

Follow-up Letter



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

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

8th July 2019

Dear Friends,

Here are the minutes of our meeting last Saturday and I hope you are able to share some of our business with your area meeting in whatever ways you think work best. It might be good to talk this over with your area meeting clerk.

The key items are:

- 1) A consideration of the documents received from QLCC and YFGM and for us to try to understand the issues involved in the current debate around gender diversity. We heard that working in small groups to consider this may be a good way forward and that QLCC would like to receive further comments - please send your comments to gender@quaker.org.uk We hope that when we return to this we may be able to articulate more clearly what specific Quaker contribution there may be to this issue, remembering that the basis of our response is love and the recognition that each person is a child of God.
- 2) The appeal for funds for the Sanctuary Everywhere has been sent to meetings but a link to the appeal leaflet may be found [here](#) Remember that donated monies should be extra for this programme and not a diversion from normal donations to BYM! Please click [here](#) if you would like to make a donation.
- 3) Do report to local Friends about the recent work of BYM trustees and their initial decision to develop work beyond the Vibrancy project to enable more local support for meetings. This was considered by both BYM and Woodbrooke trustees, working together. We heard that there are many more plans and decisions to be made and our minute recording this information concluded that we 'hold our trustees and our staff in the light as they continue to grapple with difficult decisions.
- 4) We also spent time considering the involvement of young people and others unable to attend a regular weekly local meeting for worship but who worship with us at other regular events and how we might best provide pastoral care in these situations.

MfS Arrangements Group meets in the third week of August to plan for our next meeting at the beginning of October and will be grateful for your upholding and any further input you may like to make. Please do email sufferings@quaker.org.uk

George Fox exhorts us to be patterns and examples so that our 'carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people... then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one'. I hope we can heed this in today's world of political and social upheaval and I look forward to our meeting together again at Woodbrooke on October 4th-6th.

May Peace be with you



Anne Ullathorne, Clerk

The following papers are included in this mailing:

- Functions checklist
- Minutes of the Meeting held 6 July 2019

Meeting for Sufferings: Functions Checklist (Quaker faith & practice Chapter 7.02)

Requirement	July 19	Comments
A To set the priorities for the centrally managed work		
B To issue public statements in the name of BYM		
C To receive regular interim reports from BYM trustees	12	Vibrancy project
D To receive the BYM trustees' annual report & accounts for information	13	
E To make a report on its own activities to YM		
F To determine the dates of YM		
G To deliberate on how best to support the spiritual life of the yearly meeting and to further the development of its visionary and prophetic role	5	YM reflections
H To keep under review and to test as appropriate the existing and new concerns referred to it by AMs and others	6	QLCC /YFGM gender diversity
I To foster communication throughout the yearly meeting	14 15	YP involvement QRBs
J To receive minutes from area meetings	7 8 9 14	Sustainability Sanctuary EU YP involvement
K To make appropriate entries in the prison and court register	4	
L To appoint representatives to attend other Yearly Meetings		
M To receive information about changes in the composition or status of general meetings and gatherings		
N To make changes in the composition of area meetings		
O To give assistance to area meetings in the amicable settlement of disputes		
P To hear appeals against area meeting decisions		
Q To give guidance on policy matters referred to it by the BYM trustees from time to time		
R To authorise action and minute as required under other sections of Quaker Faith and Practice	10 18	Noms & appts QRBs
S To set up an arrangements group and support and working groups to assist its own work as it sees fit	11	MFS Arrangements Group

- Receiving reports from central committees adds to our understanding and decisions regarding both A priorities and G supporting the spiritual life of the YM .



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

At a meeting of

Meeting for Sufferings

Held at Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ
Saturday 6 July 2019

Minutes

MfS/19/07/01 Opening Worship

During opening worship we have heard *Quaker faith & practice* 23.47 read.

MfS/19/07/02 Membership of Meeting for Sufferings

Since our last meeting we have received the following nominations for and requests for release from Meeting for Sufferings until the rise of Yearly Meeting 2021:

Release:

Barbara Bone – Northumbria AM Representative
Ivan Hutnik – Surrey & Hampshire Border AM alternate

Nominated:

Ivan Hutnik – Surrey & Hampshire Border AM Representative
Gregory Valatin – Surrey & Hampshire Border AM alternate

Further to minute MfS 18/10/21 we have received the following nominations for the new young adult places on Meeting for Sufferings:

Stephen Lonsdale
Jenny Orme
Zoe Marquis
Yenni Millar

We appoint the Friends named and thank the Friends released for their service.

Visitors invited to represent area meetings/committees in the absence of the appointed representative or alternate:

Mary Aiston – Kingston & Wandsworth AM
Kim Hope – West Weald AM
Sarah Myers – Central Yorkshire AM

Other visitors:

Hannah Brock Womack – Central Nominations Committee (item 9)

David Beale – Central Nominations Committee (item 9)

Emma Roberts – Quaker Life Central Committee

Robert Card, Northumbria AM – assistant clerk of MfS from January 2019

Sherry-Ann Mitchell – BYM Staff, Recording Clerk's Office

Anne van Staveren – BYM staff, Media Relations Officer

MfS/19/07/03 Agenda

The Clerk has introduced the draft agenda, and we have agreed to this.

MfS/19/07/04 Court and Prison Register

We have been informed about a number of Friends arrested during actions with Extinction Rebellion (a movement using nonviolent civil disobedience to achieve radical change in response to the climate emergency).

8 March	Justin Kenrick and Eva Schonveld (both of South East Scotland AM) were arrested in Edinburgh. They were held overnight in a police station. Justin Kenrick was charged to appear in court.	No further proceedings have taken place to date.
15 April	Marcia Colley and Jan Scott (both of Devon AM) were arrested in London.	They were released 'subject to further enquiry' and to date have not been charged
16 April	Peter Griffin (Cambridgeshire AM) was arrested in London.	He was released 'subject to further enquiry' and to date have not been charged
16 April	Justin Kenrick (South East Scotland) was arrested in Edinburgh. He was charged with Breach of the Peace.	A trial has been scheduled for 21 August 2019.
16 April	Cath Dyer, and Lesley Morrison (both South East Scotland AM) were arrested in Edinburgh. They were charged with Breach of the Peace.	Following an interim hearing a trial has been scheduled for 20 September 2019.
16 April	Ian Bray (Brighouse West Yorkshire AM) was arrested in London. He has been released pending investigation.	

16 & 17 April	Saul Kenrick (South East Scotland AM) was arrested in London. He was charged with Obstruction of the Highway.	A trial scheduled for 28 June 2019 was postponed and a new date has not yet been set.
17 April	Peter Tyler (West Scotland AM) was arrested in London.	He has been summoned to appear in court in London on 12 July.
19 April	Camilla Wimberley (York AM) was arrested for obstruction of the highway and an offence under the Public Order act in London.	She was released and to date has not been charged.
20 April	Sue Hampton and Leslie Tate (both of Luton and Leighton AM) was arrested in London. She was charged with a breach of Section 14 of the Public Order Act and Obstruction of the Highway without a Vehicle.	No further proceedings have taken place to date.
21 April	Beth Jones (London West AM) and Heather Rostron (Sheffield and Balby AM) were arrested for wilful obstruction of the Highway in London.	They were released and to date have not been charged.
25 April	Ian Bray (Brighouse West Yorkshire AM) was arrested in London. He has been charged with causing an obstruction of the railway or carriage using the railway, contrary to s36 Malicious Damage Act 1861.	At a plea hearing at Blackfriars Crown Court on 23 May he pleaded not guilty. A trial has been listed for 11 May 2020 at Inner London Crown Court and bail conditions have been applied for him not to travel by London underground, Docklands Light Railway or over-ground railways
25 & 26 April	Justin Kenrick (South East Scotland AM) was arrested in London. He was held in a police station overnight and has been released.	He has not been charged to date.

Further to minute MfS/19/02/05, concerning the action taken by Ian Bray (Brighouse West Yorkshire AM) in November 2018 as part of the Extinction Rebellion movement that led to his arrest, we note that he went to trial in Hendon Magistrates' Court on 10 May 2019. The proceedings were adjourned until 5 August for a case management hearing at Westminster Magistrates' Court.

We agree to include the above information in the court and prison register. We hold the Friends concerned in the Light. We are aware that other Friends have been involved in similar actions. If details are forwarded to BYM staff, they can also be included in the court and prison register.

MfS/19/07/05 Yearly Meeting 2019

We have received minutes from Yearly Meeting held on 24-27 May 2019.

We note that minute 6 asks Meeting for Sufferings to carry out a review of Yearly Meeting and Gatherings. We ask the Recording Clerk to bring a paper for discussion, about how this might be taken forward.

We note that minute 21 delegates responsibility to Meeting for Sufferings to revise Church Government text in *Quaker faith & practice* to keep it up to date while the new Book of Discipline is being prepared. Meeting for Sufferings is asked to continue to forward to Yearly Meeting any substantive matters of Quaker discipline which requires its attention, and to report any updates to Quaker faith and practice to Yearly Meeting, annually.

We have had an opportunity to reflect on our experience of Yearly Meeting this year.

The minutes of Yearly Meeting do not tell the whole story. There were many experiences, and much learning in many ways.

It is important to encourage those who feel moved but are diffident about speaking in a large group. We also value unspoken ministry and the experience of the “scale of stillness” that Yearly Meeting offers.

Minute 33 says: “We call on Friends throughout our Yearly Meeting to continue this work in our meeting communities, to deepen and extend the work we have done, so that we can be the community we need to be to face the future. We encourage local and area meetings to share their insights.”

MfS/19/07/06 Gender Diversity

We receive and note minute 2019.2.3 of Young Friends General Meeting and the initial statement regarding Trans and non-binary inclusion; and Quaker Life Central Committee’s initial statement ‘Quakers and Gender Diversity’.

Friends are encouraged to reflect on the Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC) initial statement and the Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM) minute, and to work together to explore the issues.

We are aware that we need to listen to those people affected by discrimination of any sort (to listen deeply, with open hearts); and we want Quakers in Britain to be welcoming and affirming of all people. Each individual is a child of God and we all seek to know that Love which is eternal.

We uphold all Friends in this exploration. Working in small groups may make it easier for Friends to share more deeply. We encourage everyone to listen carefully to the Spirit through each other. We hope to return to this later in the year.

MfS/19/07/07 Sustainability

We receive minutes 19.40 of Bristol AM held on 21 April, 19/28 of West Weald AM held on 12 May 2019, both concerning Extinction Rebellion, and minute 19/54 of Southern Marches AM held on 11 May.

West Weald AM has forwarded a statement issued on 21 April from a Meeting for Worship held at the Extinction Rebellion camp at Marble Arch in London.

Southern Marches AM's minute asks Britain Yearly Meeting to give more attention to climate breakdown. The AM would like to see more of the resources and organisational capabilities available within centrally managed work to be directed towards leading and coordinating the Quaker response across all AMs, and better enabling Quakers to participate in the activities of other organisations.

Our shared concern for the Earth and the well-being of all who live in it is not new. Through corporate discernment in local and area meetings, Meeting for Sufferings, Yearly Meeting and elsewhere, Friends in Britain have repeatedly re-affirmed our commitment to action. We recognise the urgent need to address climate breakdown.

We are reminded that Meeting for Sufferings holds responsibility for overseeing our corporate action (minute 18/07/20 refers). Last year we agreed that central and standing committees should continue to take increasing responsibility for their role in facilitating the progress of BYM to becoming a low carbon, sustainable community. With the help of our newly-formed Sustainability Monitoring Group, we will continue to ask committees to report on how their work is taking forward our commitment in five agreed areas:

1. Eldership: rooting the commitment in our Quaker faith
2. Oversight: Strengthening our community
3. Living faithfully: Changing our lifestyles
4. Right Ordering: Quaker core activities and property
5. Witness: Taking political action and promoting systemic change

We encourage all Friends to consider how they are called to respond to the crisis. Each person has a different contribution to make, and we can be stronger and make more difference if we work together and support each other. We will share this minute with our area meetings as appropriate.

The next meeting of representatives of central and standing committees will be held on 24 July. We forward this minute to that meeting and will hear more when we return to this matter in October.

MfS/19/07/08 Sanctuary Everywhere programme

We receive minute 3 of Staffordshire AM held on 19 May, regarding the future of Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee's (QPSWCC) 'Sanctuary Everywhere' project. This work, which was intended to be time-limited, has been very successful. QPSWCC hopes to keep the programme running for a little longer in order to continue providing support, resources and advice to Sanctuary Meetings but also to develop more infrastructure, tools and resources, to help the network be more sustainable.

Sanctuary and other meetings have been asked to consider making an additional financial gift for this purpose.

We acknowledge our resources are not infinite, and uphold our central committees when they are faced with difficult decisions.

We forward this minute to QPSWCC.

MfS/19/07/09 Britain's withdrawal from the EU

Further to our minute MfS 19/04/09, we receive and note minute 19/05/06 of South Wales AM reflecting further on the statement on Britain's withdrawal from the EU. The AM has noted in particular the impact on the Northern Ireland peace settlement.

MfS/19/07/10 Appointments

a) Central Nominations Committee

Brings forward the following names for service or release as indicated:

Book of Discipline Revision Committee

Request for release:

Eleri Pengelly – South London AM

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee

Nominated by a between meetings discernment of the clerks of Central Nominations Committee to serve from 6 July 2019 to Yearly Meeting 2022:

Robert Wilson – North Scotland AM

Request for release:

Anthony Buxton – North Scotland AM

We appoint the Friends named accordingly, and thank those released for their service.

b) Meeting for Sufferings Nominating Group

Brings forward the following names for service:

MfS Sustainability Monitoring Group

Appointed by the clerks between meetings, to serve from 6 July 2019 to 5 July 2022:

Peter Avis – Sussex East AM

Tina Leonard – Oxford and Swindon AM

Maureen Jackson – Hardshaw & Mann AM

We confirm these appointments.

MfS/19/07/11 MfS Arrangements Group Terms of Reference

We ask Central Nominations Committee to bring forward nominations for a group of three Friends to be appointed by Meeting for Sufferings to review the continuation and terms of reference of the Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group.

MfS/19/07/12 Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees Report

We receive and note the minutes of Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) Trustees meeting held on 5 April and on 7-9 June 2019.

Further to minute MfS/19/04/13, we also receive a paper regarding the Vibrancy in Meetings pilot (paper 2019/07/11b).

Caroline Nursey, clerk of BYM Trustees, has spoken to us about their recent meeting.

Trustees have spent time considering how best to support Quaker meetings and communities to thrive and grow, in the context of the review of the Vibrancy in Meetings project, which we heard about last time.

The joint statement issued by BYM trustees and Woodbrooke trustees includes the affirmation that: 'the Vibrancy in Meetings pilot project has shown that a meeting-centred approach to providing support can deepen our worship and transform our communities'.

Trustees agreed that the current model of locally-based development workers should be extended expanded so that there is a local development worker within reach of every meeting in Britain within 5 years, and that BYM will work rapidly towards more local support for Meetings and begin to experiment with new regional bases, hubs or clusters. This is about having support for local meetings, so we can take forward Friends' ministry.

Change will not happen overnight and have reminded us that some work that is dear to our hearts will have to be laid down to find the investment for meeting-centred support.

However, the time to invest in the future of Quakers in Britain is now, whilst we have reserves to enable the management of change - of infrastructure and of culture.

We have been able to ask questions today and we look forward to further updates.

We hold our trustees and our staff in the light as they continue to grapple with difficult decisions.

MfS 19/07/13 BYM annual report and financial statements

The annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2018 for BYM were agreed by trustees in their meeting on 5 April 2019 and presented to Yearly Meeting in May 2019. Linda Batten, BYM treasurer, has spoken about them with us today and we have been able to ask questions.

We thank Linda for her presentation.

MfS/19/07/14 Young People's Involvement

We receive minute Minute 19.03.07 of Kendal and Sedbergh AM held on 16 March 2019, regarding the interpretation of advice for including young people in the annual tabular statement.

Paul Parker, Recording Clerk has spoken further about this matter. We acknowledge that people of all ages are not always connected to the Society primarily through regular attendance at a specific local meeting. We heard many practical ideas, including attention to "sensitive adult scaffolding" for youth events, and a plea to help our young people find their identity as Quakers.

We ask the Recording Clerk to review the advice sent to area meetings for completing the tabular statement, looking particularly at how to include Friends whose active participation in the Society is not based on a regular connection to a local meeting.

We send this minute to QLCC to encourage them to review their guidance about the pastoral care of such Friends, and to the Revision Committee to draw attention to this issue, which has a wider impact on membership.

MfS/19/07/15 Quaker Recognised Bodies

Further to minute MfS/15/12/17, we receive paper MfS 2017/10/14 recommending groups for registration as Quaker Recognised Bodies.

We agree to register the following groups for five years, with registration to be reviewed by July 2024:

External

Sibford School

Francis Camfield's Trust

MfS/19/07/16 Closing minute

We closed our time together with worship.

Anne Ullathorne

Clerk