

# Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Friday 6 June to Sunday 8 June, Hinsley Hall and Quakers in Britain Yorkshire Centre, Leeds

## Minutes

**Present:** Catherine Brown, Lis Burch, Kit Fotheringham (minute BYMT/25/06/02 onwards), Ursula Fuller, Jo Hills, Chris Jardine, Marisa Johnson (Clerk), Kit King (Assistant Clerk), Liz Law, John Lewis (minute BYMT/25/06/14 onwards), Silas Price, Liz Redfern, Paul Whitehouse (Treasurer)

**Prevented:** Danielle Walker Palmour

**In attendance:** Sarah Donaldson, Senior Change Leader: Quaker Governance; Siobhán Haire, Deputy Recording Clerk; Vipin Narang, Finance Director; Paul Parker, Recording Clerk; Oliver Robertson, Head of Witness and Worship; Lisa San Martín, CEO Quiet Company (minute BYMT/25/06/09 onwards)

**Visitors:** Libby Adams, Head of Library and Archives (minutes BYMT/25/06/08 and BYMT25/06/16); Sandy Horsfall, Clerk of Property Development Steering Group, (minute BYMT/25/06/13); Mark Mitchell, BYM Safeguarding Officer (minute BYMT2025/06/07); Carol Rowntree Jones, Clerk of Directors of Quiet Company (minute BYMT/25/06/11) Jane-Eve Straughton, Governance Manager (minute BYMT25/06/12).

## BYMT/25/06/01 Welcome and introductions, agenda check, conflicts of interest check

The clerks welcomed Chris Jardine, Elizabeth Redfern, Liz Law, and Lis Burch to their first in person meeting. We heard that Danielle Walker Palmour has asked to be released from service with immediate effect for health reasons. We thank Danielle for all she has contributed to the work of trustees over five years and send her our gratitude and warmest good wishes.

John Lewis and Lisa San Martín will join us on Saturday.

There are no unrecorded conflicts of interest. Trustees have completed their annual review of their entry in the register of interests and updated it where necessary.

We considered our agenda.

During our opening worship, we heard read the following extracts from *Minute 8 – Listening* and *Minute 2 – Corporate Discernment* from Emily Provance's Swarthmore Lecture 2025 "*A Testimony of Community*":

"Listening and being present is an important contribution even when we don't speak. Listen to everyone but respect expertise. In discerning truth, explore paradoxes. Take time away from your interactions with others for quiet prayer and listening so that you may continue to be guided. Take time to reflect on your interactions with others.

*Minute 8 – Listening*

When you feel called to speak in a meeting for business, speak as led by the Holy Spirit. When you feel called to stay silent, stay silent. Committing to corporate discernment is not easy, but once we know the truth of the practice, we can't deny its spiritual necessity.

*Minute 2 – Corporate Discernment*

### **BYMT/25/06/02 Continuing business**

We receive a list of continuing minutes, including minute BYMT/25/02/13 *Supporting area meetings facing viability issues*, from our meeting in February.

### **BYMT/25/06/03 Minutes received**

We receive the following minutes:

- Reparations Working Group, 18 January and 14 March
- Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC), 30 January, 21-23 March, 22 April
- Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC), 21-23 February, 24 April, 26 April
- Employment Committee, 21 March
- Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations separated minute 25/02/13 *Statement of Commitment to Inclusion: Gender Diversity as Commissioned Work*. This minute gives us an update on their work on this, and we look forward to receiving a fuller update at a later stage.

### **BYMT/25/06/04 Data protection**

We have been reminded of our responsibilities for handling personal and sensitive information as part of our role as trustees.

### **BYMT/25/06/05 Internal Audit and Risk Committee**

We receive minutes of the last meeting of the Internal Audit and Risk Committee held on 11 March 2025 and its report of its activities in 2024 (papers BYMT 2025 06 04a and 04b).

We note the current three-year plan of work ends in 2025 and the Committee will bring a draft plan for 2026-2028 to us for our consideration later in the year.

### **BYMT/25/06/06 Financial report**

We receive management accounts for March 2025 (BYMT 2025 06 05e). Our Finance Director has presented longer-term forecasts for BYM's income and expenditure for our information ahead of this year's budget process.

This information is going to be helpful in setting the context in which we need to consider the Drayton House proposal later in this meeting.

### **BYMT/25/06/07 Safeguarding annual report**

We are joined by Mark Mitchell, BYM's Safeguarding Officer, who has introduced the annual safeguarding report (BYMT 2025 06 06).

### **BYMT/25/06/08 Information governance**

We are joined by Libby Adams, Head of Library and Archives. We receive the annual report from the Information Governance Group (BYMT 2025 06 07).

We note this staff group uses the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) Accountability Tracker as a self-assessment tool to monitor BYM's data protection practices. We endorse the Group's recommendations to improve long-term compliance as set out in the report.

This report has been received by both Management Meeting and Finance, IT and Property Committee (FIPC). We agree to FIPC's recommendation that Trustees do not need to receive the report in future years unless there are points of significant concern, and that it will be made available to Trustees on request.

### **BYMT/25/06/09 Worship**

We gathered in worship on Saturday morning and heard read the following extract:

"120. Complete knowledge is always beyond us, and a recognition of this fact carries with it a demand that we 'prove all things; hold fast that which is good'. It is by this method that Christian thinkers in the past have advanced towards a more perfect understanding of the ways of God. This suggests on the one hand that even those ideas which we now see to be incomplete or erroneous often contained for those who first held them a vital expression of truth, and were in their time only gained as the result of painful strivings of heart and mind, and, on the other hand, that the ideas of God and man which have been held in the past must be re-expressed in the light of our own experience and further knowledge."

*From Christian faith and practice in the experience of the Society of Friends 1959, passage approved by London Yearly Meeting in 1925.*

We noted that the wording is of its time, showing that the meaning of the text applies to the text itself.

### **BYMT/25/06/10 BYM's strategic priorities**

In February, we agreed to a light touch review of our existing strategic priorities. Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, gave an introduction describing the background context which led to the 2020–2025 strategic priorities and the changes that have happened since.

Jo Hills and Chris Jardine were appointed by BYM Trustees' Clerk and Assistant Clerk using the 'between-meetings' procedure to work with Recording Clerk on this. Their appointment will be minuted in BYMT/25/06/21 Appointments.

We have spent time in small discussion groups considering what has changed in the external context of the world around us, in our Quaker community across the Yearly Meeting, and in the central structures for which we are responsible, and how we need to respond to these changes. We have heard a call to be nimble, grow connections at every level of the Society, and be reflective with ourselves and stakeholders.

We agree to offer a session with Meeting for Sufferings on 30 June 2025 in preparation for their next meeting to explore these themes further.

We plan to return to this in September.

### **BYMT/25/06/11 Quiet Company**

We are joined by Carol Rowntree Jones, clerk of the Quiet Company's Board of Directors. Carol and Lisa San Martín, Quiet Company CEO, have introduced their annual report to us.

We have been informed of the financial picture, the delivery of the operational plan for 2024 and a risk overview (including the risk register). The report also looks forward to priority areas for 2025. 2024 was challenging, as the growth seen in 2023, and on which budgets had been based, did not materialise, and this left a significant deficit in the results for the year.

We note in particular the concern to achieve net zero carbon emissions, initially in house and subsequently in our supply chain, and the partnership with *Only A Pavement Away* in employing people facing or experiencing homelessness. This partnership began in March 2025, and it relies on turnover of staff in the hospitality team (which is much lower than the sector average) to enable the opportunity of employing people from the programme.

### **BYMT/25/06/12 Risk review**

We are joined by Jane-Eve Straughton, Governance Manager and receive paper BYMT 2025 06 11 which introduces a new risk register format and proposes a new reporting framework.

Trustees have reviewed the new reporting framework and are pleased to see the development in the risk register and its increase in accessibility and efficacy. Staff have reflected on how this new framework has greatly improved their ability to assess risk and consequence, and that the new register poses opportunities to regularly reflect on risk management, not only individually, but together as a team.

### **BYMT/25/06/13 Drayton House [CONFIDENTIAL minute]**

### **BYMT/25/06/14 Programmes & Prioritisation Committee**

We receive a report proposing a new committee to support decisions on prioritisation, evaluation, and allocation of resources (BYMT 2025 06 13). The paper includes draft terms of reference for such a committee, and we agree to name this committee Programmes & Prioritisation Committee (PPC).

This committee would support BYM Trustees and the two Central Committees to take good decisions about prioritisation, evaluation, and the allocation of resources, specifically in relation to the programme of work in furtherance of the charitable purposes of BYM. The work of the PPC would support BYMT to discharge their duties in relation to the management of the budget and finances of BYM. The PPC would have delegated responsibility from BYMT for making decisions about the allocation of resources to the programme of work in furtherance of the charitable purposes of BYM, informed by its assessment of impact.

We agree to these terms of reference, as amended in this meeting, and ask BYMT Nominations Group to begin searching for names to appoint to this committee in collaboration with QLCC and QPSWCC, for appointment at our September meeting.

We send this minute, together with the terms of reference, to QLCC and QPSWCC for their information at this stage, noting that the relationship between these committees and the Programmes & Prioritisation Committee will be an important one in ensuring good governance of BYM's charitable work.

### **BYMT/25/06/15 Barriers to Quaker service**

Last year, we asked staff to bring us a report on financial barriers to Quaker service. We receive a report from staff members of Quaker Church Affairs on this, along with wider barriers to service. This work stems from our concern to make Quaker structures inclusive and sustainable, and to 'look at how we can remove barriers and actively seek wider participation in the full life of our meetings' as called for by minute 38 of Yearly Meeting 2017.

We support the *Suggested areas for development* made in section 3 and we are pleased to see that some are already in progress.

### **BYMT/25/06/16 Collections management and access**

We are joined by Libby Adams, Head of Library and Archives, who has introduced her annual report on collections management to us (paper BYMT 2025 06 15).

#### **a) QUNO archives held in the Library of the Society of Friends**

We agree to dispose of the records of the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva, transferred to the Library of the Society of Friends in 1984 and 2017 by transferring the records to the United Nations Library and Archives in Geneva as a gift. We endorse the recommendation in Appendix 1 that care should be taken to reduce shipping costs as much as possible.

We send this part of our minute to the Quaker United Nations Office Geneva Executive Committee.

#### **b) Policies**

We approve the following policies, which are to be reviewed at least every three years:

- Collections information
- Collections care and conservation
- Collections access and engagement

### **BYMT/25/06/17 Finance, IT and Property Committee**

We receive minutes from the Finance, IT and Property Committee (FIPC) meetings on 19 February and 6 May (BYMT 2025 06 05a and 05b).

#### **a) Use of Marsh Legacy**

We note minute FIPC 25/28 and receive paper BYMT 2025 06 05bi.

We agree to the recommendation from FIPC to release the designation of the portion of the Marsh Legacy which has not been assigned for reparations work or released into the general funds.

#### **b) Pollard & Dickson Trust**

In Minute BYMT/24/02/06 we agreed in principle to accept the transfer of the Pollard & Dickson Trust and noted that these funds could be used to further hardship grant-making programmes and to support travelling ministry through other work of Britain

Yearly Meeting within the scope of the restrictions. In minute FIPC 25/29, Finance, IT and Property Committee recommends that Trustees accept the transfer in accordance with a Deed approved by the Treasurer and the Director of Finance.

We agree to accept the transfer and authorise our Clerk and Assistant Clerk to sign the Deed on our behalf. The Funds are expected to arrive in July 2025. We ask our Finance Director to ensure that the detail of how these funds will be used is included in the budget for 2026.

### **c) Sturge Family Flats**

We receive paper BYMT 2025 06 05bii outlining the wish of the Trustees of the Sturge Family Flats Charitable Trust to wind up the charity and they have offered BYM a donation of a gift of approximately £812,000.

We accept the donation and agree that the fund should be used primarily for making grants to older members and attenders as a strand of the Pastoral Care Fund but, at the discretion of BYM Trustees, the gift can be used for other grants as the need arises. We ask staff to prepare an annual report on the progress and outcomes of the grant scheme.

We send this minute to the Trustees of Sturge Family Flats Charitable Trust.

### **d) Restricted funds**

Minute FIPC 25/15 makes recommendations about the release of some restricted funds so that we can make use of them more appropriately, as outlined in paper FIPC 2025 02 08. We accept the following recommendations:

- The Courtauld House Fund has £174,218 remaining and has stayed unspent for 5 years due to limited liability for the property, and we hold other restricted funds for upkeep of property. We agree to release the remainder of this fund into unrestricted funds.
- The Legacy Funded Short Term Projects fund has £100,263 remaining. After the transfer of around £85,000 to Woodbrooke for their Climate Crisis project there will be around £15,000 remaining. We accept the recommendation to transfer the remainder of this fund to the Young Adult Quaker Grants Scheme, after the grant to Woodbrooke has been paid.
- The S&M Holt Memorial Fund holds roughly £4,000 and has a related endowment with an annual income of roughly £500. The original intention of this was to fund a scheme to support young adult Quakers to work with Quaker organisations. This scheme no longer runs, so we agree to transfer the remaining cash to the closest scheme we have: the Young Adult Quaker Grants Scheme. We ask FIPC to consider whether we should seek permission to expend the endowment for this purpose, given its small size.

### **BYMT/25/06/18 Grants Group**

We receive a report from the Grants Group summarising grants made in 2024 (BYMT 2025 06 05d). The report includes minute QPSWCC 25/40, adding further information to the grant programme.

Our Treasurer, as Interim Chair of Friends Trusts Limited (FTL), has informed us that in their Minute T25/06, FTL agreed that 60% of the Blackwell Trust will be distributed

to QPSW for Relief Grants from 2025. FTL agreed to review these arrangements prior to making decisions for future years, with a view to making a longer-term commitment to distribution arrangements.

We send this minute to QPSWCC's Grants Group.

### **BYMT/25/06/19 Recording Clerk's report**

We receive a report covering February to May 2025 from the Recording Clerk and Management Meeting.

We also receive the reporting dashboard dated May 2025 with indicators of key information on compliance, communications, organisational health, and QC debtors.

Elizabeth Redfern introduced us to the developments in AI and how these will influence the way we work in future.

### **BYMT/25/06/20 Reflection on Yearly Meeting**

We have spent time reflecting on Yearly Meeting in May.

### **BYMT/25/06/21 Appointments**

We receive the following nominations from our Nominations Group:

#### **Buddy to support new trustee in their first year of service:**

- Jo Hills to support Chris Jardine

#### **BYMT Nominations Group**

- Lis Burch to serve from 8 June 2025 to 31 December 2026

#### **Quiet Company Board**

- Rosie Hakes – Devon Area Meeting, commencing from date of membership to 31 December 2027. Rosie Hakes is currently in the process of formalising her membership. Her appointment is subject to acceptance into membership. Trustees will record at a future meeting the exact date of acceptance and the official start of her service as a company director.

#### **Trustee to attend Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee to communicate views of BYMT to Yearly Meeting Agenda Planning for 2026:**

- Lis Burch

#### **Continuing Yearly Meeting Transition Board**

To serve for the lifetime of the group:

- Gavin Burnell, Leeds Area Meeting
- Kit Fotheringham, Trustee member
- Liz Law, Trustee member
- Clare Scott Booth, London West Area Meeting
- Keith Walton, Kingston and Wandsworth Area Meeting

The following appointments were made by BYMT Clerk and Assistant Clerk using the 'between-meetings' process:

#### **Strategic priorities review**

- Jo Hills, for lifetime of the work
- Chris Jardine, for lifetime of the work

### **Young Adult Quaker Grants Group**

- Imi Hills, West Weald Area Meeting, to serve for three years from 28 April 2025 to 27 April 2028
- Jo Parker, London Young Adult Quakers (attached to London West Area Meeting), to serve for three years from 28 April 2025 to 27 April 2028
- Eddie Weedon, Cambridgeshire Area Meeting, to serve for three years from 28 April 2025 to 27 April 2028

We agree to these appointments and thank Nominations Group for bringing us this report.

### **BYMT/25/06/22 Young Adult Quaker Grants Group**

We agree to update the terms of reference for this group as detailed in paper BYMT 2025 06 19.

### **BYMT/25/06/23 Agenda for Yearly Meeting in May 2026**

We have received an invitation to contribute towards the discernment for the agenda for Yearly Meeting (YM) in May 2026. Lis Burch will be attending a meeting of Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee (YMAC) on our behalf. We have spent time discussing and sharing our thoughts.

We note that the agenda of YM in May 2026 is likely to need time on constitutional matters such as the changes relating to Continuing Yearly Meeting, aspects of membership, and service by attenders. In minute RWG2025/06/03, the Reparations Working Group have asked to spend some time reporting to Yearly Meeting, including in all-age programmes.

We ask Lis Burch to draft a brief report based on the ministry on this item and share it with BYMT clerks before submitting to YMAC.

### **BYMT/25/06/24 Preparing for Meeting for Sufferings**

We have prepared for Meeting for Sufferings on 5 July 2025.

### **BYMT/25/06/25 Time with Recording Clerk**

We spent time with the Recording Clerk.

### **BYMT/25/06/26 Time without staff**

We have reviewed the meeting and considered how to communicate our work.

### **BYMT/25/06/27 Worship**

We joined Friends at Central Leeds Local Meeting for Meeting for Worship as closing worship for our meeting.

Marisa Johnson  
Clerk

Kit King  
Assistant Clerk