

Calling letter



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

29 June 2021

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

Dear Friends

I write to invite you to the last Meeting for Sufferings of the current triennium, on Saturday 10th July. This meeting was not originally in the 2018–2021 schedule but MfS Arrangements Group felt that the six-month gap from April to October was too long, and that it would have created a backlog of items to consider. You will see from the extent of the papers before you that Arrangements Group was right – there is a great deal exercising Friends across the Yearly Meeting and I am glad we can meet again before the summer to worship and learn together.

In the morning session we will cover, amongst other things, our usual standing items of appointments, Prison and Court Register and Quaker Recognised Bodies. There is a report from the Engaging Young Adult Quakers project officer, and trustees will be introducing the annual report and accounts as well as reporting back on the small-group simplification meetings that have taken place since our April meeting.

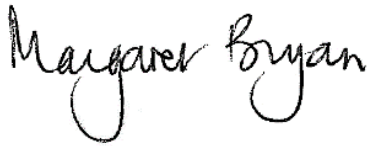
The meeting dates for the next triennium 2021–2024 were originally before you in June last year and Friends will remember the consternation felt by many at the prospect of reducing the time given to our meetings. Arrangements Group has considered this carefully and experimented with timings and with special evening meetings, and their paper brings a new proposal. In recognising as we work out what life might be like post-pandemic that the only certainty is that everything is uncertain, we have limited the plans to 2021–2022 so as to allow for development and possible change.

In the afternoon session we have allowed plenty of time to consider the work of QPSW and Quaker Life. Both central committees have brought draft and then final strategies to MfS during 2019–2020, and Friends are now seeing what the working out of those strategies means in practice. Arrangements Group has received a number of minutes from Area Meetings, and you will see that we have also planned an evening session on Weds 7th July to explore the issues in depth.

As before there will be breakout rooms over lunch and we hope that Friends will feel that they are just as welcome to attend as to go and eat, to pop in or out, with or without food, as suits them. Whatever you choose to do I hope you will enjoy an opportunity to socialise with Friends you may or may not already know.

I look forward to seeing you all

In peace,



Margaret Bryan
Clerk

Papers enclosed with this mailing

Agenda

MfS Arrangements Group April and June 2021 meeting minutes

MfS 2021 07 05 Appointments

MfS 2021 07 06 Prison and Court Register

MfS 2021 07 07 Quaker Recognised Bodies

MfS 2021 07 08 Transfer of Leigh Local Meeting

MfS 2021 07 09 Young adult representation on MfS

MfS 2021 07 10 BYM Trustees June 2021 meeting minutes

MfS 2021 07 11 Simplifying our central structures – update

MfS 2021 07 12 Meeting for Sufferings dates 2021–22

MfS 2021 07 13 Minutes from area meetings

MfS 2021 07 14 Quaker Peace and Social Witness strategy

MfS 2021 07 15 Supporting Quaker communities

A reminder of how you can prepare for the meeting

- Register
- Register for the optional session with clerks of QPSW Central Committee on 7 July
- Read the agenda and papers in good time
- Contact the other representative/alternate from your area meeting or body
- Send any comments or questions to the clerks (sufferings@quaker.org.uk), before the meeting to be received by **8 July**



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Agenda

Meeting for Sufferings – 10 July 2021

By video conference, open for arrivals from 9.30am for 10am start

	Item	Paper
10am	Session 1	
1	Opening worship	
2	Welcome and introductions	
3	Membership	MfS 2021 07 03 To note
4	Agenda Adoption and acceptance of the agenda	
5	Appointments	MfS 2021 07 05 For approval
6	Prison and Court Register	MfS 2021 07 06 For decision
7	Quaker Recognised Bodies	MfS 2021 07 07 For decision
8	Transfer of Leigh Local Meeting	MfS 2021 07 08 For approval
9	Young adult representation on Meeting for Sufferings	MfS 2021 07 09 For decision
	Shuffle break	
10	BYM trustees and report from Yearly Meeting treasurer	MfS 2021 07 10 To note
11	Simplifying our central governance structures – an update	MfS 2021 07 11 To note
12	Meeting for Suffering dates 2021–22	MfS 2021 07 12 For decision
12.30pm	End of Session 1	

12:30pm Lunch break

1.45pm	Session 2	
13	Minutes from area meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renaming of William Penn Room • Covid security in prisons 	MfS 2021 07 13 For decision and for information
14	Quaker Peace and Social Witness strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes from Quaker Peace and Social Witness central committee • Minutes from area meetings 	MfS 2021 07 14 For consideration
	Shuffle break	
15	Supporting Quaker communities An update from staff in Quaker Life on how the team has evolved and the support available to meetings	MfS 2021 07 15 For information
	Extended closing worship and reflection	
4pm	End of Meeting	



Yearly Meeting of the
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At a meeting of

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group

Held online from 17.00 – 18:25 on 19 April 2021

Minutes

Present: Margaret Bryan, Robert Card, Gill Greenfield, Mark Lilley

In attendance: Neil Jarvis, Juliet Prager

Prevented: Karen Draycott

1. Review of Meeting for Sufferings held April 2021

We have identified minutes 12, on use of the term 'overseer', and 16, agreeing terms of reference for the group to consider the appointment of attenders to central committees, as continuing minutes, which will return in due course.

We have identified minute 15, adopting the new terms of reference of Arrangements Group, and minute 10, on assisted dying, as gold minutes.

We have identified the difficulty of handling chat messages while actively clerking and that this can leave the clerk insufficiently supported. We also think it would be worth enabling speakers as co-hosts so that they can join the chat during their item.

2. Planning for Meeting for Sufferings in July

We have discussed the agenda for the session of Meeting for Sufferings scheduled for July 2021.

We have noted that we expect to receive a report on young adult participation in Meeting for Sufferings.

We have noted that we may be able to take the sustainability report and hear more about the preparation for COP-26.

We note that we expect to receive a trustee's report.

We have heard that it might be good to hear something about the Local Development Workers, or some other topic of interest to Quaker Life.

We will continue our planning on 9th June.

3. Dates of meetings for next triennium

We have given thought to the logistics of in-person meetings. We will return to this issue at our June meeting.

4. Revision of the handbook

We have been told that necessary changes to the handbook have been identified. Margaret and Gill will work with Neil and Juliet to look at this.

5. Standing Nominations Group

We note that SNG has only two members at this time. We understand that Neil is working with them to find additional members for the Support Group and that Arrangements Group will identify people to serve on SNG from October onwards.

6. Any other matters

There being no other business to conduct, we part looking to meet again on 9th June 2021 at 19:00.

Signed on behalf of the meeting,

Robert Card, Clerk



Yearly Meeting of the
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At a meeting of

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group

Held online from 19.00 on 09 June 2021

Minutes

Present: Margaret Bryan, Robert Card, Gill Greenfield, Mark Lilley

In attendance: Neil Jarvis, Paul Parker (minutes 1 and 2), Juliet Prager, Oliver Robertson (minute 4)

Prevented: Karen Draycott,

1. Meetings attended by clerks and others

Since we last met, the Assistant Clerk has attended the Clerks' Away Day.

2. 2021–2024 Triennium

We have received paper MfSAG 2021 06 02.

We have returned to a consideration of the dates of future meetings. This is informed by the continually changing public health guidance we receive. We have agreed to continue experimenting with the pattern of meetings. During 2021/2022 we agree to try holding four full day meetings with preceding related evening sessions, with the option of additional shorter meetings if advisable. We agree to aim for a blended meeting in Friends' House in October with the hope for a residential session in March 2022. We will plan for 2022/2023 at a later meeting but hope for a further in person meeting in 2022.

We have considered the induction of new members and ongoing support for representatives. We agree to offer an induction session separate from the formal session of Meeting for Sufferings. We will return to this matter at our July review meeting.

Further to minute 5 of our April meeting, we have considered the situation of the Support Group and Standing Nominations Committee. We will return to this matter at a later meeting.

3. Forward agenda

We have considered our forward agenda (MfSAG 2021 06 03), which supports our planning.

4. Agenda planning: July 2021

Further to minute 2 of our April meeting, we have considered the agenda for our forthcoming July meeting (MfSAG 2021 06 04 refers).

Among other matters, we anticipate a report on the representation of new adult Quakers, and on the simplification process; we also expect updates on the Quaker Life and Quaker Peace & Social Witness strategies.

We agree to hold a preparation session on the QPSW strategy.

The Clerks and staff will work out the details of the agenda after this meeting.

5. Any other matters

There being no other business to conduct, we part looking to meet again on 23rd July 2021 at 15:00.

Signed on behalf of the meeting,

Robert Card, Clerk

Record of minutes received by Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group in 2021

This is a record of all minutes received by Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group since the last Meeting for Sufferings with information about any decisions that have been taken. It also includes minutes received in the past where there are updates. If representatives wish to see a copy of a minute, or wish to contact the Clerks, please email sufferings@quaker.org.uk.

Minutes received since last Meeting for Sufferings

Body sending minute	Minute	Initial steps and decisions	Subsequent steps (if any)	Status
East Cheshire AM	21.03.10 Restructuring within BYM – Towards a Simpler Church	8/4/21 Minute received 9/6/21 Minute tabled at MfSAG MfSAG agreed to include this at the July meeting.		To MfS in July 2021
West Kent AM	6 Matter of Concern from Tunbridge Wells LM – Nurses' Pay	17/4/21 Minute received 9/6/21 Minute tabled at MfSAG AM to be contacted for further information.		To AM
North East Thames and Mid-Essex AMs	21.10 and 21.97 Transfer of Leigh LM	30/4/21 Minutes received 9/6/21 Minutes tabled at MfSAG MfSAG agreed to include this at the July meeting.		To MfS in July 2021
Mid-Somerset AM	29.5.21 QPSW restructuring proposals	9/5/21 Minute received 9/6/21 Minute tabled at MfSAG MfSAG agreed to include this at the July meeting.		To MfS in July 2021

Body sending minute	Minute	Initial steps and decisions	Subsequent steps (if any)	Status
North Wales AM	21.58 Covid security in prisons	9/5/21 Minute received 9/6/21 Minute tabled at MfSAG MfSAG agreed to include this at the July meeting.		To MfS in July 2021
Northamptonshire AM	21/24 William Penn room at Friends House	10/5/21 Minute received 9/6/21 Minute tabled at MfSAG MfSAG agreed to include this at the July meeting.		To MfS in July 2021
Worcestershire & Shropshire AM	21.30 Minute from Malvern Meeting: central support for Quaker work on criminal justice	10/5/21 Minute received 9/6/21 Minute tabled at MfSAG MfSAG agreed to include this at the July meeting.		To MfS in July 2021
Cornwall AM	Minute QPSW restructuring proposals	10/5/21 Minute received 9/6/21 Minute tabled at MfSAG MfSAG agreed to include this at the July meeting.		To MfS in July 2021
QPSW Central Committee	Meeting 28/04/21	11/5/21 Minutes received 9/6/21 Minutes tabled at MfSAG MfSAG agreed to include this at the July meeting.		To MfS in July 2021
Leicester AM	Minute 21.39 Restructuring at QPSW	11/5/21 Minute received 9/6/21 Minute tabled at MfSAG		To MfS in July 2021

Body sending minute	Minute	Initial steps and decisions	Subsequent steps (if any)	Status
		MfSAG agreed to include this at the July meeting.		
Central Yorkshire AM	5 Central support for prison chaplains	18/5/21 Minute received 9/6/21 Minute tabled at MfSAG MfSAG agreed to include this at the July meeting.		To MfS in July 2021
Hertford & Hitchin AM	2021:20 Concern – Implications of restructuring at QPSW	19/5/21 Minute received 9/6/21 Minute tabled at MfSAG MfSAG agreed to include this at the July meeting.		To MfS in July 2021
Banbury & Evesham AM	2021.21 (d) Restructuring at QPSW	5/6/21 Minute received 9/6/21 Minute tabled at MfSAG MfSAG agreed to include this at the July meeting.		To MfS in July 2021



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Membership of Meeting for Sufferings

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

Release requests received:

Stephanie Grant – QCCIR representative

Maggie Taylor-Sanders – Southern Marches AM representative

Nominated:

Penelope Cummins – QCCIR representative

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:

Kerren Davey – Bristol AM visitor

Ann Davison – Southern Marches AM visitor

Sue Walton – Sussex East AM visitor

Apologies:

We receive apologies from North Scotland and West Kent Area Meetings which have not been able to send a representative on this occasion.

Other visitors:

Robert Almond – QPSWCC Co-clerk

Jeff Beatty – QPSWCC Co-clerk

Wendy Hampton – BYM Staff, Quaker Life

Bridget Holtom – BYM Staff, Quaker Life

Neil Jarvis – BYM staff, Recording Clerk's Office

Rachel Matthews – BYM staff, Quaker Life

Naomi Major – BYM staff, Quaker Life

Anne van Staveren – BYM staff, Media Relations Officer

Clare Wood – BYM staff, Quaker Peace and Social Witness



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Appointments

a) Central Nominations Committee

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

Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA)

Nominate to serve from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2024:

Haifa Rashed – North London AM

Nominate to serve as alternate from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2024:

Rebecca Bellamy – Oxford & Swindon AM

For information, the following updates were recorded since the last meeting:

Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee

Appointed by between meetings decision of the Meeting for Sufferings clerks:

To serve at Yearly Meeting Gathering 2021:

Anna Sharman – North London AM

Harry Albright – Leicester AM

Yearly Meeting Pastoral Care Group

Appointed by between meetings decision of the Meeting for Sufferings clerks:

To serve from Yearly Meeting Gathering 2021 to Yearly Meeting 2024 (subject to DBS checks):

Sasha Lawson-Frost – Young Friends General Meeting

To serve at Yearly Meeting Gathering 2021 (subject to DBS checks):

Brian Ashley – North Scotland AM

Ireland Yearly Meeting

Second representative on 16 April 2021:

Mike Clark – North Wales AM

Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations (QCCIR)

Release from service:

Joyce Robertson – Meeting of Friends in Wales representative

b) Yearly Meeting Nominating Group

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

Yearly Meeting Nominating Group

Release with immediate effect:

Kellie Turner – Manchester & Warrington AM

For information

Central Nominations Committee

Appointed by between meetings decision of the Meeting for Sufferings clerks.

To serve with immediate effect from 1 June 2021:

Gill Greenfield – Mid Somerset AM

c) Meeting for Sufferings Standing Nominations Group

For information

Meeting for Sufferings Support Group

Appointed by between meetings decision of the Meeting for Sufferings clerks.

To serve with immediate effect from 24 June to end of Meeting for Sufferings 2021–2024 Triennium:

Keith Walton – Kingston and Wandsworth AM

Brian Wardrop – Mid-Essex AM



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Prison and Court Register

We have received three notifications from area meetings regarding the Prison and Court Register.

Ian Bray

Ian Bray, a member of Brighouse West Yorkshire Area Meeting, has been acquitted in a landmark verdict at Southwark Crown Court on 23 April. Ian was on trial with others from the 'Shell 7' for criminal damage to the Shell HQ building in London's Waterloo in April 2019. This was an Extinction Rebellion (XR) action which could have led to a maximum five year prison sentence and / or a £10k fine. The jury delivered its not guilty verdict for each defendant, despite the Judge ruling that five of them had no defence under the law.

Sue Hampton

Sue Hampton, a member of Luton & Leighton Area Meeting, was arrested and charged in relation to a protest in Harpenden on the Climate Emergency, and appeared in court on 28 May.

John Lynes

Further to minute MfS/2021/04/04, John Lynes, a member of Sussex East Area Meeting, was found guilty of breaching Section 14 of the Public Order Act 1986 in the course of an Extinction Rebellion event in Parliament Square in September 2020 and ordered to pay £180 fine (for breaking the terms of a previous conditional discharge), £500 costs, and £34 victim surcharge.

Meeting for Sufferings is asked to record this information in the Prison and Court Register and to hold Ian Bray, Sue Hampton and John Lynes in the Light.



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Quaker recognised bodies

Introduction

Meeting for Sufferings is asked to renew the registration of five Quaker Recognised Bodies.

Background

In 2015, Meeting for Sufferings agreed a new way for BYM to relate to other Quaker bodies. The guidelines are on the BYM website www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/quaker-groups

A QRB is an independent group where concerned Friends explore a common interest, seek affirmation, or carry out witness. The process of registration helps clarify benefits and responsibilities for QRBs and BYM. Registration also strengthens links between centrally-managed work and the wide range of Quaker work being done by other groups, helping build a vibrant Society of Friends.

Since 2016, Meeting for Sufferings has registered 74 QRBs.

Once a group is registered it participates in a periodic review to reaffirm its recognition and registration – normally five years after its initial registration. ‘Emergent’ groups are temporarily listed for up to two years and the review determines if the group is still emergent or can be fully registered. This is the first time that Meeting for Sufferings has been asked to re-register any QRBs.

Review of five QRBs

At registration, each QRB is linked to a member of BYM staff and this staff member helps review the QRB. Primarily the review establishes that the group is still active. (The demands on BYM over the past 16 months have meant that some QRBs have not been reviewed at the correct time but this is now being addressed and further renewals will be received by Meeting for Sufferings later in the year.)

Meeting for Sufferings is asked to renew the registration of the following five organisations as QRBs. Two are ‘emergent’ groups – staff recommend that one remains ‘emergent’ and the other is registered as a ‘freestanding group’.

1) Quaker Disability Equality Group (Q-DEG)

The purpose of the group is to work for full integration of disabled people in the life of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain.

<https://quakerdisabilitygroup.org.uk>

Originally recognised in December 2016. Review due in 2021.

Freestanding group. Staff link: Michael Booth

Q-DEG continues to be active, mainly through facebook and an online email list. Its committee has been meeting regularly through zoom. QDEG has engaged with the recent and current Quaker Life work on mental health. On the request of Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee, it nominates a QDEG member to serve on the Yearly Meeting Pastoral Care group. It is in touch with Edwina Peart, the BYM Inclusion and Diversity Coordinator to make sure that QDEG's aims and work are included in her work. QDEG has produced a document of suggestions to help find stillness and silence in Quaker Meeting for Worship.

2) Quaker Values in Education (QVinE)

The group is a place where Quakers with an interest in education, can share approaches, learning, insight and inspiration.

<https://qvine.org.uk>

Originally recognised in December 2016. Review due in 2021.

Freestanding group. Staff link: Clare Wood

QVinE continues to be active and has some new steering group members. Their main recent activity was a highly successful webinar in May 2021, in collaboration with Woodbrooke, and with speakers including some of the most significant voices in education: Geoff Barton (General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders), Becky Francis (CEO of the Education Endowment Foundation), Kevan Collins (Education Recovery Commissioner) and Anne Watson (professor emeritus in the department of education at the University of Oxford). The event attracted over 50 participants and is to be reported at YMG and their new website <https://qvine.org.uk>. They operate on a small budget, which includes an annual grant from Cumberland AM. QVinE keeps in touch with QPSW's peace education team, for exchange of information and to invite the peace education team to contribute to QVinE events.

3) Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs (QAAD)

QAAD aims to meet the needs for support and information within the Religious Society of Friends in relation to alcohol, other drugs, and gambling. It produces materials, offers advice to individual Friends when requested, and attends and organises gatherings. It seeks to facilitate links between Friends who share the concern or who are affected by substance issues or gambling addiction. QAAD also

responds to government consultations and contributes to public discussions on matters within its concern.

<https://qaad.org>

Originally recognised in December 2016. Review due in 2021.

Externally regulated group (registered charity). Staff link: Teresa Parker

QAAD continues to provide support to individual Friends and meetings, connecting those with common interests. The usual gatherings have been limited by the pandemic in 2020. The quarterly publication QUADRANT contains much interesting and important material. For example, the Government announced a review of the 2005 Gambling Act in December which QAAD will respond to.

4) Quaker Decriminalisation Network (QDN)

Aims:

- to enable discernment regarding the decriminalisation of the personal use of drugs
- to promote understanding within BYM of the need for decriminalisation
- to develop a network of individuals, Local Meetings and Area Meetings
- as Quakers to work with other organisations who desire change in both domestic and international drug policy

www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/quaker-groups/quaker-decriminalisation-network

Originally recognised in October 2017. Review overdue

Emergent group – recommended to renew as 'emergent group'.

Staff link: Clare Wood

QDN has not been very active since they helped to organise the Quakers in Criminal Justice conference in Leeds in 2019. Friends at the conference produced an inspirational Minute. QDN then paused for a while in their effort to bring this concern to the attention of Friends. Last year the pandemic was the focus of attention. QDN are hoping to revive the concern over the coming year and will think of ways to remind and inform Friends about it with a focus upon the injustices which connect criminalisation and racism.

5) Quaker Roots (formerly Roots of Resistance)

Roots of Resistance is a grassroots network of Quakers across the UK who are building a creative, vibrant and radical Quaker response to the DSEI (Defence and Security Equipment International) arms fair.

<https://rootsofresistance.org.uk>

Originally recognised in February 2019. Review overdue
Emergent group – recommended to renew as 'freestanding group'.
Staff link: Daniel Jakopovich

Quaker Roots (previously called Roots of Resistance) continues to be active, and it has become an established network. During the recent period it has been organising regular online gatherings to socialise, discern spiritual priorities, engage in capacity-building and plan further actions, particularly in order to challenge the DSEI arms fair. The Peace & Disarmament Programme of QPSW has been providing publicity and other support to Quaker Roots in their efforts to coordinate and strengthen grassroots Quaker peace activism.



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Transfer of Leigh-on-Sea Local Meeting to Mid-Essex Area Meeting

A function of Meeting for Sufferings is to make changes in the composition of Area Meetings (Qfp, 7.03 n). Any proposals for reorganisation shall, after agreement between the area meetings concerned, be presented to Meeting for Sufferings for endorsement (Qfp, 4.12). Minutes have been received (copied below) from North East Thames Area Meeting and Mid-Essex Area Meeting agreeing to the transfer of Leigh-on-Sea Local Meeting to Mid-Essex Area Meeting.

Meeting for Sufferings is now asked to endorse this transfer.

i) North East Thames Area Meeting held on 23/01/21

Minute 21.10 Transfer of Leigh Meeting from NETAQM to Mid-Essex AM

Further to AM minute 20.97 (below), which was forwarded to Mid-Essex Area Meeting, we have received and heard their AM minute 20.56 agreeing to the transfer of Leigh-on-Sea LM to Mid-Essex Area Meeting, which we welcome.

In accordance with Quaker Faith and Practice paragraph 4.12 we forward this minute and NETQAM minute 20.97 and MEAM minute 20.56 to Meeting for Sufferings for endorsement.

We forward the same minutes to London Quakers Property Trust for their information so that the formal process of the transfer of the building can begin.

We forward this minute to MEAM.

North East Thames Area Meeting held on 18/10/20

Minute 20.97 Transfer of Leigh LM from North East Thames Area Quaker Meeting (NETAQM) to Mid Essex AM

Further to AM Minutes 19.91, 20.13 and 20.56 regarding the possible transfer of Leigh LM to Mid-Essex AM we have heard Leigh LM minute 20.67 and the request for AM to agree to their transfer to Mid-Essex AM.

It is with our blessing, love and sadness that we support Leigh's discernment to move from NETAQM to Mid Essex AM.

We give thanks for the contribution that Leigh Friends have given over many years but understand that they feel more part of Essex than London and that it is the right time to make the move.

We understand that Mid Essex AM will welcome them, but we hope the connections with us will continue.

We send this minute to the clerk of Mid-Essex AM and await their response.

ii) Mid-Essex AM held on 14/11/20

Minute 20.56 Leigh-on-Sea – update on progress

We received a minute from North East Thames Area Quaker Meeting, which is attached to these minutes in which they support the decision by Leigh to join Mid-Essex AM, and expressing warm appreciation of the part Leigh has played in NETAQM.

We accept the minute from NETQAM 20.97 and agree to the transfer of Leigh-on-Sea Local Meeting to Mid Essex Area Meeting."

We anticipate that outstanding matters regarding property will be cleared and Leigh will join us by the end of 2021.



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Young adult involvement in Meeting for Sufferings

Introduction

The Engaging Young Adult Quakers (EYAQ) project has been working to increase the involvement and visibility of young adults amongst Quakers in Britain since it began in 2017. The project is coming to an end and is being evaluated. The project officer has worked closely with Quaker Life colleagues and much of the work continues in this team.

In 2018, the project steering group asked to create four reserved places on MfS for young adult Friends (under the age of 35) on an experimental basis for the remainder of the current triennium (until Yearly Meeting 2021).

This was accepted by Meeting for Sufferings with enthusiasm.

This paper, from the EYAQ project officer, brings together feedback from the young adult members of Meeting for Sufferings on their involvement in BYM's decision-making structures. The paper proposes bringing the experiment to an end and makes suggestions for future involvement:

- a) Encourage AMs to nominate a rep or alternate who is under 50 years old
- b) A buddy or mentor system for young adult reps and alternates

Meeting for Sufferings is asked to consider whether these are helpful in principle – if so, we can think about practicalities later in the year.

Feedback from the young adult members of Sufferings

On the whole, the feedback from the young adult members of Sufferings has been very positive. Although it can be daunting to be in a visible minority in such a large group, on the whole young adults felt welcomed and included:

"I managed to attend two of the meetings, one in person and one via zoom. Both were excellent experiences."

"I was warmly welcomed and it was very nice to attend the Support Group's dinner on the Friday evening."

“I felt that people were excited that I was there, as a young adult, and they asked me lots of questions.”

“One of the great things about attending Meeting for Suffering in person was the sense of wider community that you could get from being present there, and not just in the meeting itself but when getting food or going to the bookshop in Friends House etc. It was a heartening experience, truly, to see and meet so many Friends from so many walks of life, and I can’t help but think that that could be lost if we focus too much on zoom meetings than in-person ones. The experience just isn’t the same.”

They were glad to take part and to feel that they were contributing:

“I enjoyed serving on Meeting for Sufferings and learned a lot. It is an unrivalled learning opportunity for Young Friends to see how decisions are made within BYM.”

“I really enjoyed being a part of Meeting for Sufferings, especially in these trying times; it was great to see Meeting for Sufferings addressing relevant issues that a lot of churches and organisations shy away from.”

“I gave ministry about gender diversity. I felt really nervous, but that I needed to speak. Someone told me afterwards that they’d found my ministry helpful. I was glad to have been able to minister, it was very rewarding.”

Although most young adults felt welcomed, there was some feedback about how little time is available to focus on building a sense of community and connection with others, given the amount of business which has to be covered. When it was discussed with a few older Friends, we heard that this has been raised before by other members of Sufferings. However, this may feel particularly acute to those who don’t have existing connections and who don’t know anyone else present.

When we proposed the experiment in 2018, there were significant concerns expressed from the young adult Quaker community that this was tokenistic and didn’t represent real change.

The main concern expressed by young adults who joined Sufferings was the sense that they were not there to represent anyone. At the outset, we were clear that “it is not realistic to expect them to speak for all young adults, nor can they report back to all young adults.” However, this clearly did feel like a pressure for some of those taking part:

“Representatives require a constituency and young adult Friends are quite a diverse group of people with a range of views and opinions...I was, and am, really glad and honoured to give my opinion, but I have no knowledge of whether or not that opinion is in any way reflective of the broad opinion amongst young adult Friends.”

It was also suggested that buddies or mentors would be very welcome to help people to feel included and particularly for their first attendance at Meeting for Sufferings, to feel they knew people and weren't isolated.

They also spoke of the concern for how age diversity might continue beyond this experiment:

“To make it more accessible for those under 40, there needs to be a programme like EYAQ that nominates Young Friends, because it is very difficult to get nominated by one's Area Meeting... There need to be avenues whereby Young Friends can be nominated outside of their Meetings for Worship.”

Three members of the current group would be keen to serve on Sufferings as representatives in future. One of them has now moved to work abroad, and she was very sorry to have to give up her role. There were three members of the group who didn't manage to attend any sessions – this was due to a number of factors beyond their control, as illness, new jobs and other unexpected life events prevented them from taking part.

Recommendations for the way forward

The Steering Group did not expect this trial of young adult representatives would solve the issue of age diversity on Sufferings, rather that it would be a good first step and make it easier to increase age diversity through area meeting representation.

From the feedback we have received, it seems two areas need to be addressed. One is to find a way for young adults to be nominated as representatives by area meetings. The other is to consider how new representatives are supported so they can participate fully in Sufferings and don't feel isolated – perhaps through a formal buddying or mentoring arrangement.

a) Nomination of young adults from area meetings to serve on MfS

One possible solution to increase the number of young adult representatives would be to ask area meetings to nominate one under 50-year-old (as one of its two members on Sufferings). We appreciate that this can only be an aspiration and not a requirement, but it would help set a clear intention to increase age diversity in Meeting for Sufferings.

We understand this suggestion brings challenges and we appreciate Friends may have concerns. We know that it can already be hard for area meetings to find people who are willing and able to serve on Sufferings, and, for many area meetings, there are few younger Friends who have time to serve on Sufferings. The following points might help find young adults to serve:

- Age. The suggestion is for one representative to be under 50, rather than under 35, acknowledging that increasing age diversity is more than just including a handful of younger people.

- Using Quaker Life networks. The Quaker Life Officer with responsibility for young adults could help to encourage people known to them through their networks to consider this form of service and to put names forward to area meetings for consideration.
- Communication with Friends in the area meeting. Some young adult representatives may find reporting to area meeting in person difficult – could area meetings consider alternative ways to feedback, for example, written reports, video reports, email reports or relaying a report through the other area meeting MfS representative? Hearing concerns or views on upcoming MfS business from Friends in area meetings could also be gathered in alternative ways.
- Previous connection to the area meeting. Could the nominated young adult be someone who no longer lives in the area but has a link to the area meeting? Young adults tend to move more frequently and therefore might not have strong ties to the area they currently live in. They are likely to have a stronger connection to other areas, for example the area meeting where they grew up, or where they went to university, or somewhere they have previously lived for a significant period of time. The variety of ways we can communicate now makes this a possibility.
- Nominations from outside the area meeting. Could one of the two area meeting representatives be from another geographic location who is willing to serve and brings age diversity and enthusiasm to the role? They could perhaps sometimes travel in person to visit the area meeting, but they would mainly report back and seek the views of the meeting by email and online.

b) Supporting young adult representatives

We hope introducing buddies or mentors might be considered to provide support to new representatives – we felt this was particularly important for young adult representatives to help them get to know others and not to feel isolated. We are running a buddying scheme for young adults attending Yearly Meeting Gathering this year connecting them to older Friends. If there were members of Sufferings who were interested in getting involved, this could be a good starting point to build these connections and we are keen to explore this further.



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

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

11–13 June 2021, by video conference

Minutes

Present: Georgina Bailey, Linda Batten (Treasurer), Alison Breadon, Jenny Brierley, Nick Eyre (BYMT-2021-06-10 to BYMT-2021-06-12), Kit Fotheringham, Kate Gulliver, Ellie Harding, Carolyn Hayman, Caroline Nursey (Clerk), Silas Price, Graham Torr (Assistant Clerk), Frances Voelcker, Danielle Walker Palmour (BYMT-2021-06-01 to BYMT-2021-06-13), Chris Willmore.

In attendance: Paul Henderson-Grey, Head of Operations; Paul Parker, Recording Clerk; Juliet Prager, Deputy Recording Clerk; Oliver Robertson, Head of Witness and Worship, Maureen Sebanakitta, Head of Finance and Resources.

Visitors: Libby Adams, Head of Library and Archives (BYMT-2021-06-13), Robert Almond and Jeff Beatty, Co-clerks Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee (BYMT-2021-06-10 to BYMT-2021-06-12), Mark Mitchell, Safeguarding Officer (BYMT-2021-06-12), Alan Pearmain, Clerk Quaker Life Central Committee (BYMT-2021-06-10 to BYMT-2021-06-12), Ann Pfeiffer, Grants Officer (BYMT-2021-06-05).

BYMT-2021-06-01 Decision to hold a virtual meeting, welcome and introductions, agenda check, conflicts of interest check

We record our decision to hold this meeting by video conference. We follow Charity Commission guidance on running charities during the Covid-19 pandemic published on 19 March 2020 that allows video conferencing where there is no such clause in a charity's governing document. The Charity Commission asks us to record this decision.

During our opening worship, we have heard the reading:

"I do not go to a committee meeting merely to give my own ideas. If that were all, I might write my fellow-members a letter. But neither do I go to learn other people's ideas. If that were all, I might ask each to write me a letter. I go to a committee meeting in order that all together we may create a group idea, an idea which will be better than any one of our ideas alone, moreover which will be better than all of our ideas added together. For this group idea will not be produced by any process of addition, but by the interpenetration of us all."

Mary Parker Follett (an American Friend) "The New State, Group Organization the Solution of Popular Government", 1918

BYMT-2021-06-02 Minutes

a) Review of continued minutes

We have received a summary of our continued minutes (BYMT-2021-06-01).

b) We receive the following minutes:

- Quaker World Relations Committee 20 February and 23 April 2021
- Quiet Company 4 March 2021
- Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee 9 and 28 April 2021
- Quaker Life Central Committee 18 May 2021

BYMT-2021-06-03 BYM Trustees' Audit committee

We receive minutes of the Audit committee held on 15 March 2021 and paper BYMT-2021-06-03b reporting on the work of the Committee in 2020.

We note that following a meeting with Management Meeting Audit Committee has added to their programme of work a review of the organisation's response to the pandemic, and a review of how central committees are working within their terms of reference .

BYMT-2021-06-04 Finance report

We receive minutes from a meeting of Finance & Property Committee held on 10 May 2021 (BYMT-2021-06-04a) and the quarterly finance report to 31 March 2021 (BYMT-2021-06-04b).

We note that adjusted income (taking account of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to give a better understanding of underlying income trends) is 39% lower than for the same period last year and £375k below budget. Expenditure is down by a similar percentage (35%) on the previous year and £1.1m below budget although the forecast suggests this will 'catch up' during the year. Our expectation of a longer recovery period from the pandemic has increased the risk to income to BYM from the Quiet Company. Income from investments has increased although we note volatility in investment income remains a risk.

We agree with the approaches set out in the paper to manage these risks.

BYMT-2021-06-05 Marsh Legacy

At our meeting in February 2021, we agreed on the general approach regarding the legacy from Catharine Anne Maeve Marsh (minute BYMT-2021-02-10b). We asked for options to administer the 75% portion of the legacy not allocated to general reserves. We receive paper BYMT-2021-06-04c scoping a new grants programme.

Anne Pfeiffer has joined us for this item and introduced it to us.

Trustees hope that the work supported by the legacy should be distinctly Quaker. We hope that the scheme can be more than a sticking plaster and we ask that access and equity should be taken seriously in making any grants to individuals. We hope that the legacy can support work that helps lever longer term change, but are aware of the limits of what can be done in ten years even with a large legacy.

We ask that this be taken into account in identifying an organisation or organisations to dispense the funding and will return to more practical issues at our November meeting.

Trustees agree that the forthcoming scoping study be based on the following assumptions:

- That the funds be spent down over around 10 years or less
- That BYM does not directly administer grants to individuals
- That any partnerships allow for review of impact and ensure that the use of the funds remains in accordance with UK charity law
- That a broad range of options be considered, in the UK and overseas, and not limited solely to benefiting girls, nor only to partnerships with Quaker bodies
- That the options be assessed against direct impact of the funds and on our commitments to sustainability, equality and peacebuilding.

BYMT-2021-06-06 Review of terms of reference for Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations and Quaker World Relations Committee

We receive draft revised terms of reference for Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) and Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC).

We are grateful to Ellie Harding, Nick Eyre and Graham Torr, the trustees who carried out this review, for the approach they have taken involving extensive consultation and guided by principles for simple central governance structures.

We endorse the proposal that these two bodies should in future be accountable to Meeting for Sufferings instead of Trustees if Meeting for Sufferings is willing to take over this responsibility and should Yearly Meeting agree. We approve the current draft terms of reference and note they will be sent to both committees and to the clerks of Meeting for Sufferings for final comment before we formally approve and adopt them at a future meeting.

We support the suggestion to use common language in all committee terms of reference – perhaps using the Committee Handbook as a common source for all terms – and ask the Recording Clerk to consider how this might be achieved.

We send this minute to QWRC and QCCIR.

BYMT-2021-06-07 Update on consideration of relationship between AMs and BYM Trustees

We have heard from Kate Gulliver and Chris Willmore about work on the relationship between Area Meetings and BYM Trustees.

BYMT-2021-06-08 Risk register

We receive the Risk Register (BYMT-2021-06-08) setting out the strategic-level risks and with updates on the controls and the current actions in place. We note the inclusion of a new risk of change in all parts of the charity being badly managed resulting in decreased impact and increased costs.

Juliet Pager has introduced the item and highlighted an additional strategic level risk on change management. We have asked some questions and given ideas about how risks may change.

BYMT-2021-06-09 Recording Clerk's report to Trustees

We receive a report from the Recording Clerk (paper BYMT-2021-06-08) outlining key changes and developments in delivering our three strategic priorities: thriving Quaker communities, a sustainable and peaceful world, and simplifying structures and practices. The report also includes updates on work against the three criteria for all work: distinctively Quaker, integrated and well-governed. Finally, the report includes an operational update.

We are impressed that so much progress has been made including the preparation for the first ever online Yearly Meeting Gathering. It is challenging given the continued disruption of the pandemic and the uncertainty of change. We are particularly glad to see the work underway on anti-racism and the inclusion of the anti-racism action plan.

We are acutely aware that the pace of change in many parts of the organisation is difficult for staff and committees and demands a lot of work from the Management Meeting. When we decided last year that the effect of the pandemic on the financial position of BYM made it necessary to make changes faster than originally planned, we knew that this would be the most difficult period. We are pleased to hear that the Leeds Hub has opened, that the restructuring of Quaker Life is complete and that three more Local Development Workers are in post. We hold QPSW staff in the light as they work through the staffing changes that emanate from the new QPSW strategy and prioritisation.

BYMT-2021-06-10 Reports from Central Committees

We are joined by Robert Almond and Jeff Beatty, Co-clerks Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee, and Alan Pearmain, Clerk Quaker Life Central Committee for items BYMT-2021-06-10 to BYMT-2021-06-12.

We receive papers from Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC) and Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC) (BYMT-2021-06-09a and BYMT-2021-06-09b) setting out progress against each committee's strategy, their contributions to simplification of our structures, and their consideration of anti-racism.

We have heard from both committees that working largely online has brought challenges – particularly in getting to know each other well – but also new possibilities in holding additional sessions that are open to Friends more widely. We all have work to do on learning how best to carry out discernment online as well as

following our discipline in person. We are grateful to all members of QLCC and QPSWCC for their faithful service.

As trustees, we want to work closely with Central Committees on simplification to make sure that any changes we propose retain what is good and strengthen discernment, governance, and communication with Friends. Critically, structures must be clear so that everyone knows how best to engage with them.

We are pleased to hear of QLCC's work in: steering and caring for the introduction of local development workers; supporting the development of a position on gender issues within Quakers in preparation for Yearly Meeting Gathering; considering and consulting on the use of the term overseer; supporting Safeguarding within Area Meetings (to be considered in a later item); considering how to use the learning from the Quaker Youth Work Development Project now that the pilot project is over; anticipating that the issue of unattached Friends may be helped by experience of the effectiveness of virtual meetings; and in recognising the importance of retaining expertise on Prison Chaplaincy.

QLCC is currently reviewing the role of Quaker Life Representative Council. It is also preparing to take on many of the responsibilities of Quaker Stewardship Committee, ensuring that staff are able to carry out most of the hands-on work, much of which was previously done by Quaker Stewardship Committee members.

QLCC is conscious of the importance of assessing impact and will prioritise this now that the new staff structure is in place. Communication about what Quaker Life is now doing, how meetings can access support, and stories of how meetings are being supported need to be shared with Friends.

It is encouraging to see that Quaker Life's strategy – reflecting the priorities for BYM's work developed during 2018 and 2019 – is now well bedded and that staff and committee members are enjoying their roles and finding that they are better able to support AMs and LMs.

QPSW is still in the middle of its change process. Its new strategy was finalised last year with two interconnected themes – Peace & Peacebuilding, and Sustainability & Climate Justice. The strategy includes fresh thinking about approaches to change such as: community led, political and institutional; partnership and movement building; and skills building and education.

Since the strategy was adopted, QPSWCC has been discerning priorities, and what work should be led centrally and what can be better supported or carried out differently with or without central support.

This does not mean that long cherished and valued concerns are being laid down, but QPSWCC sees considerable scope for new approaches that engage, inspire and draw on discernment from the wider body of Friends. This is a journey that is only just beginning: it can be a real strengthening and enrichment of our Faith in Action if approached in a different, creative and cooperative way.

The development of QPSW work priorities has been challenging. QPSWCC has sought to listen to Friends as widely as possible and will continue to do so, and it

continues to work through the complex changes that are needed. A key part of the formal process takes place in July when QPSWCC continues its dialogue with Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) as laid out in its terms of reference. We forward QPSWCC's minutes describing their discernment to MfS.

We have reflected on our discipline within the Yearly Meeting. We have heard that Central Committee clerks have felt personally threatened by the way that they are being lobbied by some Friends. And we know that sincere Friends who are passionate about particular areas of work have been hurt. We understand that change is always difficult, and remind ourselves, as trustees, and our Central Committees, that we must listen to Friends throughout BYM as well as testing matters in right ordering. But we remember also that loud voices can drown out the still small voice. It is laid upon those appointed through the Nominations process to particular roles prayerfully to discern the right way forward, and on Friends to be tender and loving to those carrying this burden. We ask Friends to hold QPSWCC, and us as trustees, in the light as we address these matters.

Concern has been raised that fear of redundancies has made it difficult for staff to engage creatively and fully with the opportunities we see in QPSWCC's new strategy and ways of working. Management Meeting has delayed determining how the work should be staffed because of concern for the health of staff at this time. We hope that Management Meeting will work collaboratively, without undue delay, to determine an appropriate staffing structure for QPSW, as has been done successfully for Quaker Life. Financial imperatives put urgency on decision making because long term overspends have been exacerbated by loss of income through COVID, and trustees are seeking a balanced budget for 2023. Costs have to be reduced but, so far, all savings have been secured through natural turnover or voluntary redundancy, and we continue to hope that any compulsory redundancies can be minimised.

We hold QPSWCC in the light as they carry out the work that has been laid on them.

We send this minute to QPSWCC and QLCC and forward it to MfS with the QPSWCC minutes.

Archival Note: The potential concern raised in this minute regarding personal threat has been investigated by the BYM Safeguarding Officer and deemed not to constitute a safeguarding issue.

BYMT-2021-06-11 Responding to racism

Further to our minute BYMT-2021-02-14, we receive a paper from the Recording Clerk (BYMT-2021-06-10) and have heard from Quaker Life and QPSW Central Committees.

a) The relationship between Quakers and slavery

We have considered various ways of working on Quakers' relationship with slavery.

We see this relationship as inextricably related to our work on racism. We agree that our first step should be to organise one or more threshing meetings to consider the

options presented to us for further work on Quakers and slavery. This should include Friends who have been working on anti-racism in their own Meetings, those who are more directly affected by the legacy of slavery than others, those with knowledge of the history, and Friends who have challenged aspects of our response to racism so far.

Possibilities for further action are commissioning research, mounting an exhibition to expand on the history of Quakers and slavery as it is commonly told, marking the lives of those affected by slavery, providing materials to support learning in Meetings, or atoning in some way. We look forward to learning more at the sessions on anti-racism at Yearly Meeting which may wish to consider issuing some form of apology. We hope that church and charity can move together on these issues.

We ask Georgina and other(s) to be identified by our Nominations Group to take forward the organisation of one or more threshing meetings.

We ask Finance & Property Committee to ask our investment advisers how the legacy of slavery and exploitation impacts on our current investments.

b) A BYM statement on racism

Further to minute BYMT-2021-04-04 we have considered a draft anti-racism statement to be published on the BYM website. We note that this will be a statement on behalf of the charity only, as a statement on behalf of the whole yearly meeting would need agreement by Yearly Meeting in session. Our intention is to communicate to staff, Quakers, and the organisations we work with.

We agree the draft and ask for it to be posted on the website.

BYMT-2021-06-12 Safeguarding

We are joined by Mark Mitchell, BYM's Safeguarding Officer, for this item.

a) Annual report

We welcome the annual report (BYMT-2021-06-11a) which summarises developments and improvements underway in many areas of our safeguarding: DBS checking, communications and co-ordination, training, policies and procedures, roles and responsibilities, case management and record keeping, and support for Area Meetings, amongst others. We note the current and future priorities.

b) Policies

We receive two draft policies for our approval: BYM Safeguarding Policy and BYM Online Safeguarding Policy (BYMT-2021-06-11b).

We agree the policies, thanking staff for the responses we have received to questions raised.

c) Criminal record (DBS) checks for BYM Trustees

We asked staff to advise us on criminal record checking for Trustees and receive paper BYMT-2021-06-11c. This states the position is not clear cut: trustees of

charities delivering regulated activity must be appropriately checked but we are unclear whether the level and type of activities within BYM make it necessary for all BYM trustees.

A number of us are DBS checked already for other purposes. Our role does not bring us into contact with vulnerable adults or children and we feel the decision is finely balanced. We agree to return to this at a future meeting.

BYMT-2021-06-13 Collections development policy

We are joined by Libby Adams, Head of Library and Archives for this item.

We receive a draft collections development policy for 2021 to 2023 for our approval (BYMT-2021-06-13). Its aim is to make the collection more accessible through digitisation and organisation.

We are grateful for what has already been done to make our archives more accessible.

We approve the policy and welcome it as key to addressing appraisal and cataloguing backlogs.

We note and agree the levels of delegation for decisions about the collection as set out in the paper, and ask for them to be added to the schedule of delegation.

We welcome the plans for communication and engagement, and look forward to hearing about the implementation of the policy.

BYMT-2021-06-14 Anti-racism training

We have completed a session of anti-oppression training and will participate in two more sessions over the next few months.

BYMT-2021-06-15 Climate crisis – spiritual nurture and learning

We receive paper BYMT-2021-06-12 updating us on the progress of this project which is being delivered by Woodbrooke. We are encouraged by the collaboration between Woodbrooke and BYM staff on climate and sustainability work, despite staffing changes at Woodbrooke and the shift to working online during the pandemic.

We note the particularly strong attendance at the monthly “Spiritual Preparation for COP 26” sessions but that there is a need to adapt the project workplan to better support 16–25 year olds. We support the effort being put into improving the monitoring and evaluation framework.

We would ask for more succinct and focused reports in future to enable us to assess the impact of this work against the original objectives and funding plans. We ask staff to consider whether a standard format can be developed for such reports.

BYMT-2021-06-16 Simplifying our central governance structures update

Ellie Harding and Carolyn Hayman have reported progress to us on a series of workshops held with members of Meeting for Sufferings. These workshops have been a valuable step in initiating a conversation with Friends across the Quaker body on how to achieve simpler central structures that are inclusive and sustainable.

We ask that the workshops at Yearly Meeting Gathering, and a series of roadshows during the autumn, continue this conversation without moving to exploring options so that more Friends are brought into the conversation. Meanwhile, we will update central committees and MfS on work so far.

We are grateful for all the work so far. We note that the problems with our current structures are a high risk on our risk register. Change is needed, and must be a change that is embraced by Friends through a full process of discernment that will take time.

We forward this minute to MfS, QLCC and QPSWCC.

BYMT-2021-06-17 Nominations and appointments

We receive a report from our Nominations Group (paper BYMT-2021-06-16).

1) We agree to forward the following names to Yearly Meeting for appointment.

BYM Clerk of Trustees

For appointment by **Yearly Meeting 2021**:

- **Caroline Nursey** (London West AM) to serve 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022.

Yearly Meeting Treasurer

For appointment by **Yearly Meeting 2021**:

- **Linda Batten** (Sheffield and Balby AM) to serve 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022.

For appointment by **Yearly Meeting 2022**:

- **Paul Whitehouse** (Bristol AM) to serve 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023.

2) We agree to the following appointments and release from service.

Finance & Property Committee

- **Paul Whitehouse**, Bristol Area Meeting, from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022, noting that he will be serving as Clerk of Friends Trusts Limited until May 2022 (no conflict of interest).

Audit Committee

- **Paul Whitehouse** (Bristol AM) released from 31 December 2021.
- **John Ashcroft** (Sussex East AM), currently serving on the Audit Committee, to serve as Clerk of the Audit Committee from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2023.

Property Development Steering Group

- **Matt Baker**, Quiet Company representative, to serve for lifetime of group to complete its task.

BYMT-2021-06-18 Trustees' news

We receive a report of the recent activities of Trustees (BYMT-2021-06-17).

BYMT-2021-06-19 Preparing for Meeting for Sufferings and Yearly Meeting Gathering

We have discussed our participation at Meeting for Sufferings to be held in July and at Yearly Meeting Gathering.

We note that BYM Trustees and Meeting for Sufferings will hold a joint special interest meeting at Yearly Meeting Gathering on 27 July, 16:30 to 17:30 (to be planned by Clerks). BYM Trustees will present our report in the main part of the Yearly Meeting session on Sunday 1 August at 14.00. (Meeting for Sufferings will present its report during the session on Saturday 31 July at 10.30.)

BYMT-2021-06-20 Communicating trustees' work

We have considered how to communicate our work to others.

BYMT-2021-06-21 Reviewing the meeting

We have reviewed our meeting.

BYMT-2021-06-22 Time with Recording Clerk

We have spent time with the Recording Clerk.

BYMT-2021-06-23 Time without staff

We have spent time without staff.

Caroline Nursey
Clerk



Yearly Meeting of the
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Update on Simplification of Central Governance Structures

Summary of Sessions

Since the last Meeting for Sufferings we have hosted five workshops. We are grateful for the energy and openness that Friends brought to these sessions. In the workshops we summarised the thinking so far, then held discussions on what brought people joy in the service they gave and how Friends might participate in central governance in different ways. We then provided an opportunity for Friends to suggest solutions for a structure that is simpler, more inclusive, and more sustainable.

The sessions confirmed the desire for radical change and the need to take these discussions beyond Sufferings into the wider body of Friends. It was also clear that Friends will at some point need some potential structures presented to them to allow them to engage further with the simplification of central governance.

The Meeting for Sufferings participants were clear that any structures we consider should reflect our values and help us be visible in the world. They also reconfirmed the need to provide alternative forms of service to best include the gifts and leadings of a wider group of Quakers, including 'task and finish' roles. There was still a need for committee and report-based work but Friends also talked of enjoying facilitation, working with young people and attending seminars.

When considering what brought them most joy when doing central service, these themes emerged:

- Effective team working with Friends House support
- Relationships between Friends
- All age opportunities
- Clarity of purpose and outcomes
- Seeing the impact of the work
- Having enough time for good discernment
- Dealing with things that are important/new

When considering how Meeting for Sufferings could be more inclusive there were suggestions of more threshing groups that could actively bring in a wider membership, from Friends who are not part of area meetings to non-Quakers to support in discernment.

The workshops brought to light areas for improvement regarding how Trustees and Meeting for Suffering work together. Friends felt that Meeting for Sufferings sometimes struggled to exercise leadership, meaning Trustees are drawn in to fill the gap. Clarifying Meeting for Sufferings' remit would make the function of Trustees clearer too. This would result in more collaborative relationship and less 'rubber stamping' by Sufferings.

Next Steps

We heard clear calls during the workshops for more Friends to be involved in this process, which we will now take forward. We have two sessions confirmed at Yearly Meeting to allow other Friends to participate in this conversation. We are planning a roadshow in the autumn for wider Friends to come and take part in the discussion. We hope you will encourage Friends in your Area Meetings to take part.



Yearly Meeting of the
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2021–2024 Triennium meeting dates

In June 2020 Meeting for Sufferings agreed dates of meetings for the triennium 2021–2024 (minute MfS 2020/06/08). However, there was concern about reducing the number of meetings from five to four, given the extent of our business, so Arrangements Group was asked to review the pattern, including the possibility of additional online meetings.

We have got used to online meetings, which although not always ideal, have enabled some flexibility. Arrangements Group has considered how to go forward, bearing in mind:

- The Recording Clerk has advised that committees can meet again in-person from 1st September (subject to government restrictions)
- Any in-person meetings in 2021 will be at Friends House, but other venues can be used from 2022
- From now and throughout 2022 all committees will be working to a pattern of one in-person meeting per annum, with other meetings online
- So that all members can participate and in case of late changes to restrictions, all meetings – even when they're planned to be in-person – should have arrangements in place to allow for the meeting to be online or blended
- The future remains uncertain, and people's circumstances may have changed over the last 18 months; so it makes sense to keep experimenting before settling on new firm arrangements

In the first half of 2020 Meeting for Sufferings 'lost' about 7.5 hours of business time (one cancelled meeting and the first online one reduced to 2 hours).

The second half of 2020 was much more like 'normal' although the residential event was shorter, and we added in two special interest sessions of 1.5 hours, with QCCIR and QWRC. These preparation sessions have been successful and welcomed by representatives.

In the remainder of the triennium we will have had 3 x 4.5 business hours + 2 x 1.5 hours special interest (Support Group preparation session and Assisted Dying) – actually more time than usual.

Expense and the carbon footprint were the compelling reasons behind the proposal to reduce our number of meetings to four each year. The pandemic has precipitated rapid change in modes of working, forcing us, however reluctantly, to embrace technology; the financial imperative is all the greater.

So Arrangements Group proposes that MfS meets four times a year, on the dates already agreed; but with an online preparation session in advance of each meeting. Extra online meetings can be arranged if needed.

Arrangements Group will keep this under review. The practical details for meetings in 2023 and 2024 will need to be considered nearer the time. With some slight changes, the proposed meeting dates are:

2021

- **2 October** – meeting in-person, Friends House (with facilities for Friends to join online) preceded by online induction to the new triennium
- **4 December** – online, with a preparation session in advance

2022

- **4–6 March** – residential meeting (venue to be confirmed)
- **2 July** – online, with a preparation session in advance
- **1 October** – online or in-person (London) with a preparation session in advance
- **3 December** – online, with a preparation session in advance

2023

- 4 March
- 1 July
- 6–8 October
- 2 December

2024

- 2 March
- 1 June (provisional on confirmation of the date of Yearly Meeting that year)



Yearly Meeting of the
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Minutes from Area Meetings

This paper includes minutes from Area Meetings on two matters: renaming of the William Penn Room and Friends House and Covid security in prisons.

Renaming of the William Penn Room

Introduction

Two AMs have sent minutes regarding the naming of a room in Friends House.

This matter was included in BYM Trustees' report to MfS in April (see BYMT minute 2021/02/14), and part of MfS minute 2021/04/08 records:

In the light of the decision, following conversations with Friends of colour, no longer to name a room after William Penn at Friends House, they have commissioned a paper looking at the complex relationship between Quakers and slavery as a first step towards engaging with this. We have heard that it is important to acknowledge the reality of the past including both our good work and our failures to address injustice.

The decision to name rooms after Friends is part of the Quiet Company's commitment to using our buildings in ways that tell the Quaker story.

For practical reasons, the room name is unlikely to be changed until early 2022 (we will need to change signage, information on the website and in print, and materials for hirers). The building was closed until mid-May and there are very few visitors to Friends House at the moment.

There is no intention to write William Penn out of the Quaker story, but to re-balance our understanding of different people's experiences. Trustees have asked staff to bring proposals for ways that the full story of Quakers and slavery can be told. Ideas are still being developed, but might include displays, artwork, a film or publications – and may need to be informed by research. It will be helpful to listen to the views of a newly-emerging 'Black, Brown and People of Colour' Quaker group.

Friends will find it helpful to refer to the recent minute of BYM Trustees – minute BYMT-2021-06-11 Responding to racism – which explains more about how Trustees are taking this forward (paper MfS 2021 07 10).

Minutes from AMs

Northamptonshire Area Meeting held on 9/05/21

21/24. William Penn room at Friends House to be renamed

There is disquiet in our Area meeting that the William Penn room is to be renamed to show that we are anti-racist. We feel that this is a meaningless gesture.

There is much more to this than the renaming of a room. If the name of William Penn is no longer acceptable in our buildings, are we suggesting that we can no longer consider him a spiritual leader who is to be respected, and that his teachings are removed from *Qf&p*?

If we are to stand against racism, we need to be more actively involved in anti-racism activities. We also need to acknowledge that things have happened in the past that may not be acceptable today. We should not try to eradicate the past but accept that all humans are flawed, and we should learn from our failings.

This minute will be forwarded to Clerk to MfS.

Annette Candy, Clerk

North Somerset AM held 9/05/21

We received a report from our representative, Shella Parry, about the April Meeting for Sufferings. We had also noted the report in 'the Friend' on 16th April and the letters page from the 30th April issue.

There was concern about the decision to remove of the name of William Penn from the room in Friends House. We were concerned about the way the decision was made and that it was limited to this name.

The following minute no. 21.17b was agreed:

BYM Trustees have decided that the name of the William Penn Room at Friends House should to be removed following concern that Penn had enslaved people in his household. This has generated many letters in the Friend.

We hope that consideration shall be given to removing the names of historical Quakers from the doors of rooms at Friends House and that there will be a return to a simple identification of all of the rooms by numbers. This action would maintain our testimonies to equality and simplicity.

We ask our Clerk to send a copy of this minute to Meeting for Sufferings.

We hope that Meeting for Sufferings can be made aware of our point of view.

Adrian Shephard, Clerk

COVID security in prisons
North Wales Area Meeting held on 8/05/21

For information, we send this minute to Meeting for Sufferings:

Minute 21/58

We have received a report from the Prison Steering Group, which has been circulated. They urge all local meeting clerks to contact their MPs and MSs asking them to address the issue of COVID security in prison, including the availability of vaccination for both the staff and the men and women leaving the facility.

We send this minute to Meeting for Sufferings.

In Friendship,

Angela Arnold
Helen Still (co-clerks NWAM)



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

QPSWCC Strategy

There are three sections to this paper:

- i. Introduction
- ii. Minutes of QPSWCC held on 28 April
- iii. Nine minutes sent by AMs

i. Introduction (prepared by staff)

The Strategic Priorities for Britain Yearly Meeting, adopted by BYM Trustees, were endorsed by Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) in 2018.

Both Quaker Life (QL) and Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) Central Committees have been working for some time towards new strategies for their work.

Quaker Life

[QLCC's Integrated Strategy for Supporting Quaker Communities](#) was shared with MfS in April 2020 - unfortunately, this was the time that MfS had to be cancelled due to the pandemic, but information about the strategy was shared with representatives. Since then, staffing arrangements in Quaker Life have been re-shaped. Please see the paper for the next agenda item about this.

Quaker Peace and Social Witness

QPSWCC consulted Meeting for Sufferings on its draft strategy 2020-2025 in October 2020, and [QPSWCC's new strategy](#) was shared with MfS last December. QPSWCC has continued to develop this work, and on 28th April the committee recorded two minutes, intended to enable staff to plan the work which will be done in the department to meet the discerned priorities. This is the first Meeting for Sufferings since these two minutes were agreed, and they are copied below for consideration by Meeting for Sufferings.

AM minutes

Nine AMs have sent minutes regarding changes in QPSW and/or QPSW, and the processes that have been followed regarding these changes. The minutes have been sent by: Central Yorkshire, Cornwall, East Cheshire, Gloucestershire, Hertford and Hitchin, Leicester, Mid-Somerset, Staffordshire, and Worcestershire & Shropshire AMs.

Six of the minutes focus on criminal justice work; three raise questions about discernment processes.

Some of the minutes about criminal justice work draw on an email circulated on 22nd April by Quakers in Criminal Justice (QICJ), a Quaker Recognised Body, encouraging its members to raise concerns with MfS via Area Meetings. QPSW Central Committee clerks and their Secretary met with QICJ in May to discuss their concerns.

Criminal justice work

Several of the minutes refer to criminal justice work. It will be helpful for MfS to know that work related to criminal justice currently based in three parts of BYM:

a) [Prison Chaplains](#) and prison visitors, who are supported by a member of staff based in [Quaker Life](#). The Prison Chaplain role provides friendship and spiritual advice (deliberately separated from lobbying work). QLCC has confirmed that support for Prison Chaplains should continue. During the recent restructure of roles in Quaker Life, the staff member who supported prison chaplains but also did other work in QL asked for voluntary redundancy. Following an internal recruitment process an appointment has been made, so staff support for Prison Chaplaincy remains in place, and prison chaplains will learn about this very soon.

b) QPSW's [Crime, Community and Justice](#) programme which advocates for a transformative justice system. It is delivered by a member of staff (0.5 full-time) who remains in post. QPSWCC's minute records its intention to 'lay down the work in its current form' but has asked staff to propose alternative approaches. There may be a need to restructure roles in QPSW but there are no clear plans at present.

c) [Bake the Difference](#), a project run in partnership with London Pathways, which provides training and support to ex-offenders with a diagnosis of personality disorder, and supplies the Quiet Company with baked goods for sale in the Friends House café and restaurant.

QPSWCC sub-committees and groups

The central committees are empowered by their Terms of Reference to set up sub-committees and groups, but these groups are not described or required by Quaker faith and practice. They work in a variety of ways.

QPSWCC has been considering possible changes to sub-committees and groups for some time, and the process has included meetings with members of the sub-committees and groups, to make sure they feel informed and contribute to the discernment.

ii. Minutes of Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee

Held online via Zoom video conferencing
28 April 2021

Present: Robert Almond (co-clerk), Jeff Beatty (co-clerk), Ann Bettys, Mike Coote, Abigail Darton, Ann Davison, Annie Dickson, Adam Drury, Alan Keith, Caroline Kibblewhite, Tim Landsman, Jonathan Lingham, Elize Sakamoto

Prevented: None

Staff: Suzanne Ismail, Oliver Robertson (secretary), Clare Wood

QPSWCC 21/25 QPSW STRATEGY – OVERVIEW

We have spent time at two meetings (16th April and 28th April) reflecting on how to give greater clarity, and better support to the critical next stages around the implementation of our new five-year Work Programme Strategy.

Ahead of these meetings we have heard from representatives of our current sub-committees and groups, that whilst broadly positive and open to full engagement with the process of change, there is concern about the pace of this change, and that some of the detail has not yet been sufficiently developed or outlined. We are acutely aware of the effect this is having on our staff team, as changes in structure to meet the demand of the new strategy have fallen at the same time that BYM departments have been asked to reduce spending budgets by around 30% (by 2023).

When working on the new strategy, the key focus of Central Committee has been to identify what work should be our priority, and how this is best supported, rather than what the budgets should be. In addition, there are significant issues relating to the pandemic, and to wider organisational changes within BYM such as the setting up of regional hubs and a team of Local Development Workers that need to be considered when considering the detail of these changes.

We recognise that this has been a challenging and difficult situation for all; we regret this and are sorry for any pain caused. We look to learn lessons for the future, and are committed to respond to this with love and with as much time as we are able to give. We commit fully within our remit as a Central Committee to a process of change that has open communication; that demonstrates respect and care for those carrying out work on our behalf, whilst being driven by the vision we have discerned for our new five-year strategy.

In our reflections, we have discerned a need for four core actions:

- 1. To provide a clear and simple outline – a crystallisation, of what we see as the key elements of our new strategy.** As a committee we have spent a considerable amount of time on this strategy. We are clear on the vision, but can

see a need to provide greater clarity on the overarching approaches and changes we seek.

2. **To set out clearly which work areas we believe should be prioritised for delivery and/or support by BYM staff.** Alongside this, our vision is for several work areas and concerns of Friends to be supported and led differently. In particular, to build on an appetite for more work to grow directly from the actions of local and area meetings and/or from Quaker Recognised Bodies. We know this needs considerable work to develop, and in doing this we seek to draw heavily on the input from Friends serving on sub-committees and group, and elsewhere. We hope that this newly prioritised work will also help to strengthen the visibility of the Society, our faith in action and attract more people to Quakers.
3. **To set out proposals on a simplified governance structure.** A structure that is more strategic, and mirrors key objectives from our new strategy. To have greater agility, to be more cross-cutting across programme areas, but which retains at its core discernment by Friends from across BYM on what work is carried out in our name by our professional and dedicated teams of staff.
4. **To make clear our strong support for the processes of re-organisation that are carried out with as much engagement and input as possible from staff.** In line with BYM's existing HR policies we wish to affirm a strong commitment to approaches that avoid wherever possible any compulsory redundancies, by for example a creative approach to redeployment, retraining and staged implementation. In this, we are aware that reductions in spends over the last year have taken us a considerable way towards meeting the call from BYM Trustees to achieve a balanced budget by 2023 and that this can help this commitment.

1. Our vision – the core elements of our strategy

On the first action, we have agreed the following as a set of statements that we hope will provide greater clarity on what we see as the core elements of the strategy:

Guided by the spirit, our vision for this strategy is:

- For our work over the next five years to be focussed around two core and interlinked themes – Peace & Peacebuilding, and Sustainability & Climate Justice.
- To spread our central work programmes less thinly. We believe doing more on fewer areas will achieve more overall.
- Our focus should be on areas where Quakers have a distinctive approach that can enhance change, and help build a more peaceful world.
- Alongside centrally managed work, we will seek to support greater action by local and area meetings and by Quaker Recognised Bodies. We hear a call for greater Quaker witness and activism, and believe more can be achieved on some concerns by this change in approach.
- For our centrally managed work we recognise a need for greater agility – for us to respond quickly where this is needed, even if this means laying down or pausing some work.

- Where this will achieve more and better outcomes, we support better cross-programme activity. Our vision for a peaceful world is not contained in siloes, and the organisation of our work programmes should support this approach.
- There are many gifts and skills in our staff teams and in those involved as members and attenders in the Society of Friends. We value all of these, and whilst small in numbers our vision and yearning for change is expanding.

2. Our proposals for how we prioritise our work programmes

We are clear that it is the responsibility of QPSW Central Committee to set the overarching priorities for our programme of work – whether managed centrally, supported locally, or in partnership with Quaker Recognised Bodies and organisations such as Woodbrooke.

In carrying out this role, we seek to be led by the spirit but also to call on Friends with knowledge in these areas to help our discernment.

We have set out in a further minute (QPSWCC 21/26) our proposals on what this means for our existing programmes, and for the way we might support activity centrally and locally, with BYM staff.

3. Governance arrangements

In previous minutes (QPSWCC 20/35 and 20/51) we set out the six guiding principles we would use to propose changes to the governance of this work.

We value the work and dedication our sub-committees and groups have shown throughout this process and in their governance of parts of QPSW's work.

We will review our governance structure at our July meeting. We recognise that as the work changes, the governance arrangements should match this: if there is a mismatch between work and governance that will damage our ability to effectively oversee and guide the work. We continue to work and reflect on this and will seek to openly engage with our existing sub-committees and groups. We have seen some benefits as well as challenges from being able to meet 'virtually' through IT platforms such as Zoom and these proposals will include some reflections on this.

4. Staffing changes

The terms of reference for QPSW Central Committee do not include direct responsibilities for the management or structure of our staff team. The budget for QPSW is set by BYM Trustees, and they are clear that urgent reductions in spending are essential. Central Committee acknowledges this, and the implications for prioritisation of the work. We remain ambitious in the work that we are led to undertake, and will seek creatively the best pathways to achieve this, including seeking increased budgets where circumstances and the need align.

We know having a professional, well-supported and valued team is critical to everything we do. We also know that valuing and caring for people working for the

Society of Friends is not simply a legal requirement but is itself a 'requirement' of our Quaker values and testimonies. In all our direct contact with staff we have been enormously impressed with the dedication, care, knowledge and professionalism they bring to their work – work that is carried out in our name. For the process of change to our staffing structures to implement our new strategy, and in the way we respond to achieving a balanced budget, Central Committee asks our senior staff to continue creatively to use the spirit and the letter of our HR policies to avoid compulsory redundancies wherever possible.

We ask that the view of Central Committee on this matter is shared with BYM Trustees and with members of Employment Committee.

We send this minute to our sub-committees and groups, and to BYM Trustees.

QPSWCC 21/26 QPSW STRATEGY – IMPLICATIONS FOR WORK AREAS

This minute describes how QPSW Central Committee would like to see QPSW's work develop in the light of the new strategy. This includes continuing work, growing work, and laying some work down in its current form. Alongside this, we seek to build on the appetite for work to grow more from the actions of local and area meetings and/or Quaker Recognised Bodies. While this discernment is the conclusion of our consideration of priorities at this time, we want to work with sub-committees, groups and staff to continue to develop work that is led by the Spirit that is responsive to the world and to Quaker concerns, but recognises that the ends we seek may require patient work over years or decades.

Our strategy highlights the importance of the way we work, as well as what we do. It reminds us of our faith-led commitments to nonviolence, collaboration, justice and equity, and to working where we are invited and welcomed. As a committee, we recognise need to embed and examine these principles within and between ourselves, as well as in the work.

And our strategy challenges us to be 'responsive to the needs of communities – especially those with experience of structural violence and injustice'. We agree with our sub-committees that there is a tension between having 'the privilege to do' and the desire to overturn privilege that is often based on the oppression of others. We uphold our staff as they work to develop a culture of openness, inclusivity and anti-oppression, and we will seek to learn about and practice this across QPSW's governance structures.

Some of our work is Britain-based and some has an international focus. We recognise that many issues in Britain have a global perspective, and that many international conflicts stem from injustice and global inequality in which Britain is complicit. Staff have shared a desire to connect and bridge national and international work. We hope to see mutual learning, collaboration and partnership across all the work, and we hope to better support these connections through our governance structures.

Our strategy asks us to act as 'allies and companions for communities suffering from violence or oppression where we are invited, to help develop responsive and

creative peacebuilding strategies within communities suffering from violence, and to facilitate collaboration and listening between stakeholders'. Our strategy also compels us to 'addresses the negative impact of colonialism and imperialism, in order to more effectively achieve nonviolent social change'. We are glad that all our international programmes are already seriously considering how to attend to damaging colonial legacies in the work and we uphold staff and sub-committees and groups in this, and ask they share learning and ideas for 'decolonising' the work with QPSW Central Committee so that we too can learn.

Areas of work

We see political advocacy, nonviolent campaigning, networking and wider witness support, all as key components of QPSW's work. We have heard that it is important that we do not create further siloes by approach, so we ask staff to ensure that the work outlined below is integrated and agile, with staff able to collaborate in different ways at different times. We agree with the Economics & Sustainability (ES) Sub-committee that we 'need to find ways to connect our focus areas of climate justice and peace: that militarism and war are powerful drivers of climate change, and climate change is a driver of oppression and violent conflict', underpinned by an unjust and extractive economy.

/1 Advocacy and campaigning

Our strategy asks us to 'engage with those in power to work for social systems, policies and structures that prioritise peaceful and sustainable communities'.

We have heard that we are not at our most effective when we work on many separate political themes, and that we should commit sufficient time and expertise to work in coalitions, to build relationships with policy makers and to support Quakers speaking out alongside and as part of our centrally managed work. There are also times when we will be compelled to speak out on a concern, even if it is not an area we currently work on. ***This has led us to the idea of priority and 'watching brief' themes, and we ask staff to further develop and implement use of these concepts.***

We are committed to ongoing political advocacy work on peace issues, including disarmament and militarism. We also understand that other organisations are doing this work well and that some of our role may be in signposting to them rather than duplicating their work. ***We ask peace-focused staff to listen to knowledgeable Quakers and others about where it is important to do Quaker-led peace advocacy, and to work with political advocacy staff to decide on and implement advocacy priorities. We envisage that the need for peace advocacy may also arise from the peacebuilding work described below.***

We have heard that our ES programme has worked hard to define a Quaker contribution to the movement for climate justice that addresses the need for systems change, and that the ES team are playing an active and important role in supporting and convening interfaith networks to engage with climate justice advocacy. ***We wish to uphold and continue this work, and will look for ways, including through our governance review, to integrate the learning and practice with our peacebuilding work.***

To enable us to do the work above in an integrated and agile way, we agree to do less staff-led work on criminal justice as a theme by itself. However, we wish to explore whether this longstanding Quaker concern can be retained as a 'watching brief' topic, including whether there are experienced Quakers on the committee or wider community, who would be willing to work with us to respond to key political opportunities or concerns, as we do on migration and torture. ***We ask staff to work with the Social Justice Sub-committee (SJS) to lay down this programme in its current form, in an appropriate time frame. We invite them to share with us ideas about how we might incorporate their analysis into our wider work on peacebuilding, and drawing on expertise from other relevant committees and groups.*** We deeply value the excellent work of staff and the SJS and its predecessor committee over many years. This work has evolved to encompass a vision of a transformed system, and we intend that the peacebuilding work described below is a part of building this. Criminal justice will remain a concern for Quakers in Britain, and we will continue to engage with Quakers in Criminal Justice and other Quaker groups working in this area.

/2 Supporting Quakers in their witness

Our strategy asks us to 'generate wider and more effective participation in work towards a peaceful and sustainable world', and commits us to 'developing skills, knowledge and confidence in strategic nonviolent social change'. We know that changing policy and power often requires coordinated nonviolent campaigning, strong networks of people acting together, and deep relationships that can sustain and inspire us in our shared endeavours.

We know that as well as looking to QPSW for ways to get involved in our centrally discerned advocacy and campaigns, Quaker communities and individual Friends also very much welcome QPSW accompaniment and supporting in the witness they are led to do themselves. We have a range of existing work in this area, from Turning The Tide's (TTT) nonviolence workshops and resources, to the Social Justice Subcommittee's booklet on power and privilege, and project support from the Grants Group and ES programme. We have also heard from staff that this work could be even more effective if planned and delivered in a cross-programmatic way. Working with Quakers, and helping them to inspire each other, we can be more than the sum of our parts, and more embedded in the needs and spirit of our Quaker community. We see an ongoing need for both thematic support and more general support for encouraging and inspiring effective action. Supporting Friends to witness to the peace testimony in a range of ways, remains a priority.

We ask staff to continue to support inspiring nonviolent campaigning by Friends, focussing on our priority themes of peacebuilding and climate justice, and continuing to find and amplify the energy of Quakers. We ask staff to prioritise this area.

We ask staff to continue to support Quaker witness beyond nonviolent campaigning, which might include supporting local initiatives, building Friends' skills and analysis, networking Friends together, mapping activity and energy, allocating grants and helping to test ideas and concerns. We understand that a needs analysis

is planned and look forward to seeing the work develop in response to this. We also recognise that some of this is beyond QPSW, and ask staff to work with the Local Development Team and Woodbrooke as it develops this work. ***We ask staff to prioritise this area.***

While a great many Friends value and are part of QPSW work, throughout our strategy process, we have also heard some concern that there is all too often a disconnect between the centrally managed work and the wider body of Friends. We feel it is vital to address this: QPSW's work belongs to all Quakers in Britain. The work is strengthened by Friends knowing about it, upholding it and – where possible – playing an active role in it. We are heartened by the interest in recent events like last year's spring sessions. We hope that it will be possible to build on the learning from this, potentially developing new ways to ensure that Friends know about this important work and how they can engage in it. ***We ask staff to continue to inform and engage Quakers in QPSW's work.***

/3 Networking and movement building

Quakers have often played an important role in offering space or convening networks, for example through our peace programmes, as a part of building wider movements. Increasingly staff have been finding ways to connect Quakers to each other too, so that they can inspire and learn from each other. Our International Peacebuilding Sub-committee (IPS) have suggested that Turning The Tide East Africa could act as an 'international hub or network that shares, promotes and develops the skills of activism, and not just to Quakers'. ***We are excited by the possibilities of learning, networking and movement building in our work with Quakers and beyond, and ask staff to explore our current and potential role in convening and networking, within programmes and across the work.***

/4 Peacebuilding in Britain

We see all our work as part of building a 'just peace', a peaceful world which is underpinned by principles of equality and justice. As part of this, we wish to explore work on peacebuilding in Britain, which considers what role Quakers can play in attending to the deep divisions and conflict in our society. Our sub-committees and groups have asked us 'what are we doing to encourage the important conversations within our own Society?' ***We ask this work to consider the personal and relational aspects of change, alongside the structural.***

Turning the Tide Britain already does important work in supporting Quakers and others to use the approaches of nonviolent peacebuilding, whilst developing relationships with peacebuilders in the wider community. TTT and our Conciliation Group have told us that to transform violent conflict (or the potential for it) into nonviolent conflict, we need both nonviolent action to shift power and challenge injustice, and peacebuilding approaches. We have heard that these approaches are not often combined in Britain and we are excited by the possibilities of learning from the work of colleagues in East Africa as we develop our work here.

We understand that our **Crime, Community and Justice work** has shifted to encompass the concept of transformative justice, which means finding ways to build up more equitable structures, and treats conflict as a transformative relational and

educational opportunity. We see all this as linking to the work of Rethinking Security (a partner organisation focused on peace and security) with which our **Peace and Disarmament programme** already has a strong relationship.

We ask staff to undertake scoping for this work, drawing on the expertise and ideas of staff, relevant committees and peace practitioners in the wider community. We understand that TTT have already proposed some possible areas for scoping and ask staff to continue to explore how we can integrate both peacebuilding and nonviolent campaigning, whilst considering how this work could draw on and enhance the peace witness of Friends.

/5 Supporting younger generations (including peaceworkers)

We want work to support younger generations (including peaceworkers, interns, Geneva summer school, next generation of conciliators) to continue. If we cannot do all the work we want in this area, this should be a priority growth area in the future. As recruitment for the peaceworker scheme takes place in the first half of each year, we have time to consider any changes to this work before the next round of recruitment takes place in 2022. We note there are benefits to both peaceworkers and staff in having multiple peaceworkers, and recognise the importance of having sufficient management capacity to support peaceworkers well.

/6 Peace Education

This work is thriving. An independent evaluation of the programme in 2018 found that the work is 'pioneering', that it is engaging large numbers of people, supporting children to develop a commitment to peace and shifting the culture of education towards peace and justice. It concluded that the work 'is strategically vital to the future of the field in the UK'. We have heard that the programme is providing support for Quaker peace education initiatives, supporting peer learning and networking, and advocating for peace education through the sustainable development goals. The programme also has important links with Scottish and Welsh initiatives and is expanding teacher training as an important way to influence the education system. There are many opportunities emerging through this work, some of which have huge potential to influence the understanding of and commitment to peace. ***We wish to continue this work, and to grow it if resources become available.***

/7 Grants

Grant-making will remain a core part of our witness. QPSW provides staff capacity for Quaker Housing Trust, although it is an independent organisation. Many QPSW grants are ring-fenced for particular activities, but we hope that small grants can continue to support the efforts of Friends working for peacebuilding and climate justice. ***We hope that this work can be better integrated into the wider work of QPSW, with two-way learning shared amongst staff and committees.***

/8 Sanctuary Everywhere

As planned, the Sanctuary Everywhere programme will come to an end by the end of 2021. We are hugely thankful to the staff and committee for their continuing dedicated and excellent work. The programme has helped Quakers to offer welcome to those experiencing forced migration, and it has worked with partners to challenge

the unjust and violent immigration system in the UK. The programme has had some of the highest Quaker engagement of any QPSW work, and there is much to learn from this. It has enabled collective advocacy, built a network and brought racial justice work into QPSW. The issue of forced migration is only likely to worsen and we know that many meetings will want to continue to operate and campaign as Sanctuary Meetings. ***We ask that staff consider how it could be possible to retain elements of the network as part of our witness support or peacebuilding in Britain work and to continue working with the Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network (QARN) to advocate for political change. We want to continue the inclusion of people with lived experience across our work and governance.***

/9 Turning The Tide East Africa

The work in **East Africa** is thriving. It combines nonviolent campaigning with peacebuilding, and a strong focus on learning and networking with the rigour of analysis and evaluation. This work is led by partners in Kenya, Rwanda and Burundi, and we understand that there are many opportunities for expansion across the region. ***We commit to continuing to resource this work, tapering financial support in Kenya when possible.*** We hope that QPSW will draw from and learn from this work in its peacebuilding work in Britain, and are glad that Turning The Tide Britain has already been strengthening these links.

/10 Conciliation

We have heard that **international conciliation work** is ‘a calling to respond to situations of armed conflict’, and that the work includes ‘deep listening, establishing and earning trust, and upholding unswervingly our firm belief in that of God in the other person’. We consider these skills vital in responding to violence, dehumanisation and division referred to in our strategy. In relation to current conciliation work, our partners have consistently said that they want the spiritual and practical support offered by Quakers to assist them in their peace process. ***The current conciliation group remain committed to this work and we ask QPSW to continue to provide administrative support.*** We understand that conciliation in Britain may be difficult, in part because of our advocacy work, but we have also heard there is much to be learnt from this quiet, responsive work. ***We ask staff to consider how we might nurture conciliation skills more widely (including with support from the existing conciliation team), following on from our intergenerational conciliation event in 2019.***

/11 Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)

QPSW operates the British and Irish branch of EAPPI, which is a worldwide initiative of the World Council of Churches. EAPPI has the largest on-the-ground monitoring presence of any human rights organisation working in Palestine. ***We want it to continue as the current expression of our work in the Middle East.*** The situation on the ground has deteriorated in recent years, linked to the rise in nationalist politics and the de-prioritisation of human rights and international law, as described in our strategy. Violence and demolitions have increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, when international monitors have not been present. Returned Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs), and organisations and coalitions working with EAPPI, have

important roles to play in holding the British and Irish governments to account; EAs are playing a central role in Irish advocacy. While Britain has a historical responsibility for harm in many parts of the world, this is very much the case in Israel and Palestine. Quakers have been challenged in this work, and this has sometimes led to rich collaboration and learning, including on antisemitism. This, and the programme's model of 'accompaniment' and approach of 'principled impartiality', places justice at its core, which then provides rich learning for all of QPSW's work. We are grateful to EAPPI staff for so carefully monitoring risks. ***We ask staff to keep us informed of factors which affect the running of the programme and to continue to seek external funding, including increased funding from other churches.***

We send this minute to our sub-committees and groups, and to BYM Trustees.

Jeff Beatty and Robert Almond, Co-Clerks

iii. Minutes received from Area Meetings

Central Yorkshire AM held on 09/05/2021

Minute 5 Central support for prison chaplains

We have received Minute 6 of Wooldale PM, held 2 May 2021. This is filed with these minutes. It includes a report from Diana Luther-Powell, our Quaker Prison Chaplain (QPC), and a copy of an email from Quakers in Criminal Justice. Diana has spoken to this.

The change in strategy of QPSW has resulted in the laying down of specific areas of work previously done by QPSW staff, including Criminal Justice. The Chaplaincy Support Worker for the past 8 years, has ended up taking redundancy at very short notice. This has resulted in a sudden and alarming loss of expertise and support for the QPCs and the QPC Committee. This had already been experienced when the staff member was furloughed during the pandemic, and resulted in an unsustainable workload on QPCC, while the effect on QPCs was only mitigated because many QPCs were not actually going into their prisons. There has been no consultation with the QPCC.

Diana has clarified that the support worker at Friends House was employed by Quaker Life for 3.5 days per week, supporting prison, hospital and university chaplains. However she was able to provide support whenever needed. Diana is particularly concerned about responsibility and accountability. Should, for example, a complaint be made about a prison chaplain, who would take on the responsibility of dealing with this? How will prison chaplains' expenses be handled?

The clerk of the Quaker Prison Chaplains Committee has expressed serious concern about the loss of central support and the lack of consultation. A one day a week post

may be advertised for one of the local development workers to take up, but it is feared that this is unlikely to provide sufficient capacity and expertise to give the necessary support to the committee and to the chaplains themselves.

Our Quaker prison chaplains have a very important role in working with both Quakers and others who are in prison. While we accept that we have a duty to ensure that the central work of the Society is reassessed in order to make the best use of the resources we have, this must not be at the expense of supporting those who will be continuing to serve in this challenging area of witness. We are concerned that these changes have been rushed, without adequate consideration of the implications. We ask Meeting for Sufferings to consider how this can be addressed.

Ruth McTighe, Clerk

Cornwall AM held on 08/05/2021

Cornwall Area Meeting, gathered on the 8.05.2021, has asked the clerk of the Meeting to send this minute to the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings, in the light of what seems to be a decision of BYM Trustees to lay down the Crime and Community work of QPSW and, as part of this, the central support for Quakers in Criminal Justice.

It seems that due procedure in making this decision may not have been followed, ref. QF&P 7.03.

We acknowledge that decision making during the Covid 19 pandemic is no easy task. We understand that in difficult financial circumstances priorities have to be set and reviews made, but we are deeply saddened and anxious at the effect on our long-standing Quaker witness to Criminal Justice specifically, and also the effect on serving staff with specialist skills, understanding and experience at Friends House and beyond.

We ask that as a matter of urgency this matter be given full consideration at the next Meeting for Sufferings, to be held on 10.07.20

Jan Webb, Clerk

East Cheshire AM (received 8/04/21)

Minute 21.03.10 Restructuring within BYM – Towards a Simpler Church

East Cheshire Area Meeting agreed to send this minute to MfS, Trustees and YM Agenda Committee. Attached are two articles from East Cheshire Friends as mentioned in the minute.

21.03.10 Minute from Frandley Meeting: 12. Restructuring Within Britain Yearly Meeting – Towards a Simpler Church.

We recognise the enormous amount of work that all bodies, including Trustees, have been undertaking in such challenging circumstances and we are very grateful for this

work. But we hear a growing anxiety that so much change is being carried forward right now whilst discernment at all levels, from local meetings to Yearly Meeting in session has been so strained. We have heard and reflected on a deep uneasiness among some Friends about the current restructuring process within Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM), around its discernment, decision-making, centrally-managed work and staffing. We acknowledge the impact that Covid/Lockdown has had on Quaker processes which, on occasions due to the meetings occurring on Zoom, has led to less discernment on some issues.

We would ask that:

- Meeting for Sufferings, and BYM Trustees, discern a more measured timescale for deciding on proposed changes in processes, governance structures, staffing and work programmes over the next two years, in order to allow space for our existing structures at all levels to recover from the covid pandemic disruption and work together.
- Meeting for Sufferings consider any proposals for restructurings over the next two years very carefully, asking themselves how MfS will have the space to give these adequate discernment, and about what is needed to enable us to go forward as a spirit-led church
- Yearly Meeting 2021 is given sufficient agenda space to enable meaningful discussion and discernment about how the RSoF is evolving and how we will ensure that our structures provide what we need for deep, spiritually rooted witness.

We agree to send this minute to MfS, Trustees and to Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee, with brief outlines from two Area Meeting Friends giving examples of these issues that they have experienced.

Hilary Brooks, Anne Sumner
Co-Clerks

Attachments to minute from East Cheshire AM:

Attachment 1: QPSW – problems in the process of restructuring

The last 12 months have been gruelling for many, perhaps everyone, involved in QPSW restructuring. The covid pandemic has made formal and informal ways to share, listen, include and discern extremely difficult. It feels that the Quaker Business Method has been not just stressed but seriously weakened at a time when really fundamental changes are being decided, and that a timetable has been adopted which, without intending to, continues to marginalise Friends.

Background

QPSW is currently governed by nominated Friends serving on Central Committee (CC), which senior managers attend, and eight Sub Committees and Groups (SC&Gs) who accompany the different work programmes and which programme

staff attend. The SC&G Terms of Reference include discerning work priorities, checking that work programmes are achievable within available resources, monitoring and evaluation. (note1)

Work had not long started at Central Committee level to discern the new QPSW Strategy 2020-2025 when the covid pandemic and lockdown hit. Most QPSW staff were then furloughed, including some SC&G secretaries. So most QPSW Sub-Committees and Groups (SC&Gs) could not meet officially for many months. Meetings of any kind have been, and continue to be, on zoom. Central Committee and senior managers strove to continue the process of Strategy development despite the obstacles, and during the year four consultation papers were sent out to SC&Gs, who met informally, making their own arrangements, to seek to provide discerned responses. A great deal of effort was put in on all sides. (Though of course the insights and voices of programme staff were largely absent, being furloughed).

Yet the process has felt confusing and alienating. On the one hand the SC&Gs produced written responses to a timetable operating despite covid. On the other, SCGs felt increasingly that they were not being heard, that their comments had little impact on the strategy development, and that there was no real feedback or dialogue. This meant that some 80% of Friends serving our QPSW structures have felt marginalised by the process. At the same time CC worked hard to make progress on the Strategy despite all the restrictions, and periodically agreed various principles and high level objectives. The communication of CC decisions to SCGs was hampered as CC minutes were not routinely shared, something CC did not realise.

Growing concern

Feeling isolated, SC&G clerks initiated a process of sharing, between themselves, copies of what they had sent to CC, in order to help build a better understanding of the insights and experience that each was able to offer to the restructuring. When they compared these responses, it became clear that SC&Gs had been repeatedly voicing similar questions and concerns.

These questions and concerns continued, indeed became more urgent, after the QPSW Strategy 2020-2025 was formally adopted by Central Committee in November 2020. They include – that the speed of proposed changes has meant that time for reflection and dialogue was being crushed out; that the proposed implementation of the strategy would make QPSW feel more like a secular NGO than a spirit-led church; that the meaning and implications of some of what had been agreed were very unclear; that there seemed to be assumptions about the existing work programmes that differed from SC&Gs' own understanding; and that the proposals for governance would lead to much reduced capacity for discernment.

There seemed to be an assumption that, in seeking to respond to calls from Trustees for a simpler charity, – for more direct engagement of Quakers on the bench, and for Quakers, supported by Local Development Workers (LDWs) to take more

responsibility for work and witness locally, rather than such work involving centrally managed staff, – the existing structures and processes were totally failing to do this and so needed a complete shake-up.

COVID and the cuts

Although the QPSW Strategy review/redevelopment process started separately from the process of cuts, the current reality is that the restructuring is now being considered in the context of a 30% reduction in QPSW resources. Some QPSW staff have left, and their posts have been frozen. Nevertheless, HR and Staffing is outside the remit of both CC and SC&Gs. So, clearly, proposals for future staffing have to come from senior managers.

The timetable and process adopted when the Strategy was agreed, greatly intensified the concerns of SC&Gs. The task of translating the very high level objectives agreed in the Strategy into concrete work programmes and priorities, as well as staff structures, was given to senior managers, and the timetable proposed adopting these without any real dialogue with the SC&Gs. The SC&Gs were thus to continue to have a marginal role, although they are made up of nominated Friends who know the work areas thoroughly, and bring their knowledge of the concerns and experiences of local Friends around the country. A further sense of unease came from knowing that, although the Strategy has now been to Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) twice (once while being formulated, and again after adoption by CC) MfS representatives may not be aware that most of the nominated Friends in the existing QPSW structures feel serious concerns about the process to date and going forward.

The SC&Gs have now been asked to continue until new structures are in place but they are now operating in limbo, unable to discern work priorities for 2021 as the cuts and restructuring continue.

The beginnings of dialogue

The SC&Gs eventually sent a joint statement of concern to CC clerks in early February 2021 and asked to meet with them, given there had been provision for direct dialogue at any point so far. This was copied to Paul Parker, asking for advice about how to raise concerns with Meeting for Sufferings and Trustees as it was felt that some of the issues about the way that the restructuring is happening are wider than just internal to QPSW. Paul's suggestions were that QPSW restructuring should remain in QPSW and SC&Gs should not attempt to address the wider issues until later in 2021, when Trustees are expected to have brought questions around taking a radical approach to our structures to Meetings for Sufferings

Following the joint Statement of Concern, CC clerks have met twice with SC&G clerks to discuss the process, in mid-February and again at the end of March. CC had already spent some 16 or 17 months on formulating the new Strategy and discussing possible new priorities and structures. Yet for many, it is only now at this point that there is the beginning of a sense of dialogue and inclusive Quaker process.

The key decisions on work priorities and programmes, on staffing structures, and on future governance are still to be made. Understandably, CC wish for the principles and objectives they have already agreed to be carried forward into concrete changes, but have also now said they hope for an open process going forward. SC&Gs, while conscious that they (and many staff) are not yet clear about what these principles and objectives are meant to mean, and question some of the assumptions in them, also want to contribute, as part of an inclusive, spirit-led process, to a vision and structures and priorities that will serve our QPSW witness for the next few years.

But at the moment, it is still unclear whether this can happen effectively. Although the timetable adopted in November proved unrealistic, the sense of urgency driving cuts and staffing changes remains. The voluntary redundancy and vacancy freeze policies already implemented are shaping the resourcing of QPSW work, and it is not clear that staffing structures will follow discernment about work priorities rather than precede them.

In conclusion

This note has been written to help Meeting for Sufferings, Trustees and Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee understand the context behind the East Cheshire Area Meeting minute, and its call for adequate time to reflect on and discern the way forward during such major changes. Everyone involved has been acting with best intentions and much dedicated work and service to seek to translate the calls of Trustees, the witness of Quakers round BYM, and the work of dedicated staff into a vibrant QPSW strategy for the future, and to do so in the very, very difficult circumstances brought about by the pandemic. Yet the process has been failing, and does not yet reflect the best of Quaker discernment and spirit-led guidance. It is not too late to change that.

Note 1: The SC&G do include a variety of forms of working within them. For example, in some, the nominated Friends do much of the actual programme work. In some, the work programmes have full time or part time programme staff. In a couple e.g. EAPPI the Committee includes non-Quaker representatives. However, the concerns about the restructuring have been voiced across the SC&Gs.

Attachment 2: Response to AM minute to MfS on restructuring

It has been my privilege to serve on a subcommittee of Quaker Life for the past 5 years.

In common with most Friends I was happy to take on the additional work and responsibility as part of my service to the Society of Friends.

I am saddened and disappointed that during the last year major changes made will affect the workings of sub-committees such as the one I sit on. These changes also affect the BYM staff supporting us and I consider have been made without due diligence.

During the past year, supporting staff have been put on furlough. As a result, committees meeting and continuing their work in isolation has led to a lack of communication about decisions being made. Information about these decisions have been filtered through informal channels and rumour– increasing the sense of insecurity and concern. This also led to a very large increase in workload on committee members particularly the Clerk which is not sustainable in the long term.

As a result of becoming aware of proposed changes affecting the work of our committee through these informal channels, we were able to insist on an opportunity to put our case. It became apparent that there was a lack of understanding of what we do, which led to some of the proposed changes being reversed.

Change is always difficult and we all appreciate the financial problems faced by organisations during this pandemic. However I feel that this process has been made far more stressful and painful by the lack of consultation and communication of the discernment leading to decisions.

I am distressed that this process of change in the present circumstances will have made the staff changes and job losses within BYM even more painful than they might otherwise have been. As a Quaker I feel that these changes are being made in my name and I am so sorry.

Gloucestershire AM held on 21 June 2021

2021/36 Criminal Justice

We have met today to continue discernment on criminal justice work, which we were unable to complete at our meeting on 13 June (our minute 2021/35). We are grateful to Juliet Prager, Deputy Recording Clerk of BYM, for joining our meeting.

Andrew Turrall has spoken to a paper prepared in the last few days by the Criminal Justice Group, which sets out the group's concerns about staff and budget reductions in Quaker Life and QPSW, and the effects on the Society's criminal justice work; and also the group's concerns about the way these decisions were taken. A copy is in the AM Dropbox.

An experienced staff member, who supported the work of Quaker prison chaplains, has taken redundancy. QL have recruited a replacement, but the hours which will be made available to support prison chaplains will be half what they previously were. QPSW has agreed a strategy for 2021-25 which takes account of reduced financial resources, and which focuses work on peace and peace-building; and on sustainability and climate justice. Existing staff-led work on criminal justice issues will be laid down. In its place QPSW will explore whether there are experienced Friends who would be willing to work with QPSW to respond to key political opportunities or concerns. QPSW say that they will continue to engage with Quakers in Criminal Justice and other groups. A copy of the new strategy is in the AM Dropbox. QPSW consulted Meeting for Sufferings on a draft of the new strategy in October 2020, and Meeting for Sufferings received the strategy in final form in February. Juliet Prager has told us that detailed decisions about QPSW have not yet been made, and that changes are likely to happen slowly.

Quakers in Criminal Justice, and the Quaker prison chaplains say that they should have been consulted, but were not, about these changes; and that unrealistic and misleading statements were made to Meeting for Sufferings about, for example, the Quaker Prison Chaplains Committee becoming a successful self-organising group¹.

We understand the intense frustration which this has caused. We welcome Quaker Life's recognition that support for Quaker prison chaplains needs to continue.

We have been reminded of the importance of simplicity and transparency in the way that the Society works; and also that we need to uphold those to whom we have entrusted responsibility for governance and management.

Concerns relating to criminal justice are an important and long-standing part of our Quaker witness. Ways must be found to sustain and develop them. We do not expect BYM staff to do all the necessary work. Individual Friends and meetings, and Quaker recognised bodies, must play an active part and perhaps take on new responsibilities. Area Meeting has a particular responsibility to uphold the work of its prison chaplains. We also need to continue to support Quakers in Criminal Justice.

We offer the following suggestions:

QL should keep under review the allocation of staff time to support Quaker prison chaplains, and look for ways of increasing it when opportunities arise.

QPSW and Quakers in Criminal Justice and other interested Friends should meet to discuss in detail how new arrangements for criminal justice work might work; in particular in relation to public advocacy and Parliamentary liaison on criminal justice issues.

We ask that BYM should bear in mind that Friends can find it difficult to navigate minutes and papers from Meeting for Sufferings and central committees; and that effective communication and consultation with Friends and meetings is particularly important when changes that affect them are under consideration.

We ask our clerk to send copies of this minute to the clerks of Meeting for Sufferings, Quaker Life Central Committee, QPSW Central Committee and Quakers in Criminal Justice.

Peter Carter, clerk

¹ Note by the clerk: This information is part of a paper circulated to MfS called "Simplification of Governance Structures" 2021.04.19. (see end of p60 and QPCC ref on page 62)

Hertford & Hitchin AM held on 16/05/2021

Minute 2021:20 Concern – Implications of restructuring at Quaker Peace and Social Witness

Friends from Hertford and Hitchin Area Meeting have been concerned to discover that areas of work are being laid down within QPSW, resulting in subsequent job losses, without these changes having been brought to Meeting for Sufferings.

We are aware that Meeting for Sufferings has received and supported the plan for the roll out of local development workers and the QPSW Strategic Plan 2021-2025. The BYM Strategic Plan sets out the vision for priorities over the next few years consisting of three strands called Thriving Quaker Communities, a Sustainable Community and Peace and Justice in the World. However, Meeting for Sufferings has not heard any details about how implementation of the QPSW plan will affect current areas of work such as Sanctuary Everywhere and the Crime, Community and Justice programmes. Neither has it been made explicit that the expansion of local development workers is having a direct financial impact on the QPSW budget. It appears that the funding of the Thriving Quaker Communities strand (local development workers) depends on cuts to the funding of the Peace and Justice strand. So, while the recruitment of local development workers is going ahead, redundancy remains on the table for some QPSW staff. This is causing a considerable degree of anxiety and distress amongst staff already challenged by the effects of the pandemic. It may be that many members of Meeting for Sufferings are unaware of this. Furthermore, it is not clear whether staff cuts are being made in response to the financial problems caused by the pandemic, the restructuring plan, or both.

We have been reminded of paragraph 7.03 a) in Quaker Faith and Practice:

“The Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees shall furnish Yearly Meeting with annual reports on their work and the work of the central and other standing committees. They shall keep Meeting for Sufferings informed about the work by providing regular interim reports for information and consultation. The Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees and the central and other standing committees are reminded that they should consult with Meeting for Sufferings and have regard for its guidance in any of the following circumstances:

a) when proposing to enter upon some major new field of service, or the give up some significant long-term projects;”

We, therefore, ask Meeting for Sufferings to discern the following:

- have they been consulted on the giving up of significant long-term projects as in 7.03 above?
- are they aware of the financial consequences of the local development worker expansion and the QPSW strategy on jobs in QPSW, six of which have already gone?

- during a pandemic, should not BYM be adapting its pre-pandemic restructuring plans in order to protect people's jobs and prioritise the well-being of staff?
- is BYM showing integrity as an employer if it continues to recruit 14 new staff whilst, for others, redundancy or salary scale downgrading is still on the table?
- should Meeting for Sufferings be asking for a halt to restructuring plans to allow the proper discernment to take place?

We forward this minute to Meeting for Sufferings.

Leicester AM held on 09/05/2021

Minute 21.39 Restructuring at QPSW

We have discussed the re-structuring of QPSW and possible laying down of central work on Crime, Community and Justice. We agree to send a minute seeking clarification to Meeting for Sufferings. We ask Friends concerned with this issue to gather further information and report back to us at our next meeting. Our minute to Meeting for Sufferings is as follows:

We have heard from Friends who are active in the field of prison chaplaincy and criminal justice about re-organisation at QPSW. The link worker and staff member to the Crime, Community and Justice Group was apparently told that CCJ work was being laid down immediately. The resulting lack of support for those working in this area at local level is now a concern, but also concerning is the speed with which these changes have been made and the apparent lack of consultation.

Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee consulted Meeting for Sufferings on their draft strategy for 2020-2025 in October 2020. This has been adopted but it does not refer to the laying down of Central work.

We are aware that the financial situation for centrally managed work is very difficult as a result of the loss of income during the pandemic and that difficult decisions must have had to be taken about staffing and future work. However, QF&P 7.03a. states that Trustees should seek guidance from MfS "when proposing to enter upon some major new field or service, or to give up some significant long-term project". We wonder whether this guidance was indeed sought and whether these choices have been made for us without sufficient use of our Quaker business methods and discernment about the best way forward?

We regard work in the area of criminal justice as fundamental to our Quaker testimonies and our history and we would welcome clarification of how it is intended to take this work forward in the future.

Julian Rees, Clerk

Mid-Somerset AM held on 09/05/2021

Mid-Somerset Area Meeting would like to register its concern about the restructuring proposals with Quaker Peace and Social Witness, potentially leading to the loss of central expertise and of Friends' historic link with Crime and Community Justice work. Many Friends in our Area Meeting have been deeply engaged in restorative justice work over many years. We are mindful of the changing situation regarding budgets and personnel at Friends House. We would support a national appeal to ensure their essential work is secured for the future.

We ask our Clerk to share our concern by forwarding this minute to the co-clerks of QICJ, Meeting for Sufferings, Paul Parker and Oliver Robertson

Kevin Redpath, Clerk, Mid-Somerset Area Meeting 9/5/2021

Staffordshire AM held on 07/06/2021

Minute 7:2 of Staffordshire Special Area Meeting: 7 June 2021.

Future Strategy: Central work

Staffordshire Friends are dismayed that decisions have been taken to lay down the Society's central work covering social justice, penal affairs, the sanctuary programme and elements of our peace witness: we see these as forming part of our core testimonies to the world. We are deeply disturbed by the process by which these decisions have been reached, having followed the time line attached to these minutes. These decisions lead us to agree three distinct minutes relating to issues which they raise.

a) Concerning Quaker Life and Quaker Peace and Social Witness

In QFP 8.02 (Fifth edition) it is made clear that discernment and decisions about centrally managed work are the responsibility of LMs, AMs and Meeting for Sufferings, and that the role of trustees and committees is to provide oversight and governance.

We perceive that the proposed changes to the work of QPSW result from a course of selective consultation, not fully shared Quaker discernment, in reaching the decision to lay down long standing programmes and sub committees. The intended and actual outcomes of these decisions have not been shared within the Yearly Meeting, whose members are still not aware of their full implications. In particular, it was not made clear that appointing Local Development Workers is coterminous with terminating employment of central specialist staff; and it remains unclear how LDWs can in any meaningful way make up for this loss of expertise to local meetings wishing to continue our witness in fields where work is being laid down.

We record our hope that no QPSW redundancies or reorganisation will take place before full discernment has been shared across the Yearly Meeting.

b) Concerning Central Committees, M f S and BYM trustees.

We have envisaged our BYM trustees being appointed in line with legal requirements to support our existing governance structure to conform to charity law, which should not affect the YM's discernment, decision-making or management. Instead we observe the trustees taking executive decisions which remove Friends from their participation in the Society's central witness: in particular we are deeply concerned by the exclusion and proposed laying down of QPSW's sub committees, whose members together with their staff provided the commitment and expertise necessary for working in their specialist fields. Instead we see a small team of senior staff working directly to the trustees who are able to bypass QPSW central committee and MfS in their reporting to YM in session through their annual report.

The imposition of trusteeship to conform with charity law does not sit comfortably with the Society's governance developed over the centuries: responsibilities rest with members meeting in worshipful session, not named individuals whose collective body is assuming another layer of management on top of our existing structures.

We invite BYM trustees to review their role under two headings: to guide and support the Society in its application of charity law and good practice, and to support Friends and meetings in the right ordering of our affairs in line with precepts in QFP. We draw attention to the opening paragraphs of Chapter 3, General Counsel on Church Affairs which provide wise guidance.

c) Yearly Meeting – the future

These changes in programme and procedure reinforce the concern of Friends that our Society could become 'just another charity', rather than a religious body enabling its members to seek and express our individual vocations through a shared testing of how we can together offer effective witness. Our testimony to equality lays this open to all our members, not delegated to the management team and trustees in our central building.

Members in our meetings may now well lose any sense of connection to our central work and witness, as the Society becomes an association of local meetings with little appeal to new members.

We are concerned that Friends will not be so willing to donate to central work if they have been excluded from their role in discernment of the work, as set out in QFP 8.02 (Fifth Edition).

We hope that way will open at YMG this year for these issues to be widely shared in a context of discernment (not defence of decisions already reached). If left unattended, we can envisage the decline of our Society as its present membership is not replaced by new members responding to a refreshed vision of Friends' mission in a world where creation is being profoundly challenged by the climate crisis and its repercussions in precisely those fields where our present work is being curtailed.

Rosemary Crawley, clerk

Worcestershire & Shropshire AM held on 08/05/2021

21.30 Minute from Malvern Meeting: central support for Quaker work on criminal justice

We have received the following minute from Malvern Local Meeting:

Melanie Jameson has shared a concern from Quakers in Criminal Justice (QICJ) that central work on criminal justice has been laid down by QPSW Central Committee. Although the new QPSW strategy came before Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) in February it did not identify work that was being discontinued. Neither the Crime & Social Justice Committee nor QICJ were informed about the loss of central CJ work. More concerning is the loss of the Quaker Life staff member who oversees Quaker Prison Chaplains, whose role included training new chaplains and liaising with prisons to enable the work of QPCs. Some Chaplains are leaving.

This appears contrary to QF&P 7.03 that Trustees should seek guidance from MfS "when proposing [...] to give up some significant long-term project".

We are very deeply concerned about these developments, both in terms of the impact on central expertise in Criminal Justice work and of Friends' historic link with Crime and Community Justice, and in terms of the failings of due process.

We are disturbed that MfS seem not to have been given a complete picture by the QPSW Strategy document. We ask Area Meeting to consider these concerns, with a view to having MfS reconsider these decisions once fully informed of the consequences.

During our meeting Melanie Jameson has shared with us further information on this matter, and we have heard significant concern from across Area Meeting about the risks to long-standing and respected Quaker work in the field of Criminal Justice. We are particularly exercised about support for Quaker Prison Chaplains and ask that Meeting for Sufferings should have the opportunity to offer guidance on the full implications of current plans.

We agree to forward this minute to Meeting for Sufferings.

Lynda Prescott, Clerk



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

Quaker Life: Support for Quaker Communities

[QLCC's Integrated Strategy for Supporting Quaker Communities](#) was shared with MfS in April 2020. Since then, staffing arrangements in Quaker Life have been re-shaped.

At this meeting we will hear from Quaker Life staff about the ways they are now working to support Quaker communities around Britain.

The next pages explain more about what's being done, how, where, and who's doing the work.



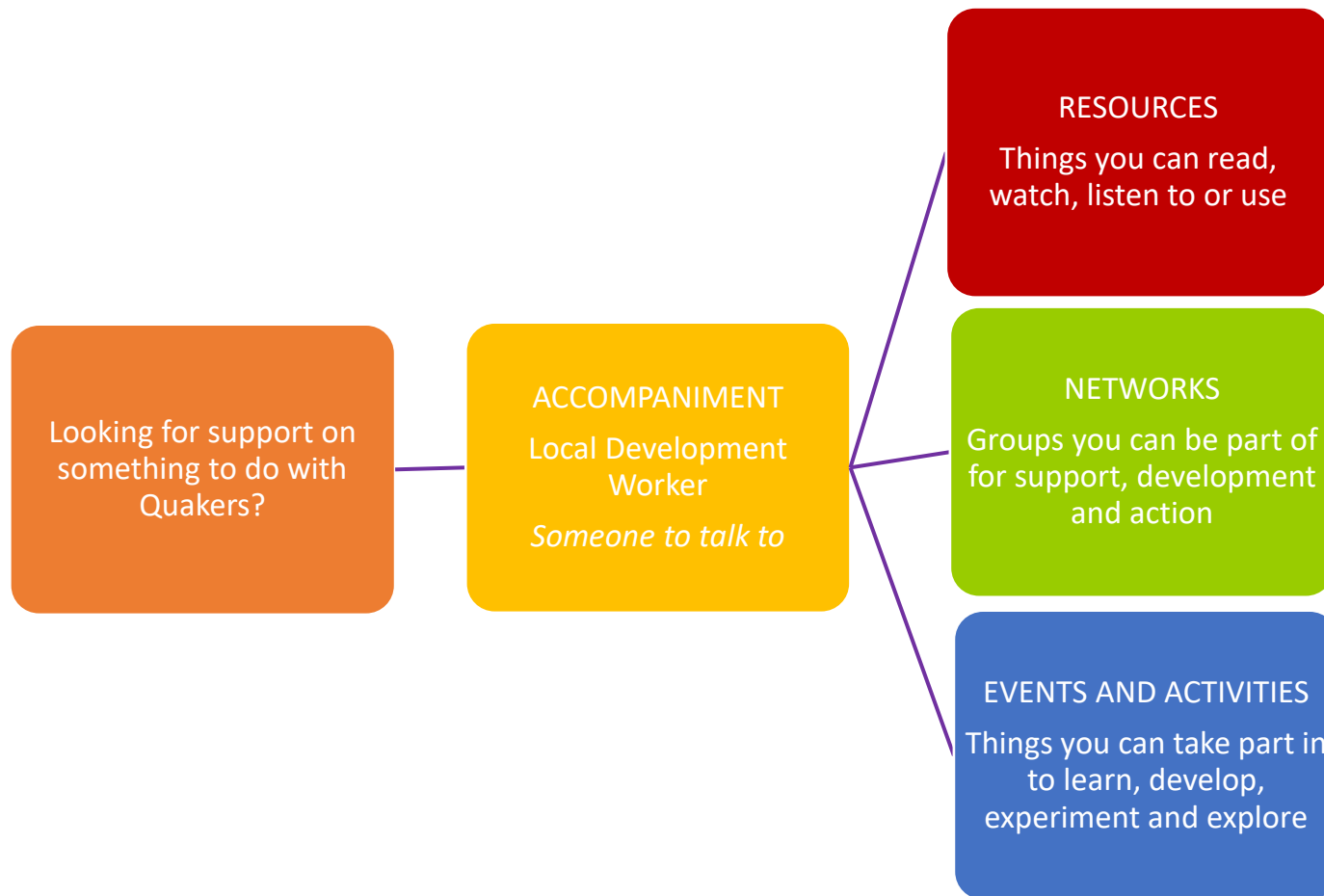
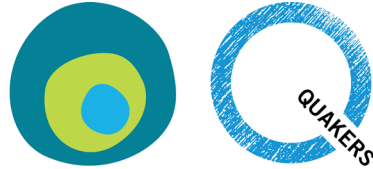
Quaker Life Central Committee / Woodbrooke Learning

Integrated Strategy for Supporting Quaker Communities 2020–2025

An overview of the types of support available, how and where it is delivered, and by whom

Thriving Quaker Meetings

Britain Yearly Meeting
and Woodbrooke
working in partnership



Quaker Life and Woodbrooke

Quaker Life and Woodbrooke support and strengthen Quaker life throughout the yearly meeting.

Our work covers both faith and practice.

It includes spiritual nurture, and the practical tasks required for organising and running Quaker communities.

This work happens through:

Quaker Life Central Committee, which discerns priorities and manages all work supporting Quaker life.

Quaker Life Department of staff, who co-ordinate and carry out the support of Quaker communities

Woodbrooke, an independent Quaker learning and research charity with over 100 years of experience in fostering the vital ministry of Quakers.

Quaker Life Representative Council, which brings together representatives from all Area Meetings to explore matters of common concern.

The Quaker Life Network, a loose affiliation of Quakers who deliver some of the support which is needed.

Quaker Life & Woodbrooke provide support and co-ordination on these
"Our Faith in the Future" topics for Quakers in Britain

Meeting for Worship is the
bedrock

- Spiritual Nurture
- Understanding, using and adapting Quaker practices

Quaker communities are
loving, inclusive and all-age

- Loving, welcoming and inclusive Quaker communities
- Understanding and addressing privilege

All Friends understand and
live by Quaker discipline

- Simplifying structures and practices
- Good discipline and good governance
- Stewardship of our resources, including property and finance

Quaker values are active in
the world

- Putting our faith into action (supporting and in collaboration with Quaker Peace and Social Witness)

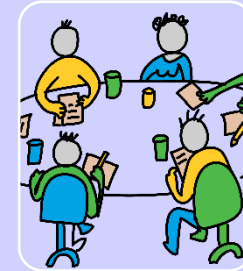
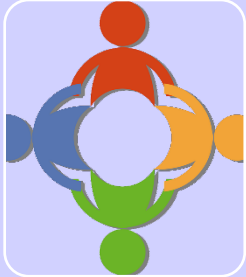
Quakers work
collaboratively

- Working collaboratively with others

Quakers are well known
and widely understood

- Speaking confidently about our faith, within and beyond our communities

How?



Accompaniment

- Listening and encouragement
- Identifying questions
- Exploring questions
- Develop pathways to solutions
- provide information, advice and signposting
- Develop or commission resources, networks aevents and activities

Resources

- Leaflets, books and packs
- Audio and video
- Websites
- Social Media
- Information
- Tools
- materials
- Expertise from individuals and organisations

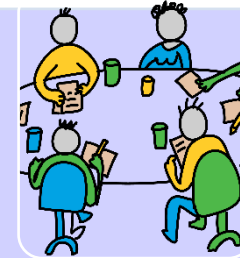
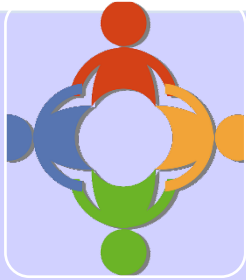
Networking

- Dedicated networks for role-holders (local and national)
- Open networking opportunities (local and national)
- Newsletters and updates
- Digital platforms

Events & Activities

- Core learning for Quakers
- Core skills for roles
- Deeper learning and skills for Quaker communities
- Conferences
- Gatherings
- Developing thinking and practice
- Research
- Experiment and Explore

How – Some Examples



Accompaniment

- Youth Development workers
- Discuss becoming clerk with the LDW
- Help to be all age friendly
- Support for a threshing meeting about the future use of the meeting house
- Signposted to Quaker Recognised Body
- Leaflet developed on meeting house signage after enquiry to LDW

Resources

- Leaflets on many Quaker topics
- Online videos about returning to worship
- www.quaker.org.uk information for meetings and role-holders
- Quaker Life facebook page
- Being Friends Together Website
- Exhibition panels

Networking

- Wardens talking fortnightly online
- Working with children, and with young people, monthly online
- e-groups for AM clerks, treasurers and trustees, clerks to trustees
- Journeys in the Spirit monthly newsletter for children and young people's work
- Young Adult Friends Network

Events & Activities

- Exploring the diversity of Quaker worship course
- Quaker Prison Chaplains conference
- Being a Quaker Clerk course
- Regional retreat for elders
- Lighthouse Epilogue
- Simpler Meetings events
- Equipping for Ministry course

Who?

Local Development Workers – in Post

- Wendy Hampton – North West
- Zoe Prosser – Scotland
- Bridget Holtom – Yorkshire
- Bev Smith – East Anglia (from September 1st)
- Carrie Comfort – South East
- Pip Harris – South West
- Helen Oldridge – Wales

Local Development Workers to be appointed November 2021 & April 2022

- North East
- East Midlands
- West Midlands
- South central
- Berkshire & Oxfordshire
- Bedfordshire & neighbourhood
- London

Youth Development Workers

- Kirsty Philbrick – West
- Lee Lester – Yorkshire

Specialist Support

- Eugene Nanning – Prison Chaplain's Support Officer
- Bev Smith (to September 1st) – Mental Health: Empowering Quaker Communities Project
- Naomi Major (to September 1st) – Youth, Children and Families Officer

Team Leaders for Local Development Work, with topic portfolios

- Sophie Smith – Spiritual Nurture
- Alistair Fuller – Community
- Oliver Waterhouse – LM and AM Governance
- Naomi Major (from September 1st) – Witness and Collaboration
- Jude Action – Youth, Children and Families

Managing and Supporting the Work

- Rachel Matthews – Head of Supporting Quaker Communities
- Stela Brinzeanu – Quaker Life Administrator

Key Colleagues at Woodbrooke

- Simon Best – Head of Learning
- Tracey Martin – Learning & Research Co-ordinator, Faith in Action
- Ben Pink Dandelion – Programmes Leader, Centre for Research in Quaker Studies
- Alison Richards – Programme Development Manager
- Stuart Masters – Learning and Research Team Leader