website at [www.quaker.org.uk/jobs](http://www.quaker.org.uk/jobs). There are also other committees you can join. Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations is our connection to other churches and faiths. They maintain bridges between Quakerism and other faith communities and manage our relationship with other ecumenical and interfaith bodies in England, Wales, and Scotland. Quaker World Relations Committee promotes understanding of the different forms of Quakerism around the world. They support the Yearly Meeting in building relationships with other yearly meetings and Quaker organizations internationally. These committees are appointed by and report to Meeting for Sufferings annually on their work.

### **Quaker Life**

Quaker Life is the staff team responsible for supporting Quaker communities in all their activities. Quaker Life Central Committee is the body that guides this work through spirit-led discernment. This work includes supporting role holders such as elders, supporting meetings in their witness activities, for example, opening their meeting house as a warm bank, and working with youth, children, and families. The Quaker Life Representative Council exists to strengthen connections between area meetings and between Quaker Life and the area meetings. They aim to share spiritual and practical experience of living Quaker lives.

### **Quaker Peace & Social Witness**

Quaker Peace & Social Witness is the staff team responsible for doing work on peace, social, and climate justice. As with Quaker Life, QPSW Central Committee guides this work through spirit-led discernment. This includes peace-building projects, campaigns, and political advocacy with and on behalf of Quakers living in Britain.

So now you've seen how the structures work and how you can get involved. You can find out more at [www.quaker.org.uk/our-structures](http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-structures).

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