

Calling letter



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

17 September 2021

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

Dear Friends

I write to invite you to the first Meeting for Sufferings of the new triennium, on Saturday 2nd October. You will know from the information you have already received that this will be a blended meeting. Some of you may be attending this sort of meeting on a smaller scale locally, but for us it is a new experience. There will be up to 40 participants at Friends House worshipping with others online, and staff are working hard to ensure that all runs smoothly. If you have any queries about this please email sufferings@quaker.org.uk

Many of you have attended one of the induction sessions earlier this week, and as you will already know there are two other events planned before we meet on the 2nd.

The Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees' session on 21st September is an opportunity to hear about the work that trustees undertake on our behalf, and to explore the relationship between YM trustees and Meeting for Sufferings. Those of you who were at Yearly Meeting will know that some Friends are exercised about what this means in practice.

Shortly before MfS – on the preceding Thursday – the Support Group is running an open 'getting-to-know-you' session for reps and alternates. This is the online equivalent of bumping into people at Friends House, and may go some way to helping new reps and alternates feel part of the community.

Now to the meeting itself:

We have an interesting range of business to consider.

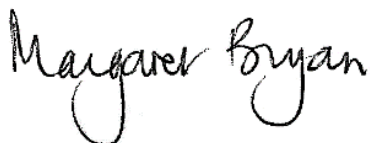
- The Recording Clerk will speak about the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) and its implications for our church.
- Surrey and Hampshire Borders AM has sent us a minute about the Police, Crime and Sentencing Bill.

- There will be a report from Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture (Q-CAT)
- The Sustainability Monitoring Group will be bringing their annual report to the December meeting but we expect to focus some attention this time on preparation for witness at COP26

Finally, this is the first opportunity to reflect on Yearly Meeting Gathering, and we will devote the latter part of our time together to considering what is laid upon us.

For online participants there will be the usual 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,



Margaret Bryan
Clerk

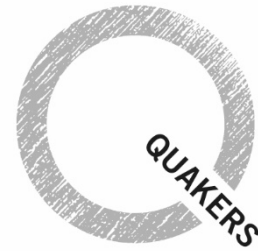
Papers enclosed with this mailing

Agenda

MfS Arrangements Group July and August 2021 meeting minutes
 MfS 2021 10 05 Quaker Recognised Bodies
 MfS 2021 10 06 Report from BYM Trustees
 MfS 2021 10 07 Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse report
 MfS 2021 10 08 Church Government Advisory Group proposed *Qf&p* changes
 MfS 2021 10 09 Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill
 MfS 2021 10 12 Sustainability – focus on COP26
 MfS 2021 10 13 The work of Quaker Peace & Social Witness
 MfS 2021 10 14 Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture (Q–CAT) report
 MfS 2021 10 15a Yearly Meeting 2021
 MfS 2021 10 15b The role of Meeting for Sufferings: initiating a process

A reminder of how you can prepare for the meeting

- If you haven't already done so, register for the Meeting and register for the optional online sessions (to hear from BYM Trustees on 21 September and for fellowship on 30 September)
- 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 morning of **30 September**



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

Agenda

Meeting for Sufferings – 2 October 2021

By video conference and Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ
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 10 03 To note
4	Agenda Adoption and acceptance of the agenda	
5	Quaker Recognised Bodies	MfS 2021 10 05 For decision
6	BYM Trustees' report	MfS 2021 10 06 To note
	Shuffle break	
7	Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)	MfS 2021 10 07 To note
8	Church Government Advisory Group proposed changes to <i>Quaker faith & practice</i>	MfS 2021 10 08 To note
9	Police, Crime and Sentencing Bill To receive a paper from Grace Da Costa, the BYM Public Affairs and Advocacy Manager	MfS 2021 10 09 For decision
12.30pm	End of Session 1	

12:30pm Lunch break

1.45pm	Session 2	
10	Appointment of Meeting for Sufferings clerks for 2022	MfS 2021 10 10 For decision
11	Appointments	MfS 2021 10 11 For information
12	Sustainability – focus on COP 26	MfS 2021 10 12 To receive
13	The work of Quaker Peace & Social Witness To receive a minute from Chilterns AM	MfS 2021 10 13 To receive
14	Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture (Q-CAT)	MfS 2021 10 14 To receive
	Shuffle break	
15	Yearly Meeting reflections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections • Quaker Stewardship Committee: lay down review group and ask Church Government Advisory Group to prepare text (15a) • 3 substantive matters (15a) • Role of Meeting for Sufferings (15b) 	MfS 2021 10 15a MfS 2021 10 15b For reflection and decision
	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 15.00–16.20 on 23 July 2021

Minutes

Present: Margaret Bryan, Gill Greenfield, Mark Lilley

In attendance: Neil Jarvis

Prevented: Robert Card, Karen Draycott, Juliet Prager

1. Review of Meeting for Sufferings held July 2021

We identify 08 (intention to appoint more younger Friends) as a gold minute and 11 (keeping the schedule of meetings under review) as a continuing minute.

We received a short report from Support Group. No serious issues were raised.

2. Meeting for Sufferings contribution to YMG 2021

We noted that the Sufferings/Trustees special interest meeting is on 27 July and the MfS report to YM will be given on 31 July

3. Meetings for next triennium

We are still hoping to hold the first meeting in October at Friends House, but with reduced numbers; the date for December is under review.

We are still looking for a residential venue for 2022.

4. Induction

We would like the handbook to be in the hands of the reps by the beginning of September. We ask for a member of the Support Group to work with Juliet and Margaret to bring this to a conclusion.

We ask for two induction sessions in the week before the agenda goes out. Those leading the session should be Juliet and the Clerks, making use of contributions from experienced member(s) of MfS and examples – eg Assisted Dying and What

Happens to a Minute? There should also be time for questions and breakout rooms arranged on a geographic basis.

'Buddying' opportunities to newcomers, support for those who join mid-term and the matter of ongoing learning will be passed to Support Group for their consideration.

5. MfS Arrangements Group

Gill and Mark are willing in principle to attend the planning meeting for Meeting for Sufferings in October (subject to availability) and we hope that the new Arrangements Group will be appointed between meetings.

6. Support Group 2021–24

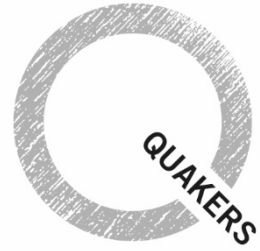
Two members of the Support Group are already appointed, one more is in the pipeline, and five more are needed. The current groups overlaps by one meeting for continuity.

7. Standing Nominations Group

There is only one member of the nominations group remaining and we agree to offer him some help in finding further names

Signed on behalf of the meeting

Margaret Bryan



Yearly Meeting of the
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At a meeting of

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group

Held online from 19.00 – 18:25 on 18 August 2021

Minutes

Present: Margaret Bryan, Robert Card, Gill Greenfield, Ivan Hutnik, Mark Lilley, Jean Scott Barr, Jane Wilde, Anthony Woolhouse

In attendance: Paul Parker, Juliet Prager

Prevented: Jane Mace, Neil Jarvis (staff)

1. Welcomes and introductions

We have spent some time introducing ourselves and becoming familiar with our task.

2. Meetings attended by the clerks and others

We have heard that Margaret Bryan has attended a meeting of Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture (Q-CAT). We have heard that they are likely to seek to take soundings with Meeting for Sufferings.

3. 2021–2024 Triennium

We have looked ahead at the forthcoming triennium and noted the need to welcome new members of Meeting for Sufferings and to provide a suitable induction for their service.

4. Forward agenda

We have reviewed our forward agenda, which informs our planning.

5. Agenda planning: October 2021

We have considered the business that might properly come before Meeting for Sufferings on 2nd October 2021.

6. Any other matters

We have noted the question of how we build community within Meeting for Sufferings.

There being no other business to conduct, we part looking to meet again on an occasion to be arranged.

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
Surrey & Hampshire AM	21/07/03 Restructuring of Quaker work at Friends House	5/7/21 Minute received This matter was included in the July Meeting. The minute was too late to include in papers for the meeting but was made available to Clerks and the AM representative was present at the meeting		Complete
Surrey & Hampshire AM	21/07/02 Police, Crime Sentencing and Courts Bill	5/7/21 Minute received 18/8/21 Minute tabled at MfSAG MfSAG agreed to bring minute to MfS in October		To MfS in October
Chilterns AM	21.07.07 QPSW Criminal Justice Programme	22/7/21 Minute received 18/8/21 Minute tabled at MfSAG MfSAG agreed to bring this minute to MfS in October		To MfS in October



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Quaker Recognised Bodies

Introduction

This paper covers the review of some Quaker Recognised Bodies, as well as applications for registration.

Background

In 2015, Meeting for Sufferings agreed a new way for BYM to relate to other Quaker bodies in Britain. The [guidelines](#) for groups that would like to be recognised are on the BYM Website. Paper MfS 2018/07/15 (available from staff on request by emailing sufferings@quaker.org.uk) gives a full introduction.

A Quaker Recognised Body (QRB) is an independent group where concerned Friends explore a common interest, seek affirmation, or carry out witness. Its Quaker roots are an important part of its identity or constitution. Having a system for recognising Quaker groups aims to clarify benefits and responsibilities for the groups and for BYM. It's also a way to strengthen links between centrally-managed work and the wide range of exciting Quaker work being done by other groups, helping build a vibrant Society of Friends. This system includes a review process.

Reviewed QRBs

When Meeting for Sufferings registers a QRB, it records a review date. Pressure of work during the pandemic has meant that some reviews are a little overdue. Meeting for Sufferings is asked to renew the registration of this organisation as an emergent Quaker recognised body.

Friends with Jewish Connections

Originally recognised in June 2017. Review due in 2019.

Freestanding group. Staff link: Formerly Marigold Bentley and now Judith Baker

Original information

Constitution: None

Governance: Informal, notes are made of meetings held.

Type of Group: Emergent

Foundation: 2014

Aims: To provide support to members and attenders who have Jewish connections as they discern how they can best help Quaker/Jewish dialogue.

Publications and activities: Have had meetings of the group and have been in contact with Marigold Bentley and other BYM staff.

Membership: 25

Finance: The group has no finances, members pay for their own participation.

Winding up: No arrangements

Archives: The convener has notes of meetings and activities.

Current contact details: Convener: Harvey Gillman, Cherry Tree House, 28 Military Road, Rye TN31 7NY harveygillman@gmail.com

Website: none

Staff link: Marigold Bentley, Head of Peace Programmes

Review notes

This is a very informal group. There are no finances involved, no newsletters, but members share matters of interest/concern through the mailing list. When they used to meet, notes were taken, but there have not been any meetings in the last several years. The group's links with Marigold reflected this informality – they were in touch when consultation or advice was needed. Judith Baker is now the staff link.

Requests for registration

The following organisations have applied to become a QRB:

- **Bamford Quaker Community**
- **Quakers in the World**

Staff have looked at the documentation provided by each of the organisations and consider that the criteria for listing them as QRBs have been met. Meeting for Sufferings is asked to approve these organisations as a Quaker recognised body

Bamford Quaker Community

Aims: The Quaker Community Bamford CIO is a registered charity. The charity's main objective is to support and explore the general, religious and charitable purposes of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain. In particular but not exclusively by: providing a place of spiritual retreat and joining the live-in community in seeking to live out Quaker Testimonies in daily life.

- sharing an understanding, exploration and development of the Religious Society of Friends by providing hospitality, spiritual and working retreats.
- providing pastoral care of visitors and community members.
- stewardship of land and gardens (10 acres) in line with Quaker testimony to sustainability.

- providing a space for Friends and others for spiritual renewal, respite, and retreat.

Governance: There are Weekly House Meetings and quarterly (or more often if needed) full CIO Meetings held in the manner of friends, with resident and non-resident Trustees in attendance. The clerk is appointed by a nominations group tri-annually. All Trustees whether resident or non-resident are attenders or members of the Society of Friends.

The Charitable Incorporated Organisation has a formal constitution attached to the application form. The Community has previously been a coop and became a registered charity in May 2018. The charity number is 1178584.

Type of Group: External.

Foundation: Year group established was 1988 but became a charity in May 2018.

Publications and activities: The Bamford Quaker Community's main activities are offering opportunities for growth and renewal through both individual private retreats and a program of facilitated retreats and day events on a variety of themes in accordance with our aims. They also offer working retreats to provide opportunities for visitors and guests to become involved in the sustainable management of our woodland and in growing organic food in the gardens. The Community owns a large property, formally the Derwent Water Board Offices in the heart of the Peak District which has its own rich history. Community members and volunteers live and work at the centre and share the work of maintaining the buildings, and providing hospitality for our guests.

Membership: The community has the possibility of 9 – 12 resident community members. During the summer of 2021 there were 4 Community Members, 4 Volunteers and 1 Tenant. The network of associate members and people connected to the community in the local area is more extensive and there are strong informal links to the Hope Valley Quaker Local Meeting and Sheffield and Balby Area Meeting.

Finance: The annual budget is approximately £55,000. There have been delays in submitting accounts that have reasonable explanations (i.e. Technical issues that have been sorted with the charity commission). The accounts are audited or examined in accordance with their constitution and are available on the charity commission/companies house website.

Winding up: As provided by the Dissolution Regulations, the CIO may be dissolved by a decision of its members. This is detailed in section 26 of our constitution. If the CIO is wound up, the members of the CIO have no liability to contribute to its assets and no personal responsibility for settling its debts and liabilities.

Archives: Records exist from the formation of the Community in 1988. There is a book documenting the dynamics and life of the Community up until it became a registered charity.

Current contact details: Jayne Meadows
Quaker Community
Water Lane, Hope Valley,
Bamford S33 0DA

Email: mail@quakercommunity.org.uk

Phone: 01433 650085

Website: www.quakercommunity.org.uk and Facebook.

Staff link: Bridget Holtom, Local Development Worker, Yorkshire

Quakers in the World

Aims: Quakers have a long tradition of being active in, and seeking to make a difference to, the world in which they find themselves. In our actions we seek to put Quaker testimonies such as equality, peace and integrity into practice, as best they can. The Quakers in the World website <http://www.quakersintheworld.org/> aims to bring together the many different ways in which Quakers have done this, all over the world.

Governance: A registered charity: 1160683

Constitution: It uses a standard charity commission trust deed

Type of Group: External.

Foundation: Website started in 2008, the charity was registered in 2014

Publications and activities: The purpose of the organisation is to operate and maintain the <http://www.quakersintheworld.org/> website.

Many people have written for the site, including African, US and Bolivian Friends, as well as British and EMES Friends. The site has been accessed from countries across all four FWCC sections, with positive feedback. Information about it was shared and welcomed at both the 2012 and 2016 World Gatherings. In a typical week 4–5 messages are received from users.

Membership: Three trustees, all Quakers.

Finance: The charity is so small that it is not required to submit accounts to the charity commission. A £25,000 grant received in 2016 is being used to fund the work of Quakers in the World, and the funds are expected to last for several more years. Most work on the site is done on a voluntary basis.

Winding up: the charity has a winding up provision, any funds would be passed to charities with similar objects.

Archives: none

Current contact details: Janet May Bowles janet@quakersintheworld.org

Jordans Quaker Meeting House,
Welders Lane,
Jordans,
Bucks HP9 2SN

Website: www.quakersintheworld.org

Staff link: Michael S Booth, Church Government Advisor and Secretary, Quaker World Relations Committee.

Michael S Booth
Church Government Advisor
Recording Clerks Officer
September 2021



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Report from BYM Trustees

Trustees met face-to-face for the first time since February 2020 and it was a great joy to see each other's faces without a zoom frame around them. Formal sessions filled an afternoon and the following morning and we used the evening to catch up with each other and talk matters over informally.

There were no matters requiring deep discernment this time, but many that needed gently moving forward and we spent time reflecting on Yearly Meeting and on the July Meeting for Sufferings and considering the report from Management Meeting.

Staff had been very busy since we last met, not least supporting what we felt to have been a remarkably successful on-line Yearly Meeting Gathering. Change processes were paused over the summer but have resumed. Some departments and teams are being restructured; as well as informal discussions, formal consultation processes ensure the views of affected staff are heard and taken into consideration. We remain hopeful that no compulsory redundancies will be necessary but staffing needs to fit new strategies so we expect changes to some teams and posts.

The IICSA report on safeguarding in faith groups was published a couple of days before the meeting. We keep safeguarding under close review and were pleased to hear that the plan of improvements continues. Quakers – like many other faith groups – are criticised in the report for our record keeping at national level of what happens across the country, and this is something that Quakers in Britain must return to as we look at the relationship between the various charities – BYM and each AM.

We heard from the trustees who are working on ways to clarify and support these relationships about a series of conversations that they have had with AM trustees and on their emerging thinking. We will bring this to Meeting for Sufferings for further discernment at a future meeting.

We also heard from the trustees working on simplification of our central structures about the series of threshing sessions they have held with Meeting for Sufferings members, and two open sessions during the YMG. Further meetings with Quakers

across Britain are being planned to elicit ideas from as wide a range of Friends as possible. This is another matter that will come back more formally sometime next year.

One of trustees' responsibilities is to consider risk – so we returned to our minutes and papers from September 2020 to take a current view on the many risks affecting BYM at the moment. We still have to be cautious, but overall we are more optimistic than we were a year ago and consider that the measures being implemented to reduce costs should be enough to achieve financial sustainability over the coming years despite the effects of the pandemic on income. We hope that contributions from Friends and meetings will maintain the higher level achieved in 2020, but we realise that many meetings are facing income loss from fewer hirings. Based on our understanding of current risks, we have set budget parameters for 2022 and the following two years: Management Meeting will now work on the budget and bring it to our November meeting for approval.

On Saturday, we were joined by the Clerk of the Quiet Company (that – in normal times – generates valuable income for BYM from hiring and hospitality in Friends House and Swarthmore Hall). The board of the Quiet Company comprises three BYM trustees alongside other Friends appointed directly to it. It has been very hard for staff of the Quiet Company and for the board: trustees expressed our gratitude to them all. Gradually bookings are increasing for Friends House, but income is still low and new challenges are emerging in recruiting hospitality staff and in the supply chain. We are impressed by the Quiet Company's strategic plan that sets out a road to recovery balancing profit, planet and people and taking account of the coming period and the longer-term. I encourage Friends to read the plan (which is short and clear).[here](#).

We heard from the Property Development Steering Group who last reported to us two years ago. They have been scoping ways to make Friends House meet the needs of Friends of future generations, and how to ensure that Drayton House (attached to Friends House) continues to provide an income stream for Quaker work as envisaged by the Friends who built it a century ago. The group had been exploring the possibilities that we considered last time and testing ideas with planning authorities.

We agreed that the Group should develop more detailed plans for Friends House to see if it is possible to create a courtyard garden at first floor level and a foyer space below it at ground floor that would make it easier to hold Yearly Meeting, improve the café for Quaker and other use, and attract more hirings for The Light and potential for income to the Quiet Company. We also agreed further scoping of plans for Drayton House ahead of the current lease to University College London finishing in 2024. We have not made any decisions, but simply agreed to further exploration. This is another of these long-term issues that will probably come back to us again later next year or in 2023.

And finally, now that our new terms of reference have been agreed by Yearly Meeting, it seems a good time to review our effectiveness as a trustee body against the Charity Governance Code and our own governance strategy that recognises spiritual, in addition to secular, governance considerations. We will spend some time on this at our training day next April.

BYM trustees Nominations Group has launched a search for a clerk to trustees for 2023 – 2025 inclusive. If you know of anyone who might be interested, they would be keen to hear from you ([see here for more information](#)).

Caroline Nursey, Clerk BYM Trustees

Attached:

BYMT minutes 3–4 September 2021

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Friday 3 September to Saturday 4 September 2021 at Friends House with some participants joining by video conferencing

Minutes

Present: Georgina Bailey, Linda Batten (Treasurer), Alison Breadon, Jenny Brierley, Nick Eyre, Kit Fotheringham, Kate Gulliver, Ellie Harding, Carolyn Hayman, Caroline Nursey (Clerk), Silas Price, Graham Torr (Assistant Clerk), Frances Voelcker, Danielle Walker Palmour, Chris Willmore (from minute 03).

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 (from minute 13), Head of Finance and Resources.

Visitors: Matt Baker, Clerk of Quiet Company Board (minutes 14 to 15); Sandra Horsfall, Clerk of Property Development Steering group (minute 15).

BYMT-2021-09-01 Decision to hold a ‘blended’ meeting, welcome and introductions, agenda check, conflicts of interest check

We record our decision to hold this as a blended meeting with some attendees joining by video conference. We follow Charity Commission guidance on running charities during the Covid-19 outbreak 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.

There are no unrecorded conflicts of interest.

We confirm our agenda.

During our opening worship, we have heard part of the Epistle from Yearly Meeting 2021.

BYMT-2021-09-02 Minutes received

We receive the following minutes:

- Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith relations 11–13 June 2021 (BYMT-2021-09-02a) and separated minute QCCIR/21/06/05 (BYMT-2021-09-02ai)
- Quaker World Relations Committee 19 June 2021 (BYMT-2021-09-02b)
- Quaker Life Central Committee 25–26 June 2021 (BYMT-2021-09-02c)
- Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee 2–4 July 2021 (BYMT-2021-09-02c)

BYMT-2021-09-03 Recording Clerk’s report

We receive an update from the Recording Clerk (paper BYMT-2021-09-03) reporting on updates and news under the headings of BYM’s strategic priorities.

We celebrate that it proved possible to support so successful a Yearly Meeting Gathering online in the midst of the pandemic and are grateful to staff for their hard work in supporting it.

We note that the strategy of providing local support to meetings is proving of particular value in these strange times, and when it is unclear what needs will be as we emerge from the pandemic.

Change processes have paused over the summer, but are resuming so that new team structures can be agreed within QPSW and in Communications over the next few months, giving staff members certainty about their individual roles.

We are pleased that Management Meeting are exploring options to maximise income – including from space in Friends House – as staff experiment with changed ways of working.

We are pleased to hear that staff intend to build on the findings of the ICSA report on safeguarding in religious organisations to make practices amongst Quakers as good as possible. We note that we have more work to do to fully implement our action plan – particularly about record keeping at a national level. We have to address this as we clarify relationships between AMs and BYM. We will return to this at our next meeting.

BYMT-2021-09-04 Trustees' news

We receive a report of the recent activities of Trustees (BYMT-2021-09-04).

BYMT-2021-09-05 Board effectiveness

We receive this paper (BYMT-2021-09-05) from Graham Torr which includes feedback from four meetings with individual trustees who, at the end of 2020, either finished their first year of service or their period as a trustee. The paper suggests that we might review our effectiveness as a team more broadly using the “board effectiveness” pillar of the Charity Governance Code.

Our training day in April 2018 introduced trustees to the Code and prompted a trustee skills audit which our Nominations Group is currently repeating. The governance strategy we approved in February is based on the pillars of the Code, adapted to our Quaker environment so that we recognise spiritual, in addition to secular, governance considerations.

The review of BYM trustees and acceptance of revised terms of reference by Yearly Meeting 2021, make this a good time for us to consider our own effectiveness further.

We ask our Assistant Clerk and Nominations Group to work out how best to take this forward and agree to spend time on it at a future meeting.

BYMT-2021-09-06 Nominations Group report

We receive a report from our Nominations Group (paper BYMT-2021-09-06) and agree to the following appointments:

Quiet Company Board

To serve for a second term from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2024:

- **Ellie Harding**, BYM Trustee, Central England Area Meeting
- **Matt Baker**, Bristol Area Meeting

BYMT Annual Review and Report and Accounts

To serve on 2021 and 2022 reviews:

- **Graham Torr**, York Area Meeting

Giving and Fundraising Group

We agree to lay down this time-limited group. The two trustees currently serving on the Group – Danielle Walker Palmour and Caroline Hayman – will continue to support the Fundraising Team as link trustees.

Nomination of BYMT Clerk

Since Committee on Clerks was laid down in 2020, BYM Trustees now bring forward a nomination for appointment by Yearly Meeting. Our Nominations Group has been working with Central Nominations Committee (CNC) – the body responsible for nominating new trustees – and we record our gratitude for CNC's exceptional work.

We have received an update on the search for a Clerk of Trustees to serve from January 2023. CNC will leave a space on the trustee body from January 2022 so that the incoming clerk can serve as a trustee from Yearly Meeting 2022 until taking over as clerk from January 2023. BYMT will nominate the clerk, and the appointment will be made at Yearly Meeting 2022.

We will usually expect a new clerk to be nominated from one of the existing trustees. This means CNC's Trustees Search Group will look as needed for new trustees with the potential range of skills and experience to serve as a future Clerk of Trustees. Our Nominations Group is willing to support CNC in its searches in whatever ways are helpful. Where a new Clerk needs to be found from beyond the current trustee body, the Trustees' Nominations Group will conduct its search from the body of Friends in the Yearly Meeting, and BYMT Nominations will ensure CNC is kept informed in a timely way, so that arrangements can be made to leave space for an incoming clerk to serve as a Trustee for a period prior to taking up the role of Clerk.

We forward this minute to CNC.

Link trustees

Although links to BYM teams/subject areas/projects were assigned at the beginning of 2020, the system whereby link trustees met with relevant staff at intervals through the year was hit by the pandemic and has not been refreshed in 2021.

We ask our assistant clerk to plan with Nominations Group and staff for the re-launching of the link trustee system from the start of 2022, taking into account current priorities and the more dispersed mode of staff working.

BYMT-2021-09-07 Operational plan for 2021

We receive a paper prepared by Alex Fulton (BYMT-2021-09-07) for our information on progress of this year's operational plan. The paper provides both a report on in-depth monitoring and evaluation of prioritised areas of work to better know the impact of BYM's work, and a progress report on 2021's work strands.

We find it very helpful to see the work set out in this integrated way that shows its impact. We are grateful to staff for their work on this. We are pleased to see how much progress has been made despite the pandemic.

BYMT-2021-09-08 Yearly Meeting 2021

We have reflected on this year's Yearly Meeting (YM) – a gathering online over three weeks. The Recording Clerk has provided a paper setting out key decisions and some of the resulting actions that are required.

We note that YM accepted revised terms of reference for BYM trustees and has asked Meeting for Sufferings to comment on whether its role now needs review. We have considered resourcing and reporting for YM's priorities.

Attendance at the Young People's Programme was much smaller than we would normally expect to see. The gap in face-to-face programmes in 2020 and 2021 has implications for their future engagement in the Society.

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee meets online on 30 October to start discernment on YM agenda for 2022. We ask Carolyn Hayman supported by Ellie Harding and Paul Parker to draft a paper for input to the meeting and appoint Carolyn to attend. We hope that the key themes addressed this year will be pursued further. We see YM as the place where positions can be discerned on the spiritual issues of our time.

BYMT-2021-09-09 Annual review 2021

We have given our initial contributions to the possible format, style and content of the annual review for 2021 and we ask our nominated trustees to work with staff to produce it.

We congratulate staff on the high quality of the 2020–21 review. We encourage the featuring of people and places to bring the report alive. We are pleased that the principal distribution channel is online to support our commitment to sustainability but that the review is printed where necessary.

BYMT-2021-09-10 Relationship between AM Trustees and BYM Trustees

We have received an update on this work being taken forward by Chris Willmore and Kate Gulliver, working with Juliet Prager (paper BYMT-2021-09-10). We note and endorse the ongoing intention for wide participation to continue this work.

BYMT-2021-09-11 Simplifying our central governance structures

We receive paper (BYMT-2021-09-11) from Ellie Harding and Carolyn Hayman including a report on workshops held during Yearly Meeting where discussions focussed on different forms of participation of Friends in our central structures. We

are pleased that more workshops are to be held across Britain to invite views of more Friends from all age groups.

BYMT-2021-09-12 Managing risk

In November last year, we received a paper on significant risks facing BYM (paper BYMT-2020-11-04). We receive paper BYMT-2021-09-12 which invites us to re-visit and review these risks. Management Meeting provides updated information.

We note that work is already underway to mitigate many of the risks and that the overall picture is more positive than it seemed a year ago. We do not think, therefore, that further significant action is needed beyond that which is already planned. We have provided detailed comments.

BYMT-2021-09-13 Finance and resources

We receive minutes from the Environmental, Health and Safety Committee from 1 July, and Finance and Property Committee meetings on 26 July and 18 August (Papers BYMT-2021-09-12a, 12bi and 12bi).

The Head of Finance and Resources has given a quarterly finance report for the period to 30 June 2021 (paper BYMT-2021-09-12c). We note in particular the risks associated with the long-term impact of the pandemic on the income of the Quiet Company and our area and local meetings which remains difficult to predict.

Paper BYMT-2021-09-12d, Three Year Budget Scenarios, sets out the parameters for the construction of the 2022-2024 budget which we expect to receive at our November meeting.

We agree to formally adopt a total return approach to our investments, and to ask Rathbone Greenbank to provide a predictable monthly income.

We agree to take a total return of 6% for 2022 and 2023.

We will take stock during 2023 to agree the level of return for 2024 and beyond. Provisionally, this is likely to be 4% each year which should preserve the level of reserves long term, noting that there will be fluctuations and that there are likely to be some years where we incur losses. We ask Finance and Property Committee to keep this under regular review.

We have discussed broad parameters for the 2022 budget and following years. We are aware that the effects of the pandemic on the Quiet Company will still be felt. However, in our consideration yesterday, we agreed that overall risks are lower than we had feared at this point last year. We do not, therefore, consider that further measures need to be taken beyond those already planned. As explored at Yearly Meeting, we hope that giving from Friends will continue at the higher level of 2020 although we remain conscious of the pressure that meetings face locally.

BYMT-2021-09-14 Quiet Company annual report

We are joined by Matt Baker, Clerk of the Quiet Company Board, for this item.

The board of directors of the Quiet Company has sent us its annual report for 2020 (BYMT-2021-09-13a) and we receive minutes of its meeting on 15 July 2021.

We acknowledge that 2020 has been the most challenging year the company has faced in its history – we are deeply grateful for how staff and directors of the Quiet Company have met these challenges and we continue to uphold them in their ongoing work.

We note plans for the road to recovery guided by the company's new strategic business plan 2021 to 2025 that demonstrates Quaker values at work in a commercial context.

We are excited by the strategy and the way that it balances between people, profit and planet, and between the here-and-now and the future. We welcome its intention to report to the variety of stakeholders on the social as well as commercial outcomes, and projecting our Quaker presence to the world.

We ask Employment Committee and the Quiet Company to consider the challenges that the Quiet Company is facing with recruitment.

The learning of the last year has shown that there are complex governance questions that may need to be explored to allow the Quiet Company sufficient autonomy to manage risk effectively within legal constraints while continuing to demonstrate Quaker values. We will return to this when the Quiet Company Board is ready.

We ask Nominations Group to seek a name to serve as an additional director for the Quiet Company, and ask the Recording Clerk to bring to our next meeting a revised draft hospitality and facilities agreement to accommodate the appointment of an additional director.

BYMT-2021-09-15 Property Development Steering Group report

We are joined by Matt Baker, Clerk of the Quiet Company Board, and Sandra Horsfall, Clerk of the Property Development Steering Group.

We receive the second interim report from the Property Development Steering Group (BYMT-2021-09-14) and thank the group for their work.

We agree to proceed with the development of the Friends House scheme to RIBA Stage Two, including submitting planning consent and listed building consent applications at a cost of £59,000 plus planning fees from the Property Upkeep Fund in 2022. Planning permission would apply for three years so we would take a decision about going ahead once permission is granted.

We welcome the progress made with this scheme as it would make the holding of Yearly Meeting easier, improve the café for Quaker and other use, and increase hirings of the Light and potential for income to the Quiet Company.

We agree to the proposed plan/approach and budget for 2022 for Drayton House (which was built as an investment property to fund Quaker work). We look forward to returning to this item frequently over the coming period.

BYMT-2021-09-16 Meeting for Sufferings preparation

We have prepared for Meeting for Sufferings to be held on 2 October.

BYMT-2021-09-17 Communicating trustees' work

We have considered how to communicate our work to others.

BYMT-2021-09-18 Reviewing the meeting

We have reviewed the meeting.

BYMT-2021-09-19 Time with Recording Clerk

We have spent time with the Recording Clerk.

BYMT-2021-09-20 Time without staff

We have spent time without staff.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Nursey', written in a cursive style.

Caroline Nursey
Clerk



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

Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)

About IICSA

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) is a statutory inquiry in England and Wales, which has been running since 2014. It has launched 15 separate investigations, one of which is about Child Protection in Religious Organisations and Settings.

In 2019 the Recording Clerk, on behalf of Quakers in Britain, provided written witness statements to this investigation.

Report

The investigation into child protection in religious organisations and settings published its [report](#) on 2nd September. It was covered widely in the media, but to get a full understanding it is worth reading the document, which is clear and helpful.

In brief, the report:

- Emphasises that freedom of religion and belief can never justify or excuse the ill-treatment of a child, or a failure to take adequate steps to protect them from harm.
- Gives examples of ‘egregious failings by a number of religious organisations, and cases of child sexual abuse perpetrated by their adherents’.
- Notes that ‘Precise and reliable evidence about the scale of child sexual abuse within religious organisations and settings is not currently available.’
- Identifies barriers within religious settings to reporting allegations of child sexual abuse.
- Highlights the importance of reporting and responding to allegations of abuse.

Recommendations

This report makes two recommendations: the first relates to the definition of full-time education, and as far as we’re aware there are no Quaker settings to which this would apply. The second is particularly relevant for Quaker communities:

All religious organisations should have a child protection policy and supporting procedures, which should include advice and guidance on responding to disclosures of abuse and the needs of victims and survivors. The policy and procedures should be updated regularly, with professional child protection advice, and all organisations should have regular compulsory training for those in leadership positions and those who work with children and young people.

IICSA has stated that some issues identified in this investigation have not been included in this report, but will be addressed in its final report, due in 2022 - including:

- mandatory reporting;
- vetting and barring;
- regulation of the voluntary sector in respect of religious organisations and settings;
- introducing primary legislation to provide that voluntary settings adhere to basic child protection standards.

References to Quakers

References to Quakers in the report draw on the witness statements provided by the Recording Clerk. The Investigation asked for information about policies and procedures. It also asked for information about allegations of abuse relating to children, within the previous ten years: with IICSA's agreement, the information submitted was from a sample of six Area Meetings.

In relation to record-keeping, the report notes:

The Religious Society of Friends in Britain (Quakers) does not maintain records at a national level of the total number of allegations across local congregations. There are 70 area meetings in Britain and, across a sample of six area meetings, there were a total of four allegations during this 10-year period.

While the figures provided to the Inquiry ... may reflect the known prevalence of child sexual abuse within [The Religious Society of Friends in Britain], it is extremely unlikely that they reflect the full extent.

BYM had already been aware of these shortfalls. We were helped to identify them in 2018 and 2019 thanks to an internal whistleblower who raised concerns about practice in Area Meetings as well as the IICSA process. As a result, BYM has adopted an improvement plan. This includes adopting a new safeguarding policy for BYM; clarifying data-sharing arrangements with thirty-one:eight (the organisation which provides specialist advice to BYM and area meetings); and establishing a database. Quaker Life Central Committee has asked Area Meetings to report annually.

The other specific reference to Quakers relates to training, when the report notes:

It is not the case that larger organisations necessarily have more sophisticated child protection training programmes. For example, Triratna offers child protection training, as do the Bahá'ís, the Religious Society of Friends in Britain (Quakers), the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Church of Scientology, each of which represent relatively small religious communities in this country.

Victims and Survivors

The experiences of survivors lie at the heart of the Inquiry, and are crucial for informing IICSA's findings and recommendations.

The publication and media coverage of a report about safeguarding failures can trigger difficult emotions for people who have direct experience of the issues. Our Safeguarding Officer has been ready to respond to enquiries. BYM staff were able to alert Safeguarding Co-ordinators before the report was published, and we made sure they had access to information about sources of support.

There are [links to organisations that can help](#) on our website. The 31:8 helpline is an excellent source of advice on safeguarding incidents, and of course Friends and others can contact our Safeguarding Officer to discuss these or any other safeguarding issues via safe@quaker.org.uk.

Implications for Quakers

Keep improving

The report highlights the need to continue with the improvements we have already been working on. Of course, we must not be complacent. Staff will continue to consider the report, working alongside Safeguarding Co-ordinators and Area Meeting Trustees. We will be watching with interest for further recommendations from IICSA.

Barriers to safeguarding

The report identifies barriers to reporting child sexual abuse in religious organisations. We hope Friends will welcome the opportunity to ask ourselves how far we are allowing these barriers to put children at risk. In brief, they are:

- Victim-blaming, shame and honour
- Approaches to discussions of sex, sexuality and sexual abuse
- The use of religious texts and beliefs
- Abuse of power by religious leaders
- Gender disparity
- Distrust of external agencies
- Fear of external reporting and reputational damage
- The desire to manage allegations internally
- Forgiveness

Reporting

The report makes it clear that, at present, it's unlikely that we understand the full extent of child sexual abuse among Quakers. To the best of our knowledge, every AM has a current safeguarding policy and associated procedures and will be updating these documents regularly with guidance provided by BYM.

To confirm this, Area Meeting Trustees and Safeguarding Co-ordinators have been asked to send a very short, simple annual report to the Safeguarding Officer. The report itself doesn't contain any sensitive information; it simply asks for factual information (about policies and role-holders) and whether there are any issues in the AM, so that the Safeguarding Officer can be aware, follow up and work with local Friends where necessary.

The request has been sent three times since January; so far, 44 Area Meetings have reported, which means 26 have not. We hope that Meeting for Sufferings as a body, and representatives within their Area Meeting, will strongly encourage Area Meetings to complete these reports as soon as possible.

Conclusion

Although in some ways the report makes for difficult reading, it is an important reminder that safeguarding matters. It provides a useful framework for Quakers (and other faith groups) to consider what we need to do, continuing to work to make sure our communities are welcoming, inclusive and safe, for everyone. As Meeting for Sufferings minuted in 2019, 'IICSA is building the case for change and improvements in how institutions must protect children, learning from the past and drawing on the experiences of victims and survivors. Quakers in Britain see this as important work and we uphold everyone involved.'

Juliet Prager
Deputy Recording Clerk
September 2021



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

Church Government Advisory Group suggested changes to the text of *Quaker faith & practice*

Yearly Meeting 2020 in its Minute 9 laid down the Committee on Clerks, and agreed new procedures for the nominations previously made by that committee. That minute is included in an Appendix to this paper.

Recommendation to Meeting for Sufferings

The Church Government Advisory Group recommends to Meeting for Sufferings that the text of *Quaker faith & practice* is changed to reflect the decision made by Britain Yearly Meeting to lay down the Committee on Clerks.

The proposals include the removal of a complete numbered section (6.19). Church Government Advisory Group recommend to Meeting for Sufferings that, to minimise confusion for Friends using both the printed 5th edition and the online text, the removed section just reads “omitted” or another similar short phrase. This will also obviate the need for changing cross references to subsequent paragraphs.

The alternative would be to renumber all the subsequent paragraphs in Chapter 6, with consequent amendments to cross references elsewhere in *Quaker faith and practice*.

In the proposed text below, deleted text is shown like ~~this~~, and new text like this.

Proposed consequential amendments

Section 6.13

The new text proposed is:

The Yearly Meeting shall at its first session appoint, on the nomination of ~~the Committee on Clerks~~ Central Nominations Committee (6.21), a clerk and two

assistant clerks. The clerks shall hold office until the first session of the ensuing Yearly Meeting.

Section 6.17

The new text proposed is:

The following committees are appointed in whole or in part by Yearly Meeting, for continuing work after its conclusion: Agenda Committee (6.18), ~~Committee on Clerks (6.19)~~, Central Nominations Committee (6.21), Quaker Stewardship Committee (14.36).

In order to facilitate the business of Yearly Meeting the following committees shall be appointed at an early session: Nominating Group (6.22), Epistle Drafting Committee (6.23), Committee to Examine Minutes (6.24). The service of these committees ceases at the close of Yearly Meeting, save only in the case of the Nominating Group, which shall serve until the first session of the ensuing Yearly Meeting. Additionally Yearly Meeting may appoint, on the nomination of ~~the~~ Central Nominations Committee, at an early session two Friends to serve on ~~the~~ Arrangements Committee (6.20) for the period of Yearly Meeting. Yearly Meeting may decide to set up, or request Meeting for Sufferings to set up, other committees or ad hoc groups for special tasks.

Section 6.18

The new text proposed is:

The planning of the agenda for, and the use of the premises during, Yearly Meeting shall be in the hands of the Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee, which shall consult as may be necessary with standing committees, area meetings and General Meeting for Scotland, Meeting of Friends in Wales and Young Friends General Meeting.

The membership of the Agenda Committee shall be as follows:

- a. the clerk and assistant clerks of Yearly Meeting together with any other Friend nominated by ~~the Committee on Clerks~~ Central Nominations Committee to serve as clerk or assistant clerk of the next Yearly Meeting;
- b. eighteen Friends appointed by Yearly Meeting for a three-year period on the recommendation of ~~the~~ Central Nominations Committee, one third retiring annually though eligible for re-appointment;
- c. where necessary, interim appointments shall be made by Meeting for Sufferings on behalf of Yearly Meeting, on the recommendation of ~~the~~ Central Nominations Committee.

The Agenda Committee shall:

- d. appoint such subcommittees of its members as are from time to time required;

- e. appoint annually three or more of its members to serve on ~~the~~ Arrangements Committee (6.20).

~~The~~ Agenda Committee appoints a subcommittee responsible for planning residential Yearly Meeting Gatherings, having consulted with ~~the Committee on Clerks,~~ Central Nominations Committee and appropriate area meetings.

Agenda Committee works closely with Meeting for Sufferings, the standing committees and Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees to promote the right holding of Yearly Meeting, to foster Agenda Committee's relationship with them, and to integrate the work of the committee into the budgeted programme of central work of Britain Yearly Meeting. It keeps under review the longer-term evolution of the institution of Yearly Meeting in session and the pattern of its gatherings over time, in relation to organisational and spiritual development in the life of the Society. Its terms of reference may be obtained on application to the Recording Clerk.

Section 6.19

The current text:

The Committee on Clerks is responsible for considering the short-, medium- and long-term clerkship needs of the Yearly Meeting.

The Committee on Clerks acts as the nominating body for clerks of Yearly Meeting, Meeting for Sufferings and Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees. It brings forward:

- a. to Yearly Meeting, annually, names of a Friend to serve as clerk and two Friends to serve as assistant clerks of Yearly Meeting;
- b. to Meeting for Sufferings, annually, names of Friends to serve as clerk and assistant clerk of Meeting for Sufferings;
- c. to Yearly Meeting, annually, names of Friends to serve as clerk and assistant clerk of the Trustees;
- d. to Yearly Meeting, annually, the name of a Friend to serve as Yearly Meeting Treasurer in relation to the centrally managed work.

The Committee on Clerks consists of thirteen members including a clerk appointed by the committee from within its number. One third of the members other than the clerk will retire annually at the rise of Yearly Meeting, and are eligible for re-appointment.

These Friends shall serve for no more than six continuous years. The clerk is appointed for a three-year period and may serve for a maximum of nine continuous years on the committee.

It is proposed that the whole of this section is deleted.

As suggested earlier in this paper, Church Government Advisory Group recommends to Meeting for Sufferings that the text is replaced with the word “omitted” or another similar short phrase.

Section 6.22

The new text proposed is:

Yearly Meeting Nominating Group

Yearly Meeting Nominating Group is responsible for nominating to Yearly Meeting names of those to serve on Central Nominations Committee (6.21) and ~~Committee on Clerks (6.19)~~.

Yearly Meeting Nominating Group is appointed annually by Yearly Meeting from those attending Yearly Meeting. The convener is nominated by the previous Nominating Group.

Yearly Meeting Nominating Group consults as necessary and brings names to the next Yearly Meeting as required. The group also offers nominations to fill any vacancies.

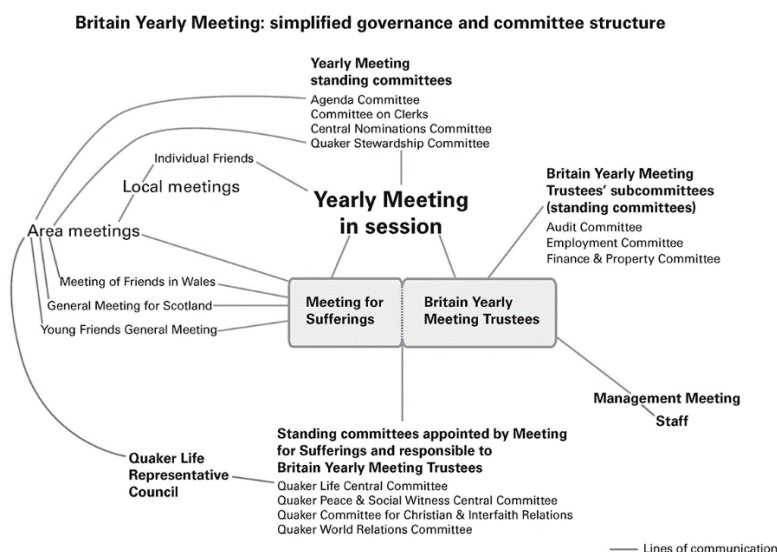
Section 7.10

The new text proposed is:

Meeting for Sufferings shall annually appoint Friends to serve as clerk and assistant clerk on the nomination of ~~the Committee on Clerks (6.19)~~ Central Nominations Committee (6.21).

Section 8.05

The current diagram:



The proposal is to remove “Committee on Clerks” from the diagram.

Section 8.17

The new text proposed is:

Yearly Meeting appoints trustees to act on its behalf as managing trustees of the work, assets and property held directly by Britain Yearly Meeting.

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees are responsible to the yearly meeting for the right stewardship of its work, assets and property; as charity trustees, they are also legally defined as responsible for the general control and management of the administration of the affairs of Britain Yearly Meeting.

The powers and responsibilities of Trustees, as set out in the Britain Yearly Meeting governing document, are grounded in service. Trustees have a duty to account to the outside world for the conduct of their trust. Gathered meetings, both of the Trustees and of other bodies, provide the religious discernment that guides our actions in the world. Trustees recognise and listen carefully to the discernment of Yearly Meeting, Meeting for Sufferings, and their committees and ensure that it is followed, within legal and financial constraints.

Trustees undertake, on behalf of Yearly Meeting, legal compliance, monitoring and scrutiny functions. They also ensure that the centrally managed work is being properly governed and managed in accordance with the religious and charitable objects of Britain Yearly Meeting (see 8.03), set out in the governing document approved by Yearly Meeting which is available on the Britain Yearly Meeting website or on application to the Recording Clerk. They oversee the work of Management Meeting (8.22) and are the employers of Britain Yearly Meeting staff (8.20).

Trustees approve annually an operational plan and budget for the forthcoming year. They are responsible for the Trustees’ annual report and financial statements for the past year, which are presented for information to Meeting for Sufferings before submission to Yearly Meeting and to the charity regulators in due course.

The membership, responsibilities and duties of Trustees are set out in detail in terms of reference to be approved and revised from time to time by Yearly Meeting. A copy is available from the Recording Clerk and the [BYM website \(new window\)](#).

Trustees are appointed by Yearly Meeting on the nomination of ~~the~~ Central Nominations Committee (6.21.+) as set out in the Trustees’ terms of reference. In making nominations for service as trustees, ~~the~~ Central Nominations Committee ensures that the Friends approached are aware of the legal responsibilities of trustees and of the legal position on eligibility (see 15.04). No trustee shall serve on a standing committee as listed in 8.06. The clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees and the Yearly Meeting Treasurer and assistant clerk are appointed by Yearly Meeting on the nomination of ~~the~~ Committee on Clerks (6.19.c), as is Britain Yearly

Meeting Trustees. The the Yearly Meeting Treasurer (6.19d) who serves as a trustee ex officio because of the Treasurer's role in relation to the centrally managed work as a whole. The Assistant Clerk is appointed by Trustees from amongst their number.

Conclusion

We hope that Meeting for Sufferings will agree to these changes to the text of *Quaker faith & practice*.

Church Government Advisory Group considers that these are minor factual changes that Meeting for Sufferings may make on behalf of our Yearly Meeting (as noted by Meeting for Sufferings in minute MfS/19/07/05).

Mark Tod
Convener, Church Government Advisory Group
September 2021

Appendix

Britain Yearly Meeting 2020

Minute 9: Review of Central Nominations Committee and Committee on Clerks

Further to Minute 23 of Yearly Meeting Gathering 2017, we receive minutes MfS 19/12/15 and MfS 18/11/17 of Meeting for Sufferings which set out work done to review the terms of reference of Central Nominations Committee, and the recommendations of a review of Committee on Clerks.

Meeting for Sufferings, Central Nominations Committee and Committee on Clerks have been working on this for some time, along with Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees for the recommendations concerning Britain Yearly Meeting trustees' clerks. We are thankful for this careful process of discernment on our behalf, and accept their work and recommendations as follows:

- Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees should bring to Yearly Meeting nominations of Friends to serve as Clerk of BYM trustees and Yearly Meeting Treasurer. These appointments will be made for a term of three years. BYM Trustees should appoint their own Assistant Clerk from amongst their number.
- Central Nominations Committee should take on the work of bringing nominations for the clerks of Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings.
- Central Nominations Committee will establish subgroups and standing search groups, with additional Friends brought in to serve on them as needed. This

will enable expertise and capacity to nurture Friends before and during service.

Accordingly we lay down the Committee on Clerks, giving thanks for the work of the many Friends who have served to nominate clerks, and we accept the new terms of reference for Central Nominations Committee.

Clare Scott Booth
Clerk



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

Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill

Introduction

In July, Surrey and Hampshire Border AM considered the Police, Sentencing and Courts Bill, and agreed to send it to Meeting for Sufferings. The minute acknowledges that BYM is already working on this. This paper includes:

- a) The AM's minute, followed by a 'draft minute' prepared by the AM's working group
- b) A paper prepared by Grace da Costa, BYM's Public Relations and Advocacy Manager, explaining more about the Bill and suggesting ways that Meeting for Sufferings, and Friends generally, might take this concern forward.

Surrey and Hampshire Border AM held on 4 July 2021

21/07/02 Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill

We have received a report from our Police, Crime and Sentencing Bill working group (ref AM minute 21/05/02).

We agree with the reports conclusion that "Given the Quaker history of championing human rights and prison reform" we should "ask Meeting for Sufferings to take this issue forward as a concern".

We recognise this is a concern that Quakers have been actively engaged with for some time and, in one sense, this minute merely affirms the actions already being taken at Friends House and encourages them to continue their work on it.

We ask our Clerk to forward this minute to MfS.

Draft Minute on Police, Sentencing and Courts Bill suitable for submission to Meeting for Sufferings

This Bill strikes at the heart of the human rights we have held in this country under the common law and later in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.

This government is using the emergency health crisis as a cover to make emergency measures permanent.

We are very concerned about the impact of this Bill on the freedom of assembly and of expression, and the right to peaceful protest, in this country if it were enacted as currently drafted. We have written letters to our local MPs and to a member of the House of Lords who lives locally. The member of the House of Lords agreed with us, stating that ‘the Bill includes very concerning measures such as unjustified and draconian restrictions on the right to peaceful assembly and protest.’ We also made a submission to the Joint Committee on Human Rights on 14 May 2021, and, on 22 June 2021, to The Public Bill Committee which was tasked with the scrutiny of this Bill.

We have followed closely the proceedings of, and the evidence presented to, these two parliamentary committees, as well as the first and second readings of the Bill and all of the Parliamentary debates that were part of those proceedings.

As well as the damage that this Bill would cause to those wishing to exercise their right to protest peacefully, it proposes to introduce draconian sentences for criminal damage to memorials (maximum jail sentence of 10 years), also a maximum of 10 years in prison for the proposed new offence of ‘intentionally or recklessly causing public nuisance’. The threshold for imposing conditions on public assemblies would be lowered, and maximum penalties increased. Proposed maximum sentence for breaching conditions imposed by police: 51 weeks in jail. A new idea is introduced of a ‘one-person protest’. Again, maximum sentence for breaching conditions imposed: 51 weeks. A new offence is proposed of ‘Residing on Land without Consent in or with a Vehicle’. This would have a disproportionate effect on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. Proposed maximum penalty of three months in jail; the vehicle can be seized; the person could be made homeless.

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR) published its report on the Public Order Part of the Bill (Part 3) on 22 June 2021. In our view, its proposals are welcome and would remove the contentious and draconian parts of the Bill which would otherwise have a terribly damaging impact on the human rights of the people of this country. It also proposes that a new ‘right to engage in peaceful protest’ be included in the Bill. We support the proposals of the JCHR in their report.

Given the Quaker history of championing human rights and prison reform, we ask Meeting for Sufferings to take this issue forward as a concern. It is unthinkable that the Bill could be passed into law as it currently stands. We ask Meeting for Sufferings to support the amendments proposed by the JCHR 22 June 2021 report.

Draft dated 28.6.21

Stephen Crouch, Clerk

Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill briefing

Summary

This paper provides an overview why the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill (PCSCB) matters to Quakers in Britain and what BYM is doing about it. It asks Meeting for Sufferings to uphold BYM's work on the PCSCB and affirm Quakers in Britain's commitment to campaigning for civil liberties and against racism in all its forms.

Why it matters

The PCSCB was introduced to parliament in March 2021 and recently began its passage through the House of Lords. The bill threatens the right to protest by allowing the government and police to impose stringent conditions on assemblies and processions and to hand out large fines and long prison sentences to those who breach protest laws and conditions. It also criminalises trespass and increases 'stop and search' powers. The bill will have a disproportionately negative effect on groups who are already marginalised by our society, including Black people and people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

Quakers have a religious commitment to bringing about positive change in the world, and speaking truth to power. Protest is one of the ways in which we carry out these commitments, as affirmed by Meeting for Sufferings minutes MfS/12/02/6 and MfS/12/06/4 on 'Radical resistance and the state'. Protest can therefore be seen a matter of religious freedom for us. Our testimony of equality and our history of being persecuted lead us to support and uphold those who are now being persecuted and disadvantaged by the PCSCB. At Yearly Meeting 2021 we declared our commitment to becoming an actively anti-racist faith community. The PCSCB is an opportunity to put this into practice.

What BYM is doing

For a number of years BYM has used its influence as a national charity to bring civil society organisations together on issues around democracy, civil liberties and charities' right to campaign. While the Lobbying Act was going through parliament, we worked with Bond (a charity umbrella body) to convene a network of charities and civil society organisations under the name 'Civil Society Voice'. The network is currently mobilising against an unprecedented attack on democracy and civil liberties. As well as the PCSCB, we face threats including:

- The ongoing effects of the Lobbying Act, which introduced onerous reporting requirements and spending restrictions for non-party campaigners such as registered charities.
- Elections Bill – introduces further restrictions and requirements on non-party campaigners, as well as other worrying provisions on voter ID, the Electoral Commission and party donations.

- Independent Human Rights Act Review – likely to pave the way for weakening or even abolishing the Act.
- Judicial Review and Courts Bill – curtails the ability of charities and their beneficiaries to challenge decisions by public bodies.
- Nationality and Borders Bill – undermines the right to seek asylum by penalising asylum-seekers who enter the country via irregular routes.
- Rhetoric by government, parliamentarians, media and the Charity Commission implying that charities should not speak out on the issues they work on, such as MPs criticising Barnardos for talking about white privilege.
- The use of anti-advocacy clauses in government contracts, preventing charities from raising concerns in sectors where they provide services.

We seek to raise awareness of all these threats as we campaign against the PCSCB. Our role as co-conveners of the Civil Society Voice network has placed us at the heart of work on the PCSCB. BYM staff are on the steering group of an alliance of organisations campaigning on Part 3 (protest) and Part 4 (trespass) of the bill. The other members of the steering group are Bond; Friends, Families and Travellers; Friends of the Earth; and Liberty. Thanks to generous grants from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, the steering group has hired consultants to convene the alliance and lead on communications and parliamentary influencing.

We are working with other members of the alliance to lobby MPs and Peers at a national level and mobilise opposition to the bill at a grassroots level. Grace Da Costa, Public Affairs and Advocacy Manager, works collaboratively on the bill with Paul Parker, Oliver Robertson and other colleagues who have expertise in criminal justice, protest, peacebuilding and racial justice. BYM is holding meetings with MPs and Peers and providing them with written briefings ahead of all parliamentary debates. Grace has provided support and resources for Quaker meetings to lobby local MPs, particularly those on the Bill Committee, and to resist the bill in other ways. We have published three blogs on the PCSCB, which other organisations are also using to mobilise opposition to the bill.

What Friends can do

We ask Friends to uphold BYM's work on the PCSCB and affirm Quakers in Britain's commitment to:

- Upholding and promoting democracy, civil liberties and human rights, including the right to freedom of assembly
- Standing with groups who are being marginalised by politicians, the media and wider society, including People of Colour and people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds. Those of us who are White can affirm our commitment to using our privilege to empower and support those who lack such privilege.

- Affirm the right and duty of faith groups, charities and other civil society organisations and community groups to speak out on matters in which they have expertise and their conscience leads them to campaign for change.

Friends wishing to take action on the PCSCB can find more information in our [briefing for Quakers \(Word\)](#). We are trying to raise public awareness and opposition to the bill as it passes through the House of Lords. When the bill returns to the House of Commons for 'ping pong' in late 2021 or early 2022, we will ask Friends to write to their MPs again for a final push to improve the bill. We are also drawing attention to the broader context of attacks on democracy and human rights. We encourage Friends to take part in Amnesty UK's '[Stop the rights raid week of action](#)', which is designed to tackle these issues holistically. We will keep Friends informed of our progress.

Grace Da Costa,
Public Affairs and Advocacy Manager
September 2021



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

Sustainability – focus on COP26

Introduction

In recent years, Meeting for Sufferings has heard from our Sustainability Monitoring Group in October. This year their report will come to us in December. However the October meeting is our last before the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) and the clerks felt it was right to give this some agenda time.

The UK will host the 26th [UN Climate Change Conference Conference of the Parties](#) (COP26) in Glasgow on 31 October–12 November 2021. Quakers are undertaking various actions in the run up to COP26, and the rest of this paper describes British Quaker involvement in the conference.

Walks and pilgrimages

As part of the build-up to the COP26, several different pilgrimages are already underway. Groups of people of faith have walked to COP conferences before, including the 'Pilgrimage to Paris' in 2015 – it can be an effective way to raise the profile of climate action, talk to lots of different people, build solidarity and gather support for your aims. We are aware of four pilgrimage-style actions that Friends are involved in:

a) Rise to the Moment relay

Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) is supporting the 'Rise to the Moment' relay, led by the Young Christian Climate Network (YCCN) with the backing of Christian Aid, the interfaith Make COP Count group and several UK churches. It is calling on the UK government to work with others to cancel the debts of the world's poorest countries and commit to providing more climate finance and new sources of money to deal with climate-related loss and damage.

The relay left St Ives in Cornwall on 13 June as the G7 summit concluded, and is making its way to Glasgow. Friends can walk part of the route, host walkers, or help to organise along the route. The relay is open to anyone, whether or not you are a young Christian! On the day these papers are published (17 September) the walk will

reach Leeds; on the day of Meeting for Sufferings it will be in Durham. To sign up or find out more, visit www.yccn.uk or email Oonagh at oonagh@quaker.org.uk

b) Quaker relay pilgrimage to COP26

Peter Belton, a Friend in Norwich, is calling on Quakers to join a Quaker relay pilgrimage by travelling from one meeting house or place of worship to another in the direction of Glasgow. Each participant is asked to carry a letter addressed to some person of influence stressing the need for action and a real commitment to change. These letters will be posted at each destination, ensuring a constant flow of letters arriving during the whole period of the pilgrimage. For Friends also wanting to participate in the YCCN relay, there are plenty of opportunities to join up with the route for this. To get involved, please email peter.belton2@ntlworld.com

c) Art & Ecology Scottish Pilgrimage for COP26

Friends in Scotland are participating in a walk from Dunbar to Glasgow, working with cultural, community and interfaith organisations to reimagine what it means to be ecological. The pilgrimage will start on 18 October, with talks and exhibitions to mark the occasion, stop in Edinburgh from 22–24 October, and arrive in Glasgow for a series of events on 30–31 October. To find out more and get involved, visit <https://artandecology.earth/pilgrimage-for-cop26>

d) Climate Crisis Pilgrimage

Bamber Hawes of South Shropshire plans to leave Bishops Castle on 10 October, to walking to Glasgow and arriving on 1 November. He will carry a ten-foot high sculpture of a polar bear. He can be contacted on social media as [@Clarion the bear](https://twitter.com/Clarion_the_bear)

Local Quaker actions

QPSW staff have created an online database to enable Quakers to share information about the action you are taking and your contact details – so Friends can read about one another's actions and get in touch with each other directly. To find out more and share information, see the [Cop26 Actions](#) webpage.

Already staff have heard of so many inspiring actions – just some examples:

- Manchester and Warrington AM organised a vigil for justice, displaying placards which told the story: Slaves grew Manchester cotton – Cotton Created Huge Wealth – That Wealth Created Industry – Industry Spewed Out CO2 – This CO2 caused the Climate Crisis – Climate Crisis is Worst for the Poorest.
- South Wales Area Meeting (SWAM) set up an Environment and Sustainability Cluster which is co-ordinating a blog, newsletter. They've become partner organisations of Climate Cymru. They've joined with Friends in other parts of Wales – read more about this journey [here](#).
- [Bristol AM](#) and Wanstead LM have made climate emergency declarations.

- [Newark Quakers](#) have created a “One World, One Climate” exhibition which is open on 18, 22 and 25 September at Newark Meeting House to coincide with The Great Big Green Week, and in the run-up to COP26 in early November.
- A group of representatives from meetings within West Scotland AM has been meeting regularly to support some of the logistical aspects of Quaker involvement in COP26. Notably, Glasgow Friends are coordinating a programme of Quaker and non-Quaker events in Glasgow Meeting House during COP26.
- FWCC’s [penpal project](#) is helping Friends to connect with other Quakers around the world

QPSW priorities

Guided by QPSW Central Committee and its Economics and Sustainability Sub-Committee, staff are currently focusing on two climate justice issues: **Loss and Damage** and **Financing Climate Justice**. To read more about this work, and how to be involved, please see the [Climate Justice](#) resources on the BYM website. Friends may also find the [Make COP Count policy briefing](#) helpful.

Staff have been working with partner organisations on a new campaign for loss and damage finance, ‘Make Polluters Pay’. BYM (along with 40+ other organisations) has signed a declaration, and staff have helped create a petition for individuals to sign, as well as producing guides to holding a vigil and having conversations about loss and damage.

Parliamentary advocacy

In June, as part of the [Make COP Count](#) interfaith group, Quakers in Britain hosted a parliamentary event on ‘loss and damage’. Thanks to Friends who helped invite Parliamentarians, we had a great turn out. Attendees included members of parliament (MPs), members of the House of Lords (Peers and Lords Spiritual) and faith representatives (including faith leaders and young faith representatives). There were speeches by a UK faith representative and climate justice campaigners in Bangladesh and the Solomon Islands, with opening and closing remarks by Stephen Timms MP and Caroline Lucas MP. Following on from the event, QPSW staff have been working with two MPs to table parliamentary questions on loss and damage.

‘Inside’ COP 26

The formal negotiations at COP take place within what is known as the ‘blue zone’, which is only accessible to delegates and accredited observer organisations, which is in the Scottish Event Campus (SEC). Glasgow Science Centre, just across the river, will host the ‘green zone’, which is managed by the COP26 Presidency (the UK government) and is open to the public. There will also be many unofficial activities and events taking place elsewhere in Glasgow.

The [Quaker United Nations Office](#) (QUNO) has official observer status under the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC). QUNO will be present in the negotiation rooms throughout, to support negotiators seeking effective, fair and ambitious guideline decisions needed to implement the Paris Agreement.

Quakers in Britain have been granted observer status at COP26, and BYM staff will be working alongside QUNO (FWCC) and QEW inside the blue zone.

QUNO has been active at the climate negotiations since 2013, offering small, informal and off-the-record meetings for negotiators (known as ‘quiet diplomacy’) to help build communication and understanding between a diverse group of countries. Over 60 countries have participated since 2013; the work has continued virtually during the pandemic, as negotiators say they continue to value the ‘safe and humane space’ and ‘sense of community’ that QUNO’s quiet diplomacy helps to create.

In preparation for COP26, QUNO recently published the [Climate Empowerment Trilogy](#), a series of publications dedicated to education and capacity building on climate action across different audiences. QUNO, BYM and QEW are working alongside [Act Alliance](#) to host a side event in the ‘Blue Zone’ called A moral call to conscience – fair share in finance for people affected by loss and damage.

‘Outside’ COP

The COP26 Coalition is running a ‘People’s Summit’ from 7–10 November. This will be a mixture of in-person and online events, and is an opportunity for people from all over the world to share stories of resistance and discuss real solutions to the climate crisis. BYM staff also hope to support some of the daily ‘movement assemblies’ to be held by the Coalition during COP26.

On **Saturday 6 November**, Quakers will be part of a huge demonstration for climate justice, taking place in cities around Britain and globally. Covid-safety permitting, we hope lots of Friends will join events in Glasgow, London or locally to demand real action for climate justice.

As part of the [Make COP Count](#) interfaith group, Quakers in Britain will also be joining a number of interfaith events and actions. In the run up to COP26, those in London can join the [‘Vigil for COP26’](#) at Southwark Cathedral on 23 September. Meanwhile, those in Glasgow may be able to join an interfaith vigil that is being planned for St George Square on 31 October. You can keep an eye on the [Scottish Interfaith Week website](#) for further updates about this. Other plans include an interfaith event during Great Big Green week (18–26 September), the Relay to COP26 (more on this below) and an interfaith event on the eve of COP26.

During the conference the Meeting House in Glasgow will be entirely devoted to COP events, apart from our regular meetings for worship. It will be open every day from 8.00am to 10.00pm, providing meeting room space and a drop in cafe.

BYM is also working with Woodbrooke, QUNO and FWCC on two key moments where Friends around the world can feel part of COP26. On 31 October, Friends around the world are encouraged to hold meeting for worship to reflect on the urgent need for climate justice, and to hold communities affected by climate breakdown in the Light.

Then, in the second week of the negotiations, there are provisional plans to hold an online call for Friends around the world, where Quaker representatives at COP26 will provide an update on the negotiations and on the actions of the climate movement.

Juliet Prager, Deputy Recording Clerk, drawing on input from QPSW staff Olivia Hanks, Rebecca Woo and Oonagh Ryder
September 2021



Yearly Meeting of the
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The work of Quaker Peace & Social Witness

A minute from Chilterns Area Meeting has been received regarding the work of Quaker Peace & Social Witness:

Background note

In July, Meeting for Sufferings spent time considering two minutes from QPSW Central Committee (QPSWCC) about its strategy; alongside related minutes from 10 Area Meetings. Friends may find it helpful to refer to the full [minute MfS/21/07/14](#). Chilterns AM has sent a minute which also refers to the QPSWCC strategy.

Arrangements Group note that this matter was explored thoroughly in July. Meeting for Sufferings expects to hear more from QPSWCC about how this work is developing, later this year or in 2022.

QPSWCC is the body tasked by Yearly Meeting to translate faith into action – so the matters covered in the minute need to be addressed by it. Staff sent the minute for information to the QPSWCC Secretary and clerks. Oliver Robertson, Head of Witness and Worship and the QPSWCC Secretary, has spoken with Tim Newell and Tony Philpott of Chilterns AM, who drafted the text quoted in the Area Meeting's minute. Oliver was able to hear more about these Friends' concerns, and hopes the conversation was also helpful to them.

Arrangements Group suggests that Meeting for Sufferings forwards the minute from Chilterns AM to QPSWCC, for the committee to be aware as it works with staff to continue developing the details of QPSW programmes.

Chilterns Area Quaker Meeting held 21 July 2021

21.07.07 Meeting for Sufferings part ii: Minute re QPSW's Criminal Justice Programme

We have received a draft minute written by Friends involved in Prison Chaplaincy and Criminal Justice, responding to the suggestion that QPSW should lay down its Criminal Justice programme in its current form.

We share the concern expressed by several Area Meetings about this suggestion. We approve the draft minute with the changes noted and agree to our Clerk sending the minute to Meeting for Sufferings:

We have heard from our representatives at Meeting for Sufferings on July 10th and the preparative meeting concerning QPSW on July 7th.

We are in unity with the many views expressed opposing the reduction or laying down of QPSW's staff-led our work on criminal justice. Although we accept the decision to concentrate on our testimonies of 'peace and peacebuilding, and sustainability and climate justice' we would argue that all our testimonies are interrelated and, specifically, work on criminal justice has always been a major contributor to peacebuilding.

A peaceful society is one where there is an enlightened criminal justice system. Throughout history Friends have contributed much to bring about a fair, positive and effective criminal justice system. We have had a close involvement with the justice system from our beginnings and have spoken out about it with good effect. We continue today to have commitments through local meetings to prisons, young offender institutions, immigration centres, secure hospitals and other aspects of justice such as the courts, the probation service, support for victims of crime and police liaison.

The problem in our society at present is that the actions of the government are going in the opposite direction. Our government currently sees justice processes as remedies to many of the problems it faces, whereas we would argue that for many problems other solutions are more appropriate. Thus, the experience of refugees and immigrants has become harsher in recent years. Should an issue of a crime become newsworthy the political response is to increase the sentencing length, talking up more fear and control. Legislation to restrict the right of protest is seen by many as very damaging to our social order and democratic rights. It will result in a larger prison population for purely punitive reasons. We know about the damaging effects of imprisonment on the family of the person detained. Over 100,000 children have a parent in prison at any time with the long-term damage and disruption to relationships that involves. Housing and employment on release become long-term problems for many, as does the drug dependency not always addressed during the sentence and sometimes even developed. Sentencing has always had other purposes as well, like the rehabilitation of offenders, which might include enabling them to pay back something through a restorative process: the needs of victims seem to play a small part in present government thinking. Friends have worked with many rehabilitative and restorative processes. For example, our work with Circles of Support and Accountability would never had been achieved without the leadership of staff in Friends House, working with Friends in the community. It depended also on a

trusting relationship with the agencies and other groups working in justice matters. This relationship came from the staff in Friends House working at the issues. There are other areas of potential creative work that would make for reducing the impact of crime. Restorative projects in the community have often had support from Friends and we know that when carried out to standard they reduce the fear of crime. These include Community Chaplaincy Schemes and Drug Rehabilitation Communities. Work with victims of serious crime such as Escaping Victimhood (now a Quaker Recognised Group) has shown the potential for addressing the long-term needs of families affected by trauma. We hope, with the leadership, support and expertise from Friends House, that this work will continue and make a major contribution towards bringing about a more peaceful society.

Signed: Catriona Troth
Clerk, Chilterns Area Quaker Meeting



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Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture (Q–CAT)

Short definition of torture

"When severe suffering is intentionally inflicted on a person, by a public official, to gain information or confession, or to punish or to intimidate and coerce."

Torture is internationally banned

"There are no exceptional circumstances to this ban, and no justification of its use."

Who we are

Q–CAT is a charity and a Quaker Recognised Body, carrying forward a concern for Britain Yearly Meeting, which is to work towards the eventual abolition of state-sponsored torture worldwide.

The accepted definition of state sponsored torture is severe suffering inflicted by a person, who is employed by the state, to gain information, a confession, to punish, intimidate or coerce another person. State-sponsored torture is the focus of Q–CAT's work, without any intention of discounting the horror of the deliberate acts of cruelty meted out by people on others.

Why the concern

"Our experience that there is that of God in everyone that leads us to search for an answer to the humanity and that of God in the perpetrator of torture. Evil behaviour often blocks the flow of God's love...." – Minute 2 Meeting for Sufferings 06.02.1999

"The deliberate harming of people who are helpless denies the divine that lives within us, and moves us to love and peace. Both the torturer and tortured share this divine light. By ignoring torture, we take the side of the torturer." – Britain Yearly Meeting 2nd statement on Torture 08.02.2007

Q–CAT's profound concern is for the spiritual and physical harm that torture wreaks on those touched by its use; in addition to the victims, those engaged in the torture, or who authorise its use, and the culture which makes torture appear to be acceptable and societies in which it is embedded.

Q–CAT is taking forward the Concern of a religious body, and for that reason the charity has a different focus from the focus taken by other anti-torture charities and organisations.

What makes Q–CAT different? First, the negative impact on the perpetrators is of equal importance to Q–CAT as to the victims – all being loved children of God. Secondly, the impact on the internal spiritual paths of all those touched by torture is also to the forefront of our work. Further, our reports to Quaker and external bodies emphasise the spiritual underpinnings of our views.

Other charities do not highlight the destructive impact on the internal spiritual path of those involved in the processes of torture, rather they emphasise the situation of victim /communities and the impact on a country's security because of the practice. These of course we care about too but see it as a spiritual matter, not just a physical/material/time-tied one.

We do not aim to duplicate other organisations' excellent work, rather, we aim to work alongside them.

Our relationship with Central Friends

There are many Quaker Recognised Bodies within our Yearly Meeting. Q–CAT is one of them, and as well as being 'externally regulated' (i.e. registered with the Charity Commission) it is 'linked' to our national church. In our case, this means Meeting for Sufferings minuted that Q–CAT has delegated authority to speak on this recognised Concern against torture. BYM, particularly through Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW), gives us a good deal of support, for which we are immensely grateful. We have a link with a specific member of staff, Clare Woods, who has been most helpful with comment, advice on strategic planning and other suggestions. We have the occasional use of rooms at Friends House for meetings and conferences, Parliamentary Liaison advice, media and event planning advice.

Q–CAT's structure

Q–CAT works through its trustees; it is not a membership body. Currently there are four Supporting Area Meetings that give us support in our concern: Central England, North Wales, South East Scotland and Wirral & Chester. We also have individual supporters, spread throughout the country. Supporters receive newsletters and briefing papers during the year.

Reason and Purpose of this report

As a concern carried on behalf of all British Quakers, and a linked body, we are accountable to Meeting for Sufferings. It is important to report to you periodically for the work we have undertaken on your behalf. The last time we did so was in 2015. We are glad to do so again.

Recent activity

Two current areas of work illustrate how we have been actively working to abolish the use of torture in the world.

We have 'held power to account' in our work to gain Parliamentary support for an amendment to the Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Veterans) Bill, so maintaining the criminal nature of torture and the absolute prohibition of its use for any reason.

We are raising awareness of the impact of torture on perpetrator and detainee with Q-CAT's commission to Sally Beamish for a choral work for amateur choirs, "A Knock on the Door".

Ex-hostage John McCarthy contributed by checking the authenticity of the libretto against his experiences of detention by the Islamic jihad terrorists in 1986–91. Ex Cathedra have expressed an interest in performing its première, and may still do so at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham in 2022.

Our aim in commissioning this work is not just to raise awareness but to provide an occasion for that local meetings and area meetings to come together to sing and practice music together, to maybe give public performances of it, or to invite others to join with them on this venture. The well-established music publishers, Edition Peters, are likely to advertise "A Knock on the Door" widely so other amateur choirs here and abroad will have the chance to enjoy it too.

We believe that there are some implications arising from the first activity, working with other NGOs against the Overseas Operations Bill, in relation to our currently re-thinking our Quaker structures. We would like you to consider these.

The joint working between Q-CAT and the Parliamentary Liaison Officer, Grace da Costa, on a response to the Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Veterans) Bill was an effective collaboration between an expert member of Central Friends staff and a Quaker body, Q-CAT, acting under concern. The work had a significant impact on the Bill that that was effectively going to de-criminalise torture by military personnel, given sufficient passage of time.

Working with Grace, we made a detailed submission of our concerns to the joint parliamentary committee on Human Rights, sent short, factual briefings to MPs and Peers for use in debates, and joined forces with other human rights groups to share information and expertise in support of parliamentarians seeking to have amendments to the Bill adopted. On the crucial matter of immunity from acts of torture after five years have lapsed the Government had to accept defeat in the House of Lords. Grace da Costa's input was critical for the success of this work. We are deeply thankful for her help.

Partnership working

When Meeting for Sufferings delegated this concern to, firstly one AM and then others, it recognised that Area Meetings could take on work on behalf of the Yearly Meeting. We believe that this could become a model for future work where there is a continuing concern (for example Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network (QARN), Quakers In Criminal Justice (QICJ) and limited central capacity to work on it. This is an effective 'bottom up' way of working; Friends acting under concern being supported by expertise within QPSW. Central Friends staff, are then in the position to hone these activities to be more effective and targeted, as well as better publicised among Friends, so gaining more support.

Need for support

Over many years Meeting for Sufferings Minutes have upheld Q-CAT, for which we are most grateful. By their Minutes Meeting for Sufferings has encouraged Area Meetings to appoint Q-CAT correspondents and suggesting that Friends take up the concern. However, few Area Meetings have felt the need to join Q-CAT in addressing this corrosive evil. Few individual Friends actively support us.

Torture is thriving around the world. In many countries its use is not a secret, but is employed openly as a tool of terror and oppression, its use condoned within their official structures as an effective instrument of 'necessary' control.

In general Friends oppose the deliberate use of pain on a powerless person. Some Friends actively support the larger Non-Governmental Organisations such as Amnesty, Reprieve, Freedom from Torture. It is excellent that they do so. It does not need to be a matter of either them or us. Our focus is different. We are a Quaker concern, working on behalf of the Religious Society of Friends that holds a core belief about the divine within all. Why not support us as well?

We want to raise the energy and willingness of Friends to 'spare no effort' (Hamilton Declaration, Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) 1976) to oppose the practice of torture, given its warping of civil structures and the spiritual scarring it engraves on the victims and torturers. Why is our outrage not shared? What does this say about us, Friends, if this is the case?

It was pointed out in the 2007 Britain Yearly Meeting statement on Torture: 'Both the torturer and tortured share this divine light. By ignoring torture, we take the side of the torturer.'

We want people who can help, who would be willing to work with us to address this obscene use of power, to stem this corrosion of our human spirit. This is undiluted evil in action.

How do we continue, Meeting for Sufferings, when we cannot find Friends to be under concern with us?

We seek your suggestions for how to gain more active support.

Juliet Morton,
Co-ordinator, Q-CAT

www.q-cat.org.uk or www.qcat.org.uk enquiries: from.qcat@hotmail.com



Yearly Meeting of the
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Yearly Meeting 2021

Meeting for Sufferings is invited to reflect on Yearly Meeting; the Arrangements Group has invited a representative to prepare some opening remarks.

Meeting for Sufferings is also required to consider specific minutes relating to its work.

Minutes relevant to Meeting for Sufferings

Minutes from Yearly Meeting (full and substantive versions) are available from BYM's [website](#) (four minutes require consideration from Meeting for Sufferings – please refer to the full minutes following this link).

a) Minute 27: Review of Quaker Stewardship Committee

Yearly Meeting agreed to lay down Quaker Stewardship Committee (QSC) from the rise of Yearly Meeting 2022, and Meeting for Sufferings has been asked to:

- take responsibility for the oversight of certification of Area Meeting compliance responsibilities (please note: this is not likely to need much work on the part of Meeting for Sufferings; staff will bring an annual report, with any necessary recommendations, to Meeting for Sufferings once a year)
- agree the necessary factual alterations to *Quaker faith & Practice* and inform Yearly Meeting
- lay down the review group.

At this meeting, Meeting for Sufferings is invited to:

- ask staff to bring an annual report to Meeting for Sufferings on the certification of Area Meeting compliance with any necessary recommendations
- ask the Church Government Advisory Group to draft factual alterations for *Quaker faith & practice*
- lay down the review group.

b) Minute 14: Appointment of members of Meeting for Sufferings

Yearly Meeting appointed members of the new triennium (2021–2024). However, 16 Area Meetings and 4 other bodies did not bring forward nominations for either or both their representative and alternate in time. Meeting for Sufferings will be asked to make these appointments as nominations are received.

At this meeting, many nominations are being brought forward for consideration and appointment (paper 03).

c) Minute 37: For our comfort and discomfort: living equality and truth at a time of crisis

Yearly Meeting considered three strands under the theme of ‘for our comfort and discomfort: living equality and truth at a time of crisis’: climate justice, gender diversity and anti-racism.

Yearly Meeting asked four central committees to continue the consideration of these three strands. Quaker Life Central Committee was asked to consider how best to support local and area meetings to work on cultivating an inclusive culture of welcome, and on developing a vision for what it means to be an anti-racist faith community. Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee’s priority on sustainability and climate justice (QPSW Central Committee strategic plan 2021–25) was supported and affirmed. Finally, Yearly Meeting asked Quaker World Relations Committee and Quaker Committee on Christian and Interfaith Relations to consider how to work with Friends around the world and with other churches and faith groups to take this work forward.

Meeting for Sufferings has been asked to receive and consider interim reports on Yearly Meeting’s behalf and to share examples of successful practice. Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group will make appropriate plans to incorporate these reports in the forward agenda for Meeting for Sufferings.

d) Minute 28: The role of meeting for Sufferings

The Recording Clerk has prepared a separate paper (paper 15b) for Meeting for Sufferings on this minute.



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The role of Meeting for Sufferings: initiating a process

Background

Yearly Meeting 2021, by minute 28, approved new terms of reference for BYM Trustees. The full minute is appended to this paper. These terms of reference were not so much a change as a clarification of the responsibilities delegated to BYM Trustees. Friends at Yearly Meeting raised questions as to whether the role of Meeting for Sufferings also needs to be examined in light of the new document.

Yearly Meeting minuted (in part):

We acknowledge that there are unresolved tensions that impact on the role of Meeting for Sufferings and that their role may now need review. We ask Meeting for Sufferings to consider this and return to us.

Meeting for Sufferings, in its last triennium, had also identified the need for changes, as part of the wider drive to becoming a simple church supported by a simple charity to reinvigorate Quakerism. The meeting heard regular updates about work being done by BYM Trustees to explore how to simplify BYM's governance structures. Meeting for Sufferings in December 2020 went as far as to minute:

We have heard a call to take a more co-ordinated approach to our review process, considering the interrelationships between bodies and to take a radical approach to our structures not being constrained by the historical development of different bodies. We look forward to playing our part in achieving this change.

It should be recalled that Meeting for Sufferings is already reviewing Yearly Meeting and Yearly Meeting Gatherings and has established a dedicated review group for that purpose, which will provide an interim report on the purpose of Yearly Meetings in 2022. Meeting for Sufferings is also responsible for overseeing the revision of our book of discipline.

This new request from Yearly Meeting thus comes at a timely moment, and Meeting for Sufferings will want to set aside time in the current triennium to work on these

issues, noting that changes to the role of one body often have implications for the role of other bodies in the structure.

What's needed from this meeting

There will not be time at the October meeting to do much more than receive the Yearly Meeting minute. Meeting for Sufferings is therefore asked to:

- Receive and note minute 28 of Yearly Meeting 2021
- Commit to consider its own role and whether it needs to be reviewed
- Set aside time, probably at its meeting in December 2021, to consider an initial paper from the Recording Clerk setting out options for how such a consideration might best be undertaken
- Give any guidance to the Recording Clerk as to how broad the scope of this consideration should be and any specific issues to be addressed (either in this meeting, or by correspondence)
- Familiarise itself with the work already happening on other reviews, about which information can be provided

Paul Parker, Recording Clerk
4 September 2021

Appendix

At a Yearly Meeting Gathering held online from 19 July to 8 August 2021

Minute 28: Review of the terms of reference for Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Further to minute 35 of Yearly Meeting 2018, which asked Quaker Stewardship Committee to review the terms of reference for Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees, we receive minute QSC 2020/09/04 of Quaker Stewardship Committee held 19 September 2020 along with the proposed revised terms of reference contained in the report at appendix C of Agenda and notes. The review was carried out in conjunction with the review of Quaker Stewardship Committee and has been introduced by the convenor of the review group.

The group found that the overwhelming view was that Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees works successfully according to the current terms of reference, but that there was a need for greater clarity about the respective roles of Meeting for Sufferings and Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees in developing vision and strategic direction, as well as some other updating.

We affirm that Yearly Meeting in session retains its central role as the body with the ultimate authority for church affairs for Quakers in Britain.

“The intent and holy design of our annual assemblies, in their first constitution, were for a great and weighty oversight and Christian care of the affairs of the churches pertaining to our holy profession and Christian communion; that good order, true love, unity and concord may be faithfully followed and maintained among all of us”
(*Quaker faith & practice* 6.03)

The different parts of our governance are inextricably intertwined and we know the importance of their working well together. We have opportunities to examine this when they report to us at Yearly Meeting. We acknowledge that there are unresolved tensions that impact on the role of Meeting for Sufferings and that their role may now need review. We ask Meeting for Sufferings to consider this and return to us.

We accept the revised terms of reference for Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees, noting that further revisions are likely to be required as part of the revision of our book of discipline. We ask that they be reviewed again in 2026.

We ask for the charity governing document of Britain Yearly Meeting to be updated to reflect the changes made to the terms of reference and we authorise the Yearly Meeting Clerk to sign this on our behalf.

Clare Scott Booth
Clerk