

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Friday 6 September to Saturday 7 September, by video conference

Minutes

Present: Georgina Bailey, Catherine Brown, Kit Fotheringham, Ursula Fuller, Ellie Harding (minutes BYMT/24/09/08 to 15), Carolyn Hayman, Jo Hills (minutes BYMT/24/09/15 to 20), Marisa Johnson (Clerk), Kit King, Silas Price, Danielle Walker Palmour (Assistant Clerk), Liz Redfern, Paul Whitehouse (Treasurer)

In attendance: Siobhán Haire, Deputy Recording Clerk; Vipin Narang, Finance Director; Paul Parker, Recording Clerk; Oliver Robertson, Head of Witness & Worship; Lisa San Martín, CEO Quiet Company

Visitors: Margaret Bryan, Convener Group to Review Central Structures (minutes BYMT/24/09/09–10); Mandy Cooper, Chief Executive Woodbrooke (minute BYMT/24/09/14); Sarah Donaldson, Quaker Church Affairs (minutes BYMT/24/09/09–10); Ingrid Greenhow, Clerk of Trustees, Woodbrooke (minutes BYMT/24/09/14–15); Jane Harries, Co-clerk Crynwyr Cymru–Quakers in Wales (CC–QW) (minute BYMT/24/09/13); Michael Hutchinson, Clerk of General Meeting for Scotland (GMS) (minute BYMT/24/09/13); Suzy Lidbury, Head of Governance (minutes BYMT/24/09/06, 09–10); Jonathan Lingham, Clerk of QPSWCC (minutes BYMT/24/09/14–15); Susan Mitchell, Assistant Clerk of GMS (minute BYMT/24/09/13); Carina Mundle-Garratt, Co-ordinator CC–QW (minute BYMT/24/09/13); Lesley Richards (minute BYMT/24/09/13); Carolyn Sansom, Co-clerk CC–QW (minute BYMT/24/09/13); Rachel Swancott, Co-clerk of QLCC (minutes BYMT/24/09/14–15); Frances Voelcker, Assistant Clerk CC–QW (minute BYMT/24/09/13)

BYMT/24/09/01 Welcome and introductions, agenda check, conflicts of interest check

There are no unrecorded conflicts of interest.

We considered our agenda. We added a Nominations item to consider the name Clerks bring forward to serve on Nominations.

During our opening worship, we heard an extract from *Quaker Faith & Practice* 29.02: *When we look at our past, we can see the length of time needed for transformation. We are a small church with the pretensions to change the world. But first we have to let God change us – to empower us to be better Friends, and more active in our own work. We must look to ourselves, to speak of our lives and to let our lives speak. Above all we must look to the Truth. We have an Inward Teacher who teaches, guides and commands us. When we know what we have to do, how to do it will come.*

BYMT/24/09/02 Continuing business

We receive a list of continuing minutes including the extracts from the following minutes of our meeting in June:

- BYMT/24/06/10 Information Governance Report, where we asked for information internal processes for raising concerns; and, BYMT/24/06/11 Review of Central Structures, which we will return to at this meeting.

- BYMT/24/06/13 Risk Management; BYMT/24/09/14 Board Effectiveness; BYMT/24/06/15 BYMT's committee structure; and, BYMT/24/06/16 Reparations, which we will return to at a future meeting.

BYMT/24/09/03 Minutes received

We receive the following minutes:

- Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC) 24-26 May 2024. We note minute QLCC 24.34 asking us to consider the inequality of provision between LDWs across the Yearly Meeting and YDWs only where local funding is available. We will come back to this tomorrow under item 12.
- Quaker Life Central Committee 8 July 2024
- Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC) 4 June 2024
- Reparations Working Group 20 June 2024
- Reparations Working Group 18 July 2024
- Management Meeting minute MtM-2024-08a-05. At our meeting in June we received the annual Safeguarding Annual Report and heard BYM's safeguarding policy was under review (BYMT/24/06/04 Safeguarding annual report). We note this review has concluded, that Management Meeting has approved a new policy, and details of the changes have been communicated to the trustee safeguarding champion.

BYMT/24/09/04 Gold minutes

We agree to add the following minutes from our meetings September 2023 to July 2024 to our list of Gold minutes:

- BYMT/23/09/08 Appointments to QUNO Geneva
- BYMT/23/11/15 Fundraising strategy 2024–2026
- BYMT/24/02/06b Pollard & Dickson Trust
- BYMT/24/02/14 Social Media Policy
- BYMT/24/02/15 Friends House Lettings Policy
- BYMT/24/06/12 Communications strategy to 2027
- BYMT/24/06/15 BYMT's committee structure
- BYMT/24/06/18 Memorandum of understanding between constituent charities of the Religious Society of Friends
- BYMT/24/07/03 Drayton House
- BYMT/24/07/04 Lesser Slatters

BYMT/24/09/05 BYM Trustee meeting dates for 2025 and 2026

Proposed dates for our meetings are set out in paper BYMT 2024 09 03b. In particular, we give some thought to a) the timing and pattern of our meetings in relation to normal working hours and the possibility they cause barriers to service and b) the proximity of our June 2025 residential meeting in relation to Yearly Meeting the previous weekend.

We have reflected on how our pattern of meetings could create a barrier to service for some Friends. It is difficult to find a balance that will suit everyone where Friends have a variety of commitments: paid employment, voluntary work, caring responsibilities, etc. We expect to return to this at a future meeting.

In the meantime we agree:

- To experiment in 2026 with holding some meetings as a couple of evening sessions and a half day over the weekend, over a week or two.
- To change the date of our residential meeting in 2025 as the current date falls the weekend following Yearly Meeting. We favour holding a residential meeting in late June; the final date will be confirmed after this meeting.

We will revise the proposed dates for 2026 and bring them back in November, although we note the dates for September and November of that year may need to change after the dates for the continuing Yearly Meeting for 2026 have been set.

BYMT/24/09/06 Governance strategy update

We are joined by Suzy Lidbury, BYM's Head of Governance. We receive an update on the delivery of the Governance Strategy (paper BYMT 2024 09 05). We note progress against the four strands of the strategy.

We welcome the report as a useful update. We hear that the range of stakeholders to be consulted is being considered and further thoughts from trustees would be welcome.

We agree to the proposal to extend the strategy for a further year – until the end of 2025 – before it is reviewed.

BYMT/24/09/07 Recording Clerk's report

We receive a report covering June to September 2024 from the Recording Clerk and Management Meeting informing us of new and positive developments as well as areas of concern. We also receive the reporting dashboard dated August 2024 with indicators of key information on compliance, communications and organisational health. Members of Management Meeting provided us with further clarification of items covered in the report. We thank the team for this helpful overview.

BYMT/24/09/08 Finance and property report

We receive the management accounts for period 6 (June 2024). An updated paper containing some amendments and corrections will be circulated with these minutes.

Net deficit shows a variance of £650K for this period, due principally to a shortfall in income, particularly legacies, offset in part by reductions in expenditure.

The Quiet Company's contribution is 30% behind budget. There was over-ambition in the projections for this year. Legacies are unpredictable and analysis of what has been received over the last 10 years shows that £3m per year is a more accurate estimate to base budgets on.

BYMT/24/09/09 Continuing Yearly Meeting – actions given to Trustees

We welcome Margaret Bryan, Convener Group to Review Central Structures; Sarah Donaldson, Quaker Church Affairs; and Suzy Lidbury, BYM's Head of Governance.

Papers BYMT 2024 09 08a/b provide extracts of Yearly Meeting minutes and an outline of the work given by Yearly Meeting to Trustees.

We reflected on our experience and perspectives on Yearly Meeting.

To meet the tasks Yearly Meeting has asked of us by minute 37 and summarised in the circulated minute extracts, we ask staff to:

- ensure that the costs of the planning and holding of continuing yearly meeting sessions has been factored in in the budget planning process so that resources are available to hold a continuing Yearly Meeting.
- prepare proposals to review and simplify the bursary scheme for individuals to attend Yearly Meeting and bring them to FIPC and our anti-oppression champion for consideration and agreement.
- propose principles for a system to support area meetings and other bodies with the financial costs of representatives' attendance at Yearly Meeting sessions and bring them to FIPC for first consideration, expecting FIPC to bring recommendations to the full trustee board in February 2025 so that proposals can be taken to Meeting for Sufferings at its meeting in March 2025.

We reflect on possible principles relating to the funding of future engagement with a continuing Yearly Meeting including equity of access to financial support, geographical representation, the involvement of children and young people, and creative approaches such as regional hubs to build stronger worshiping communities and avoid isolation.

We note the move to a continuing Yearly Meeting also has impacts on other matters: the calendar of central committee meetings and other events; our governing document; trustee reporting to Yearly Meeting; communications among Friends; teaching and learning about how Friends conduct business.

We expect that these matters will be brought back to us as necessary over the course of the next 18 months.

BYMT/24/09/10 Review of central structures

Margaret Bryan, Convener Group to Review Central Structures; Sarah Donaldson, Quaker Church Affairs; and Suzy Lidbury, BYM's Head of Governance join us for this item.

We receive a paper (BYMT 2024 09 09) from the Group to Review Central Structures setting out recent work and its plans for next steps. We also receive minutes from their meetings held on 19 June and 15 August.

In introducing the paper, Margaret Bryan reviewed the progress since 2021 thus far, moving towards final proposals to Yearly Meeting 2025. We note the circulation of the consultation document setting out clearly and succinctly the "why", the "what" and asking for views on the "how". We hear that it is also hoped that there will be other opportunities to engage with Friends in different ways as the year progresses.

We welcome this exciting next chapter of reflecting and implementing the will expressed by Yearly Meeting.

BYMT/24/09/11 Raising concerns

At our meeting in June we asked staff to provide us with a summary of how staff can raise concerns (BYMT/24/06/10). We now receive paper BYMT 2024 09 14. Siobhán Haire provides us with clarification on the process proposed.

We reflect on the role of trustees in maintaining an overview of the governance of raising concerns, as well as the specific role of trustees in the process itself. We are conscious that some of us have specific responsibilities in relation to staff wellbeing, for instance the anti-oppression champion role. On the one hand we may not be very visible to staff or to Friends, on the other we have our own networks of Friends and can be approached by someone with a concern, and need to know how to respond appropriately.

We are content with the process that has been outlined in the paper.

We agree to share with senior managers any ideas that may occur to us to improve and strengthen routes for raising concerns.

BYMT/24/09/12 BYMT Nominations Group

Following the release by Yearly Meeting of Kate Gulliver from service as a trustee, the Clerk of BYM Trustees brings the name of Danielle Walker Palmour to serve on our Nominations Group from 7 September 2024 until 31 December 2025. We approve this nomination.

BYMT/24/09/13 Evening Session – Crynwyr Cymru–Quakers in Wales (CC–QW) and General Meeting for Scotland (GMS)

We met informally with Michael Hutchinson, Clerk of GMS; Susan Mitchell, Assistant Clerk of GMS; Jane Harries and Carolyn Sansom, Co-clerks CC–QW; Frances Voelcker, Assistant Clerk CC–QW; Carina Mundle-Garratt, Co-ordinator CC–QW; and Lesley Richards. We were grateful for the opportunity of learning a bit more about the experience of Friends in Scotland and Wales, particularly in relation to transitioning to new governance models.

BYMT/24/09/14 Woodbrooke

We are joined by Mandy Cooper, Chief Executive Woodbrooke; Ingrid Greenhow, Clerk of Trustees, Woodbrooke; Jonathan Lingham, Clerk of QPSWCC; and, Rachel Swancott, Co-clerk of QLCC.

Mandy Cooper and Ingrid Greenhow have outlined the future strategy for Woodbrooke.

Following a period of worship, Mandy Cooper expresses gratitude for the support of BYM to Woodbrooke while a new strategic way forward for the organisation is envisioned, at this time of change, following the closure of the building.

Current areas of development include creating a digital library of content and on-demand, self-guided modular resources in two areas: history, service and roles.

An online drop in “café” is being introduced, with tutors being available for information and guidance, and opportunities to meet other learners.

Courses that are being delivered live are being reviewed and there are plans to relaunch long-term study programmes such as ‘Equipping for Ministry’ and ‘Becoming Friends’. A sustainable financial model, which is realistic, and enlarges participation is being looked for. Developing partnerships will happen through the appointment of a Partnership Manager for an initial period of one year. We suggest the exploration of a possible partnership with the Quiet Company.

By the end of 2026 it is anticipated that breakeven will have been achieved, or be achievable within a short time.

We look forward to working with Woodbrooke to explore future partnerships and financial relationships as their new strategy develops.

BYMT/24/09/15 Work of Quaker Life and Quaker Peace & Social Witness central committees

For this item, we are joined by Ingrid Greenhow, Clerk of Trustees, Woodbrooke; Jonathan Lingham, Clerk of QPSWCC; and Rachel Swancott, Co-clerk of QLCC.

We note minute QLCC 24.34 raising the distribution and funding of Youth Development Workers and Local Development Workers across different parts of the country. We reminded ourselves of the different funding models for the two, LDWs being funded centrally, and covering every area of the Yearly Meeting, and YDW being funded through hypothecated funding received from the Meetings in the areas in which they work. We understand the importance the role of supporting work with children, young people and families has for outreach and express our support for the work of these roles in Quaker communities. We have witnessed the contribution they can make but must balance this against the need to find a sustainable financial model in partnership with Area Meetings. We will continue to explore this as we set future priorities.

We thank Rachael Swancott for attending our meeting and responding to our questions.

We thank Jonathan Lingham who introduced the work of QPSWCC. He drew our attention to the stronger theological expertise in the committee through new members. The current strategic plan runs to the end of 2025, but it may need to be extended as it began at the time of the pandemic. The committee provides advice, mentoring, interpretation on priorities to the operational staff in the role of “critical friend”. Whilst trustees allocate funding for the work, it is QPSWCC that does the direction and oversight.

The work that the committee oversees has peace programmes in Britain and abroad, and a focus on climate justice. There are also many opportunities for advocacy and lobbying of government through our own statements, and many others initiated by partners that we support.

We agree that clear measures of effectiveness for the work that BYM does are needed and should become included routinely in any work that we engage in.

The new structure for planning the work proposed by the Group to Review Central Structures would mitigate some of the challenges that have been identified by our visitors today, giving the opportunity to take a holistic view of all the work that we run currently at an unsustainable deficit.

BYMT/24/09/16 Operational plan 2024

We receive a report from the operational manager team updating us on the delivery of the operational plan for this year.

We welcome the clear format of the report and note the achievements so far helping us to deliver our strategic priorities. We thank staff for their efforts to keep the work of the organisation on track.

BYMT/24/09/17 Preparing for Meeting for Sufferings

We have prepared for Meeting for Sufferings on 5 October 2024.

BYMT/24/09/18 Communicating our work and reviewing the meeting

We hear that a new area is being created on the website on governance issues which may be a useful channel for including trustee blogs, brief reports on our work, thoughts and reflections. We welcome this development and suggest we may want to have photographs of the trustees alongside their names on the relevant webpage.

We have reviewed the meeting.

BYMT/24/09/19 Time with Recording Clerk

We spent time with the Recording Clerk.

BYMT/24/09/20 Time without staff

We have spent time without staff.

Marisa Johnson
Clerk