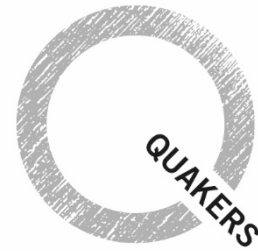


Calling letter



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

19 November 2021

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

Dear Friends

I'm writing to invite you to the next Meeting for Sufferings which, as you will know from Graham Spackman's email of 4 November, will be held online on Saturday 4 December.

As you will see from the package of papers this will be a full, and I hope engaging, meeting. We will hear from the Book of Discipline Revision Committee, Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC), Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relationships (QCCIR) and BYM Trustees.

On **Tuesday 30 November at 7pm** there is an optional session at which representatives of each committee will be present to answer any questions you might have about their work. There will be parallel breakout rooms for each of the four committees and a chance for Friends to shuffle once during the evening from one group to another.

The **Sustainability Monitoring Group** is bringing its annual report to Meeting for Sufferings and we will have some time for reflection on COP26

The keen-eyed amongst you will see that there is not an item on the possible review of Meeting for Sufferings. I would like to explain the reasoning behind Arrangements Group's decision about this.

The October minute of Meeting for Sufferings indicated that we would return to this 'probably' in December. However you will also remember that several reviews are already in progress – most notably the review of Yearly Meeting and Yearly Meeting Gathering, as well as the simplification work that has the potential to lead to change. Reviews of Quaker Stewardship Committee and the terms of reference and BYM

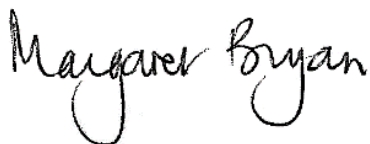
Trustees were recently accepted and reviews of QWRC and QCCIR are in their final stages.

Arrangements Group received minutes from the Yearly Meeting/YM Gathering review group indicating their expectation of bringing a report to Meeting for Sufferings in March, and there will be a meeting of representatives of all 'review' groups in November to share the progress they are making. All are committed to looking at ways in which they can answer the call heard by Meeting for Sufferings in December 2020 'to take a more co-ordinated approach to our review process, considering the interrelationship between bodies...' (minute 2020/12/08). Arrangements Group now expects the possible review to come to our March meeting.

Finally, there is one further thing I would like to mention, and that is nominations. Meeting for Sufferings, in common with many Quaker bodies, has a small Standing Nominations Group, which has room for two new members. Its role is to nominate members for the Support Group at the beginning of the triennium– this task is almost complete – and to be on hand to nominate replacements if needed. The group also nominates members of the Sustainability Monitoring Group, and this will be required during 2022.

Please consider whether or not you could offer this small service to Sufferings and contact sufferings@quaker.org.uk

I look forward to seeing you all in December,



Margaret Bryan
Clerk

Papers enclosed with this mailing

Agenda

MfS Arrangements Group October and November 2021 meeting minutes

MfS 2021 12 03 Membership (to follow)

MfS 2021 12 05 Book of Discipline Revision Committee report

MfS 2021 12 06 Report from Quaker World Relations Committee

MfS 2021 12 07 Report from Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations

MfS 2021 12 08 Reports from other European Yearly Meetings

MfS 2021 12 09 Appointments (to follow)

MfS 2021 12 10 Sustainability Monitoring Group report

MfS 2021 12 11 COP26 resources

MfS 2021 12 12 Quaker Recognised Bodies

MfS 2021 12 13 Report from BYM Trustees

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 session on 30 November to discuss the reports from QWRC, QCCIR, Book of Discipline Revision Committee and BYM Trustees
- 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 **2 December**



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

Agenda

Meeting for Sufferings – 4 December 2021

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

	Item	Paper
10am	Session 1	
1	Opening worship	
2	Welcome and introductions	
3	Membership (To follow)	MfS 2021 12 03
4	Agenda Adoption and acceptance of the agenda	
5	Book of Discipline Revision Committee To hear from the Committee on its progress	MfS 2021 12 05
	Shuffle break	
6	Annual report from Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC) Introduced by Tracey Martin, clerk of QWRC	MfS 2021 12 06
7	Annual report from Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) Introduced by Elaine Green, clerk of QCCIR	MfS 2021 12 07
8	Other European Yearly Meetings Reports from BYM representatives	MfS 2021 12 08
12.30pm	End of Session 1	

12:30pm Lunch break

1.45pm	Session 2	
9	Appointments (To follow)	MfS 2021 12 09
10	Sustainability Monitoring Group Members of the Group will report on Quaker	MfS 2021 12 10a, b, c & d

	sustainability activities, and propose some changes to the Recommendations for Action.	
11	UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) To hear from staff about Quaker work at COP	MfS 2021 12 11
	Shuffle break	
12	Quaker Recognised Bodies	MfS 2021 12 12
13	BYM Trustees To hear from the Clerk of BYM Trustees	MfS 2021 12 13
	Closing worship and reflection	
4pm	End of Meeting	

At a meeting of

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group

Held online from 17:00 – 18:30 on 12 October 2021

Minutes

Present: Margaret Bryan, Robert Card, Ivan Hutnik, Jane Mace, Jean Scott Barr, Jane Wilde, Anthony Woolhouse

In attendance: Neil Jarvis

Prevented: Juliet Prager

1. Gold and continuing minutes from Meeting for Sufferings in October 2021

We identified minutes 11 and 13 as continuing minutes at this time.

2. Review of the meeting

In reviewing the meeting we all agreed that this first attempt at a blended meeting was a HUGE success due in large part to the quality of the technical expertise with which we are blessed. We as an Arrangements Group are united in wishing to ask if this could become the norm in our way of meeting.

3. Matters arising from the meeting, not in the minutes

Further to minute MfS/21/10/07, we note that it was observed that there were further changes to *Quaker faith and practice* might be required. We are aware that the Recording Clerk is in consultation to ensure that any consequent issues are addressed.

Further to minute MfS21/10/12, we note that the question was raised as to why Friends were reluctant to get involved in the work of QCAT. We think it might be helpful if the Clerk of MfS was to circulate a questionnaire to area meetings raising some of the questions that might elucidate the situation.

4. Report to YMAC

We have taken the opportunity to comment on the draft report that has been circulated. Modified in the light of these comments, the report will be submitted to Yearly Meeting Arrangements Group.

5. Nominations to Support Group and Standing Nominations Group

We note that we are still looking for a Friend to serve on the Support Group but that the Group is almost at full strength.

We are still looking for two to four Friends to serve on the Standing Nominations Group. We think that it is unlikely to have significant work to do for some time and agree to promote the idea of service on the Nominations Group with the hope that we can find Friends willing to serve later in the year. Friends are invited to let the clerks know if they have an idea for a Friend to serve in this capacity.

We affirm that we should be aware of the latest safeguarding protocols in our nominations process.

6. Dates of future meetings

We have agreed dates for future meetings of the Arrangements Group.

We have agreed dates for additional sessions ahead of Meeting for Sufferings. We note that the content of these meetings will need to be agreed well in advance.

We are aware that there was a request to schedule additional formal sessions of Meeting for Sufferings. We are still experimenting with our format, as are Trustees. We are therefore reluctant at this point to constrain these explorations.

Signed on behalf of the meeting,

Robert Card, Clerk

At a meeting of

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group

Held online from 17:00 – 18:30 on 02 November 2021

Minutes

Present: Margaret Bryan, Robert Card, Ivan Hutnik, Jane Mace, Jean Scott Barr, Jane Wilde, Anthony Woolhouse

In attendance: Neil Jarvis, Juliet Prager

1. Matters arising

Further to minute 3 of our meeting on 12th October 2021 (MfS/21/10/07 refers), we have received an update on the survey of meetings regarding involvement with Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture (QCAT). We have heard that a questionnaire has been circulated to clerks of area meetings and to *Quake!* Responses will be directed to QCAT, who are pleased that we have taken this initiative.

Further to minute 2 of our meeting on 12th October 2021, we have received an update on future meeting arrangements. We will be unable to hold a blended meeting in December but anticipate that all meetings in 2022 will be in a blended format. March is intended to be residential but we will make provision for that to be blended if required.

2. Meetings attended by the clerks and others

Further to minute 4 of our meeting on 12th October 2021, we have heard a report of the meeting of Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee on 30th October, attended by our Clerk.

3. Forward agenda

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

4. Agenda planning

We have spent time planning the business and structure of the session of Meeting for Sufferings scheduled for 4th December 2021 as well as that of the preparation session planned for 30th November.

5. Other business

We have been advised that it would be helpful to review the frequency and pattern of reports from standing committees to Meeting for Sufferings. We have noted that we

are also required to keep a number of substantive issues delegated by Yearly Meeting under review. We have also been reminded that there is scope for Meeting for Sufferings to initiate matters itself.

6. Date of next meeting

There being no further business for us to take, we part, looking to meet again following the December session of Meeting for Sufferings.

- 14 December, 7pm

2022

- 1 February, 7pm (to plan March MfS)
- 15 March, 7pm (to review March MfS)
- 31 May, 7pm (to plan July MfS)
- 12 July, 7pm (to review July MfS)
- 30 August, 7pm (to plan October MfS)
- 11 October, 7pm (to review October MfS)
- 1 November, 7pm (to plan December MfS)
- 13 December, 7pm (to review December MfS)

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
Manchester & Warrington AM	2021:55 racial justice group	<p>3/10/21 Minute received</p> <p>2/11/21 Minute tabled at MfSAG MfSAG agreed to send to QLCC as part of their work to take forward YM work on developing a vision for what it means to be a an anti-racist faith community.</p>		Sent to QLCC
Group to Review Yearly Meeting and Yearly Meeting Gatherings	YMRG 2021-10-03 Work so far [Minute addressed to Arrangements Group giving notice of report coming to MfS in Spring 2022]	<p>11/10/21 Minute received</p> <p>2/11/21 Minute tabled at MfSAG Noted by MfSAG – business added to Forward Agenda for MfS in March 2022.</p>		Report from review group to MfS in March 2022

Book of Discipline Revision Committee: Second report to Meeting for Sufferings

Introduction

1. Following Minute 31 of Yearly Meeting 2018, Meeting for Sufferings established the Book of Discipline Revision Committee with Terms of Reference approved in July 2018, to bring to Yearly Meeting draft text for adoption as BYM's book of discipline, together with proposals for its publication. The appointment of our initial membership of 24, including two co-clerks and an assistant clerk, was completed by February 2019 and we first met in May 2019.

2. We first reported to Meeting for Sufferings in October 2020. This is our second progress report.

Who we are

3. We are a diverse committee reflecting the breadth of Britain Yearly Meeting, as required by our Terms of Reference. Since our initial appointment, 4 of our members have been released at their request, and 5 new members have been appointed. Two of our members have temporarily stepped back from the work for personal reasons, and hope to resume in due course. Of our current 25:

- geographically, 16% live in Scotland and Wales; 28% in northern areas of England; 28% in central areas; and 28% in southern areas
- two-thirds are female
- our ages range from teens to over 70
- the lengths and nature of our Quaker backgrounds vary just as widely, as do our life and employment experiences
- several of us face particular challenges, which reminds us all of our role in enabling everyone to take part fully.

Our work so far

4. We have now met as a full committee 12 times, the first five as residential weekends face-to-face, and the remainder – during the coronavirus pandemic – virtually by part-weekend zoom videoconferences. During 2021 our four shortened weekend virtual meetings have been interspersed with short weekday zoom meetings for routine business, to ease extended screen fatigue. We have experimented with zoom social evenings to keep in touch with one another away from business sessions. We have also continued to work intensively in various subgroups on specific tasks, and held regular check-in zoom committee meetings to keep track of these. These efforts to maintain coordination and progress of our work,

and to stay in touch with one another in the absence of face-to-face opportunities, have however proved too onerous. So for 2022 we are scaling back to a more sustainable volume of activity. We hope to meet mainly on three weekends as a full committee, two of these by zoom only and one as a face-to-face residential gathering with blended zoom facilities for those unable to attend in-person, and with other work continuing between times individually and in groups.

5. Our **previous report** described our initial steps to

- **get to know each other** as committee members in the things that are eternal, and to learn **how best to work together**
- document a set of principles for (a) our **committee processes** focussing on inclusivity, accessibility and good Quaker practice; and (b) our work in **developing content** – including spiritual underpinnings; reflecting the diversity of our community; and the language, tone and voice of the “book” as a whole
- develop a working understanding that the **purpose of the book of discipline** is to reflect who we are as a community and where we might be going; to share our Quaker story of where we have come from in order to explain why we have reached where we are; to give guidance on what it means to be Quakers in BYM, reflecting and expressing and nurturing our spiritual life and our Quaker way; and to act as a testimony to the grace of God as shown in the lived experience
- identify a range of different **audiences** for it, their expectations of it and how they might use it
- articulate seven key **interlinked common themes** that will need to be reflected in it, and five **key insights describing the unity of our Quaker way** which will run as threads through it
- clarify that the “**book**” **will need to appear in a variety of formats and platforms** – printed, electronic, audio-visual and more, with different ways of accessing it. We have not yet decided whether there should be one or more printed volumes, nor how they should be titled, nor whether church government and anthology material should be integrated together or separated
- experiment with **exploring initial sample material** on eldership and oversight and on marriage, to test the distinction between “core” (what Quakers do and why – the spiritual basis) and “supplementary” (detail on how we do it) material in church government, and to tease out issues such as language, tone and voice
- **engage with Friends generally** to encourage interest in our work, through activities with Woodbrooke, leading sessions at area meetings and other gatherings, setting up an online creative project, publishing “Frequently Asked Questions” and key messages, and having a presence on social media.

6. **Since then**, we have

- moved on from developing processes and principles and structures, to **preparing text**
- drawn up a **provisional list of 26 main topics** to be covered in the new book
- prepared substantive first drafts on five of these: discernment, nominations, community, outreach (retitled “sharing the Quaker experience”), and trusteeship & charitable status (incorporating elements of resources/stewardship)
- started drafting on two more: testimony and meeting for worship for business
- begun to identify areas which may need **discernment by yearly meeting structures** before we can produce definitive content for adoption – among possible examples are **membership** and **eldership and oversight**, including terminology to be used – where we are currently keeping a “watching brief”
- launched over-arching work to review all these drafts for consistency, coherence, accessibility, and choices of language and voice to reflect inclusivity and Quaker spiritual experience; and to compile a glossary
- set up a system for **tagging contributions and comments received from Friends** across the yearly meeting, so that these can be considered when drafting relevant text
- run **six special interest sessions at Yearly Meeting Gathering in 2021** (including one in the Welsh language), some offering creative opportunities to engage with aspects of the revision, and others giving briefings on areas of our work and updates on progress – all well attended
- continued to receive **invitations from area and local meetings and other groups** to run sessions (often by Zoom) to explain our work: 22 to date (7 in Scotland, 1 in Wales, and the rest in England or GB-wide).

Our next steps

7. During the period ahead, we hope to

- start drafting text on some of the remaining main topics not yet covered
- continue to review drafts for consistency, coherence, accessibility, language and voice
- develop principles for our choice of language to express spiritual concepts and experience, and for the use of quotations and extracts
- consider how and when to consult expert Friends, central and other standing committees on **issues arising** as this work progresses; how and when to come

back to Meeting for Sufferings and Yearly Meeting on major matters of principle requiring further corporate discernment before drafting can be completed; and how and when to share, and seek approval of, draft text

- liaise with Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee, and with groups undertaking **constitutional reviews** (e.g. of YM and YMG, of simplifying committee structures, and of the purposes of Meeting for Sufferings) which may affect church government text preparation and timing
- establish a **timeline** for our work
- accept more **invitations from area meetings and others**, by zoom or otherwise, so far as our people resources allow, and find other ways of **engaging Friends** throughout the yearly meeting.

How can Friends get involved?

8. You can:

- pray for and uphold the Committee
- look at our webpage at <https://www.quaker.org.uk/resources/quaker-faith-and-practice/revising-quaker-faith-practice>
- contribute to our online creative project “Open to New Light” <https://padlet.com/bdrc/OpenToNewLight>
- share ideas for the new book, including telling us of inspirational and helpful pieces of writing. These can be offered using an online form <https://forms.quaker.org.uk/qfp-idea/> or by contacting the Committee Secretary by email* or writing to Friends House
- engage with our social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (search for revisingqfp)
- invite us to talk with your meeting about our work (subject to our availability).

Conclusion

9. We remain immensely grateful to our secretary, our administrator and other BYM staff for all their work and support for us.

10. Our task continues to challenge us while enthusing and filling us with joy. We welcome the upholding of Meeting for Sufferings and Friends generally.

Rosie Carnall, Catherine Brewer, Michael Phipps: Co-Clerks and Assistant Clerk
Michael Booth: Committee Secretary

*The dedicated email address for our work is qfp@quaker.org.uk

Quaker World Relations Committee Annual Report to Meeting for Sufferings 2021

QWRC's work is within and across the world family of Quakers. We are charged with a dual remit:

- Enriching understanding between British Friends and Friends worldwide.
- Engaging Quakers in Britain in Quaker issues and concerns around the globe.

A. Overview

In 2021 we continued to adapt our work and processes to the pandemic context. This meant that our meetings and all our activities were online.

We also began the year with a new Clerk and a committee reduced to six members as the terms of two co-opted members came to an end. In fact, due to requests for release and delays in appointing new members, we have only had five active members at any one time during 2021.

However, we were excited to be able to welcome visitors from other Yearly Meetings (YMs) to Britain Yearly Meeting Gathering in other ways and in larger numbers than would otherwise have been possible. And we are heartened that a larger number of British Friends are taking advantage of online worship and events to engage with Friends across the world.

B. QWRC in 2021

Our activities included

a. Liaison with the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) and representation on European and Middle East Section (EMES-FWCC)

As there were more regular online events, we were able to interact with people from EMES-FWCC and other Sections through regular events such as EMES representatives' meetings, EMES peace & service consultation meetings and FWCC Quaker Conversations.

We attended the Europe and Middle East Section (EMES) annual meeting as representatives from BYM. As in 2020, this was held online enabling more people to attend. The theme was: *And truth flourishes as the rose, and the lilies do grow among the thorns... for the seed Christ is over all* (George Fox, 1663): Discerning how we rebuild and grow with hope. The epistle is available at <https://fwccemes.org/news/emes-annual-meeting-2021-epistle>

At this meeting we were asked to consult with our yearly meeting about the EMES draft travel policy (Appendix 1). We hope that BYM might adopt a similar policy to guide those who need to travel on BYM's behalf.

We also held meetings with Susanna Mattingly, acting FWCC General Secretary, and Michael Eccles, EMES Section Secretary, where we heard about the work of FWCC and EMES during 2021 and plans for 2022.

b. Hosting events and worship at Yearly Meeting Gathering

As the event was online, we decided not to invite specific people from other YMs as guests but to provide a welcome for anyone who joined from another YM, to host sessions where British Friends would have the opportunity to talk with Friends from other YMs and to provide opportunities for semi-programmed worship.

We held four welcome sessions, each with between 25 and 70 participants, a mixture of British Friends and Friends from other YMs. These were much appreciated as everyone tried to negotiate the online space. We held two conversation sessions where British Friends and Friends from other YMs were able to discuss inclusion and diversity and their experiences of and learning from worshipping in a pandemic. The nine semi-programmed worship sessions were well-attended with up to a 100 people at some. They included worshipping with students at the Friends Theological College in Kitale, Kenya and with London Friends Programmed Meeting.

c. Supporting BYM representatives to European Yearly Meetings

BYM representatives to European YMs are appointed by Meeting for Sufferings. We think it is important that they are properly briefed and that their experience and learning feeds into QWRC's work. We therefore held an online meeting for 2020 to 2021 representatives. We covered their responsibilities, information about EMES, the work of QWRC and how we used their reports in our discernment. While not all representatives attended, those that did said they found it useful to learn from more experienced representatives and to know what would happen to their reports.

d. Inclusion and Diversity

After receiving minute BYMT-2020-11-12 Responding to racism: next steps, we invited Edwina Peart, BYM Inclusion and Diversity Coordinator, to one of our meetings. We considered how we can make sure that our processes and activities contribute to our work on racial justice and gender diversity. We know we have more work to do on this and are considering how this will change how we work in 2022.

e. Communications

We have worked to develop a relationship with the BYM Communications Team and have committed to submitting information about events hosted by different FWCC Sections and other YMs in Quake! We have posted these 3 times this year.

C. Opportunities and Challenges in 2022

The pandemic continues to affect Friends around the world. While we hope that there will be more opportunities to meet in person, both as a committee and with Friends from other FWCC Sections we are mindful of two things:

- It is difficult to plan in advance when we don't know whether in person meetings will be possible or whether Friends from other YMs will be able to travel to the UK.
- The implications of the EMES draft travel policy (the policy is likely to be approved in May 2022) and of BYM's commitment to action on the climate crisis.

We will need to discern the way forward carefully.

We are also aware that we are asked by BYM in Minute 35 For our comfort and discomfort: living equality and truth in a time of crisis to explore how we can work with Friends around the world on the climate crisis, racial justice and welcoming gender diversity. We will incorporate this into our plans for 2022.

Finally, we are expecting to have new terms of reference from 2022 and we will need to consider how this will change how we work and what our priorities are.

Queries for MfS

How might we best use our limited capacity to create opportunities for British Friends and Friends from other YMs to engage with each other and work together on common concerns?

What would be of most value to you?

Tracey Martin, Clerk QWRC
November 2021

DRAFT



Friends World Committee
for Consultation
EUROPE & MIDDLE EAST SECTION

Europe & Middle East Section
Woodbrooke, 1046 Bristol Road,
Selly Oak, Birmingham. B29 6LJ UK
Tel: +44(0)7934310715
Email: michael@fwccemes.org
www.fwccemes.org
Registered Charity No: SC036528
Executive Secretary: Michael Eccles

EMES Sustainable Travel, Events and Communications Policy

Our faith as Quakers is inseparable from our care for the health of our planet Earth. We see that our misuse of the Earth's resources creates inequality, destroys community, affects health and well-being, leads to war and erodes our integrity. We are all responsible for stewardship of our natural world. We love this world as God's gift to us all. Our hearts are crying for our beloved mother Earth, who is sick and in need of our care.

(Part of minute IRM 16-20, FWCC World Plenary Meeting, Pisac, Peru 2016)

EMES' main objective is: *the advancement of religion for the public benefit by means of fostering the principles and practice of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) through consultation and co-operation.*

We believe that bringing people together to meet in-person is a vital part of EMES' work. At the same time we acknowledge the carbon emissions this causes and the problems that these emissions are causing to our planet. During the period when this document was written the landscape has changed dramatically due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We are all much more familiar with online meetings than we were at the start of 2020. EMES recognises that there are real advantages and also disadvantages to holding our meetings online. This policy is work in progress and we will review it every 3 years, as our understanding of our effect on the planet changes.

We also need to acknowledge the balance between the need to be present at a meeting or gathering and the fact that some Friends have less time for travel and may need to take the quickest option available some of the time. We do not want to exclude Friends from serving EMES because of other commitments such as work or family.

We also do not wish to exclude Friends with disabilities, or other health issues, who may find using public transport is not a suitable option for their travel needs, and acknowledge that travelling by car or plane may be the best option for some Friends some of the time.

EMES sees the benefits of holding meetings online and believes that we can replicate many elements of an in person meeting at an online event. EMES will consider holding events online where possible. The EMES executive committee holds some of its meetings online and in 2020 the EMES annual meeting was successfully held online for the first time (due to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions). When planning an event, EMES will consider whether it could be organised as a blended (joint online and in-person) event or as an entirely online event or whether meeting in-person is most appropriate. EMES plans to hold at least one in three of its annual meetings online.

We hope to change the mindset of Friends when they book travel. We are all encouraged to consider all options before booking travel. Air travel may at first appear to be the cheapest and

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easiest option. We remind ourselves that travel by train or boat can be a positive experience for our wellbeing as well as the planet's.

We believe that in-person events for which EMES is responsible should be run in ways that cause as little damage to our planet as possible and we commit EMES to the following actions wherever possible:

- Travelling by land and sea, using public transport, and using air travel only when it is essential - for example when no surface connections are available or when surface travel would make the travel time impractical;
- Offsetting the carbon dioxide produced by all our travel, as much as is reasonably possible (but especially air and car travel) [*details to be confirmed*];
- Using venues that can provide only vegetarian and vegan food (preferably locally sourced) for our residential events;
- Only printing documents when it is essential and using recycled paper and other materials;
- Taking into account the carbon that is used when reading a document via an electronic device, using cloud storage and using video conferencing apps such as Zoom, Google Meet or Skype;
- Maintaining an awareness about computer hardware that EMES buys and uses and its impact on the environment;
- Asking everyone travelling to an EMES event to commit to following this policy when booking their travel, taking into account the time commitment and impact on the environment of how they travel.

Where EMES pays for travel costs, we commit to paying any extra costs associated with land and sea-based travel such as additional subsistence on longer journeys, overnight stays in hotels when necessary due to waiting for connections etc, and acknowledging that land and sea-based travel will require additional staff and volunteer time.

In the medium term we will align our policy in this area with the policies of other Quaker organisations in particular the other four FWCC offices.

Useful links:

[The Man in Seat Sixty-One](#): advice about train travel around Europe and further afield

[German Railways website](#): timetables for trains across Europe

[A vegetarian diet is better for the environment](#) The Vegetarian Society

[Is digital really greener than paper?](#) Guardian newspaper article

[What's the carbon footprint of the internet?](#) Guardian newspaper article

[What's the Environmental Cost of the Internet? 6 Ways You Can Cut Your Webprint](#): article on The Bubble

Date approved
Date review due

Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations

The paper from Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) is made up of three parts:

- QCCIR's annual report for 2021 to Meeting for Sufferings
- A three-year strategy for 2022–25 – this is QCCIR's own working document to guide its work and has been sent to Meeting for Sufferings for information
- A minute to Meeting for Sufferings from QCCIR approving its new three-year strategy.

Representatives will note that the report and strategy both refer to a review of QCCIR's terms of reference. Quaker faith & practice gives this responsibility to BYM Trustees and they are working with QCCIR on this review and draft new terms of reference have been prepared. It is possible these will propose the formal reporting of QCCIR will move from Trustees to Meeting for Sufferings. This will be decided at a future point and is not under consideration at this meeting.

Annual Report to Meeting for Sufferings 2021

Under the existing Terms of Reference, the Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) is appointed by Meeting for Sufferings and is currently accountable to Britain Yearly Meeting through Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees. (If so directed by Meeting for Sufferings in the next year, the responsibility for the work of this Committee will shift from BYM Trustees to Meeting for Sufferings itself.)

At least one member is appointed from each of the General Meeting for Scotland and the Meeting of Friends in Wales. Ireland Yearly Meeting is invited to nominate a representative through Britain Yearly Meeting's Central Nominations Committee. Additional members may be co-opted to assist with particular issues and we have one theologian currently co-opted to the Committee to support its vital work on matters demanding of that specialist knowledge.

QCCIR is responsible for keeping Britain Yearly Meeting informed of relevant issues and movements which emerge from the faith life of Britain, and of opportunities for dialogue and co-operation between churches and faiths.

In 2020 QCCIR's focus stayed with inter-church relationships. The context for all churches and faiths has of course been the Covid-19 pandemic, its impact on social and economic inequalities and injustices across Britain and the aftermath of the George Floyd murder and the Black Lives Matter reaction. Although the lockdown eased over the summer last year, many worshipping communities became more comfortable using online platforms for worship and social action, although the medium and long-term effects across the range of faith communities have proved unequal.

Our ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and action

QCCIR and BYM staff members have continued to engage with Churches Together in England (CTE) over the challenges and difficulties encountered by the rejection of the Quaker appointment to the 4th Presidency of CTE, which remains unsatisfactory. QCCIR has strengthened its relations with the 4th Presidency churches, while many members of CTE continue to acknowledge and respect the deep commitment of Friends to remain in dialogue. We are seen to live up to our testimony and have inspired confidence through our peaceable approach. The discernment by QCCIR on what has been a challenge to ecumenism itself has led to a wider process within CTE that might yet bring about transformation and 'new light'.

QCCIR has continued to bear witness to Quaker values at the CTE Enabling Group, its Coronavirus Roundtable and in the Racial Justice Working Group which began its work in 2021. BYM staff members have also continued to work with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) and new inter-church work on racial justice has begun through that body too this year. Both CTE and CTBI have undertaken work on community influencing through churches and their partners to encourage the Covid-19 vaccination programme. Churches Together in Wales (Cytun) and the

Interfaith Councils in Wales and Scotland have been deeply involved in social support activities such as foodbanks and shelter and have also engaged in the public space on the concerns of racial justice and the climate emergency. In both nations, the interfaith bodies have found themselves at the core of their government decision-making under their devolved government arrangements, which has offered the faith bodies in Wales a closer involvement in such as the school curriculum revisions that have been recently proposed.

The Interfaith Network and its Faith Communities Forum, in which we also represent BYM, has listened to voiced differences between belief communities on taking the anti-Corona vaccine and the practical problems that arose for Muslims during Ramadan. Climate change has featured predominantly, especially the coordination of the Quaker and Interfaith presence before and during the COP26 talks in Glasgow in November, which coincide with the annual Interfaith Week. Other shared concerns discerned over the last year have been racial justice, inclusivity in religious education and the promotion of peaceable language in public statements.

In 2020 we were frustrated by the successive lockdowns in our ambition to hold a conference with Woodbrooke. In 2018 a suggestion had been made that we should host an event in relation to the Quaker presidency of CTE that would serve to present aspects of the non-credal basis of BYM's membership of CTE. In April 2021 we successfully organised an online event on this theme, attended by some 380 Friends. From the feedback received, we recognise that there is interest among Friends for online events focussed on specific interchurch and interfaith questions and topics.

QCCIR has been asked this year by BYM Trustees to review our ways of working to simplify and re-focus. We are encouraged to meet principally by video conferencing and, at the time of writing this report, BYM Trustees have revised, in draft, our Terms of Reference. At our last meeting of this reporting year, June 2021, we accepted the call to reduce the size of the Committee, but in a planned way, since the members of the Committee are our principal resource. We are obliged, and would wish, to retain those representatives appointed as members to link with the four nations, and, given that our relationships across the ecumenical and interfaith world are long-term and complex, we need also to co-opt specialists, from time to time, to support the work of the Committee.

As we form a refreshed Committee in 2021, with new members, a new Clerk and a new staff member appointed as Secretary, we are reviewing our strategic direction. The events of 2020 and the Yearly Meeting decisions of 2021, direct us to seek out ecumenical and interfaith responses to racial injustice and the desecration of God's earth that brings with it further social and economic injustice. As we emerge from the effects of social disruption and isolation, people of all faiths have sought to re-engage in local initiatives and local Quaker involvement in faith community exchanges and social projects has increased. We shall seek ways this year to

encourage Friends to engage with the many opportunities to participate in interfaith and interchurch relations wherever they can and we have embarked on a review of our communications and events programme. We are hopeful of stronger relationships between BYM and the other churches and faiths in Britain in times that do not stand still, but do offer glimpses of the peaceable kingdom.

For information, annual ecumenical events, open to all, include:

- Week of Prayer for World Peace www.weekofprayerforworldpeace.co.uk
- Interfaith Week <https://www.interfaithweek.org/> (England and Wales)
<http://scottishinterfaithweek.org/>
- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity <https://ctbi.org.uk/category/mission-and-unity/christian-unity/week-of-prayer-forchristian-unity/>
- World Day of Prayer (led by England, Wales and N.Ireland, 2022 on the theme 'I Know the Plans I Have For You', Jeremiah 29:1-14)

QCCIR Membership list September 2020 to date:

Kim Ashcroft – Sussex East AM

Appointed 02.07.16 – 30.04.17

Re-appointed 01.05.17 – 30.04.20

Re-appointed 01.05.20 – 30.04.23

Freya Blyth – YFGM representative – Kendal & Sedbergh AM

Appointed 01.10.17 – 01.10.20

Claire Bowman Assistant Clerk – Central England AM

Appointed 07.07.18 – 30.04.19

Re-appointed 01.05.19 – 30.04.22

Catherine Brewer – Northumbria AM

Appointed 01.05.18 – 30.04.21

Re-appointed 01.05.21 – 30.04.24

Clayton Cameron – South East Scotland AM

Appointed 01.05.20 – 31.04.23

Debbie Cates – Cambridgeshire AM

Appointed 01.05.21 – 30.04.24

Penelope Cummins – Thaxted AM

Appointed 01.02.20 – 30.04.22

Gethin Evans – Mid-Wales AM / CCR Canolbarth Cymru

Appointed 05.09.15 – 30.04.18
Re-appointed 07.07.18 – 30.04.21

Rosemary Field – Cornwall AM

Appointed 01.05.20 – 31.04.23

Stephanie Grant – Luton & Leighton AM

Appointed 01.05.15 – 31.04.18
Re-appointed 01.05.18 – 30.04.21

Elaine Green Clerk – Ipswich & Diss AM

Appointed 01.05.20 – 31.04.23

Will Haire – Ireland YM

Appointed 01.05.21 – 30.04.24

Judith Hedges – Meeting of Friends in Wales – North Wales AM

Appointed 02.10.21 – 30.04.24

Mark Lilley – Lincolnshire AM

Appointed 01.05.15 – 30.04.18
Re-appointed 01.05.18 – 30.04.21

Judith Mason – Banbury & Evesham AM

Appointed 01.05.19 – 30.04.22

Rachel Muers (Co-opted member)

Leeds AM

Madeleine Pennington – South London AM

Appointed 01.05.21 – 30.04.24

Janet Scott – Cambridgeshire AM

Appointed 01.05.19 – 30.04.22

Evelyn Shire – Craven & Keighley AM

Appointed 01.04.17 – 30.04.19
Re-appointed 01.05.19 to 30.04.22

Eoin Stephenson – Ireland YM/Surrey & Hampshire Border AM

Appointed 23.05.15 – 22.05.18
Re-appointed 01.05.18 – 30.04.21

Lynda Williams – York AM

Appointed 03.06.17 – 30.04.20
Re-appointed 01.05.20 to 30.04.23

Former FWCC Executive Secretary – Marisa Johnson

FWCC EMES Executive Secretary – Michael Eccles

Former FWCC World Office General Secretary – Gretchen Castle

FWCC World Office Acting General Secretary (until January 2022) – Susanna Mattingly

Former QCCIR Secretary – Marigold Bentley

QCCIR Secretary – Judith Baker

Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR)¹

Three-Year Strategy (2022–2025)

1. This paper sets out a strategic direction for our work, as derived from the outline changes in our terms of reference currently under discussion with BYM Trustees, the changes in staffing arrangements to establish an Ecumenical Officer for BYM and the direction for BYM organisation and witness established at the 2021 Yearly Meeting in session.

Our draft terms of reference set out our purpose as:

- a. responsible for exploring and engaging with opportunities for inter-church and interfaith cooperation and dialogue on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting.**
- b. responding on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting so that Friends' views on issues of faith, order, life and work are represented to other churches and communities of faith.**

A separated BYM Trustees' minute (BYMT-2021-02-12, 'Simplification of national church and charity governance structures and practices') also proposes that Trustees intend to engage with Friends across the yearly meeting to discern how essential governance tasks can best be done:

- 1) Setting the spiritual direction and ways of working of the church (Church)**
- 2) Establishing strategy priorities and allocating resources for centrally managed work, to support the spiritual direction and ways of working of the church (Church and Charity)**
- 3) Ensuring that the work that is prioritised and resourced is carried out effectively (Charity).

2. Our strategic thinking begins with the *Our Faith in the Future* priorities for the church:

A. Meeting for worship is the bedrock of living as a Quaker

In worship we become one with the Spirit, with each other and with our true selves. The Spirit is the source of strength and guidance for all we are and do. Our way of worship is open to all, and we are making it more widely known.

¹ *It has been proposed that our name, Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) is cumbersome and does not effectively convey our remit to promote faith dialogue in Christianity and beyond. This would need to be considered by the Committee as a distinct matter, discrete from this strategy and any proposal for revision would have to be approved by Meeting for Sufferings.*

B. Quaker communities are loving, inclusive and all-age

All are heard, valued and supported both in our needs and our leadings. Everyone's contribution is accepted according to their gifts and resources. All are welcomed and included. There are clear and effective ways of working together on shared concerns. Fellowship and fun strengthen the bonds between us, enhancing a loving community.

C. All Friends understand and live by Quaker discipline

Our discipline is actually 'Letting go and letting God': not 'Thou shalt' nor 'I will' but 'What does Love require of us?' It works when we understand it and practise it. Because we understand it, we can share it with others. Our testimony guides us, but we have to work on what it means for each of us personally.

D. Quaker values are active in the world

Our lives speak peace, equality, respect for the earth and all its inhabitants. We offer friendship to all and solidarity to the marginalised. We speak truth to power with love. We hold those in power in the Light. We find creative and nonviolent ways to get our message across. We are in this for the long haul; we're not afraid to take risks. We are called to live in the place where our 'deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet'.

E. Quakers work collaboratively

We are well aware that we can't put the world to rights all by ourselves. We value the important work of others. By engaging with them we are already changing the world. We want to break down barriers; we refuse to prejudge who is or is not an ally.

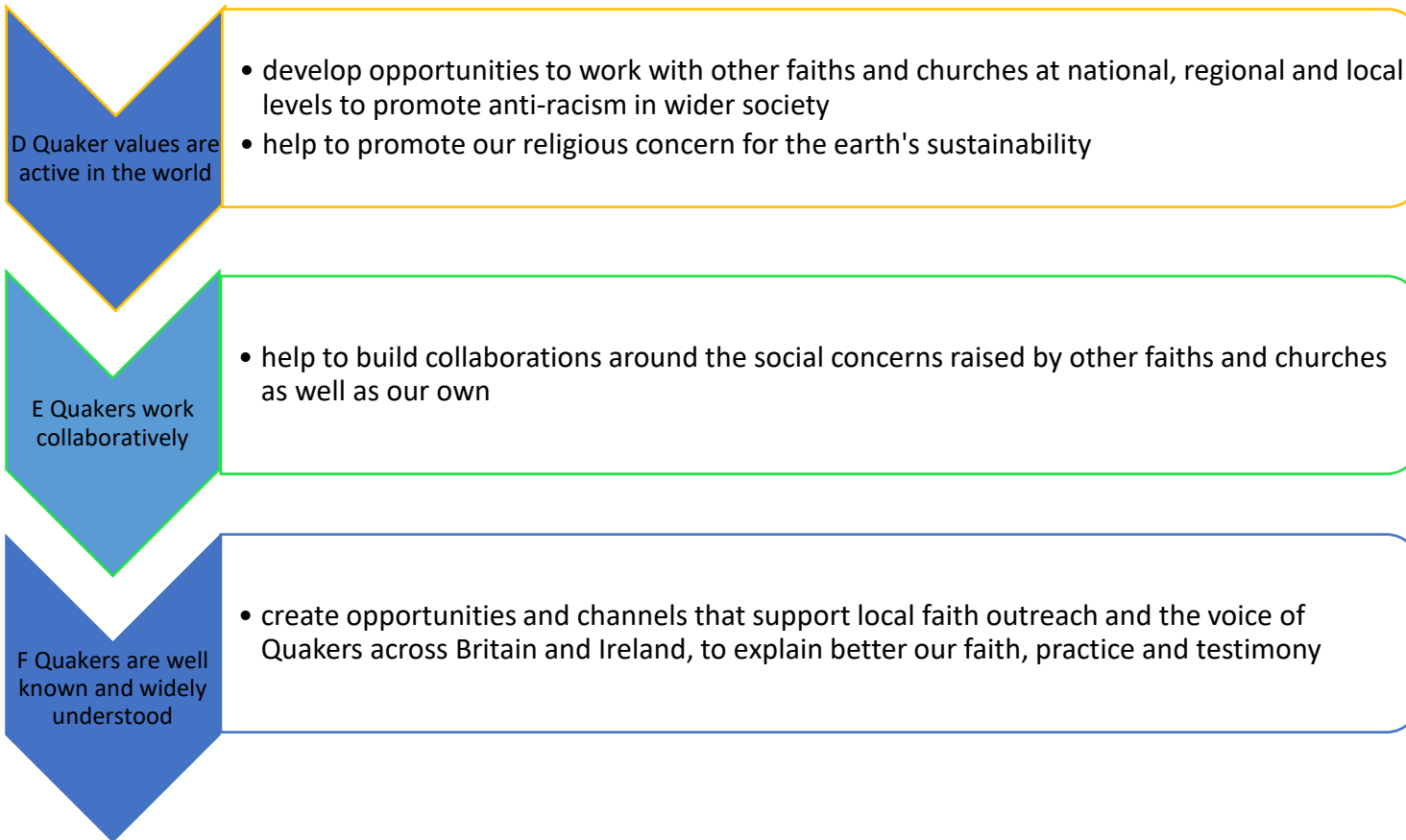
F. Quakers are well known and widely understood

We are active in our local communities, reaching out in friendship, making more use of our meeting houses for events and for renting or lending out. All members are ready and equipped to explain our Quaker way confidently and clearly to anyone who asks, as well as to speak publicly on issues of concern. We share our practices as appropriate and make full use of relevant media to reach out widely. In an increasingly divided world, we try to offer 'patterns and examples' of a caring community.

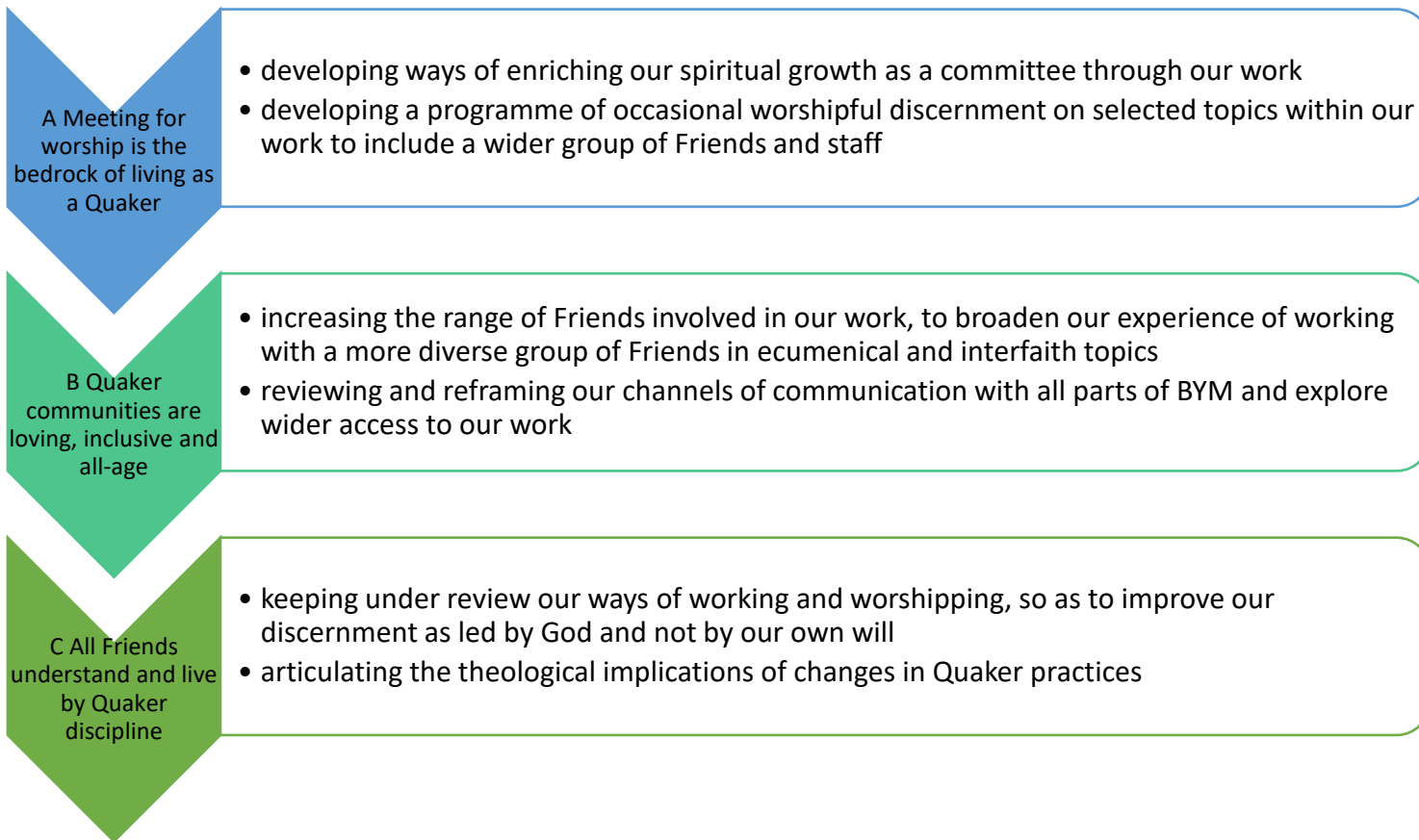
We need not assume that our work can address all of these priorities equally. Our ecumenical and interfaith remit to contribute to *the spiritual direction and ways of working of the church* suggest that we focus our work in accordance with priorities D, E and F, as supported in the application by priorities A, B and C.

A Framework for 2022–2025

Our aims over the next three years to 2025 will be to:



And we aim to achieve this through:



A Workplan for 2021–2022

- i. Our annual report to Meeting for Sufferings for the year ending June 2022 will focus largely on the revision of the Terms of Reference for this Committee now underway, the new ways of working required, and the process begun by this paper of reviewing the strategic plan for our work over the subsequent period.
- ii. We shall also seek ways in this current year (2021–2022) to encourage BYM Friends to take opportunities to participate in interfaith and interchurch relations wherever they can. This is particularly important in light of the discerned decisions of Yearly Meeting 2021 on our action for justice; to that end, we have embarked on a review of our communications and events programme. (This sits within a number of the strategic priorities listed above.)
- iii. We shall aim to open discussions with Regional Development Workers already appointed to develop mechanisms for supporting local Meeting initiatives, again informed by Yearly Meeting 2021. Wherever possible, we shall involve Young Adult Friends living within the locality to work with us on local interfaith projects and appoint a Young Adult Friend to represent us on national initiatives.
- iv. We shall deliver our biennial joint Woodbrooke conference in March 2022 and attend by representation the QWRC Forum in 2022 and routinely review Minutes of their meetings to identify common concerns.
- v. In June 2022 we shall meet in person in Glasgow and meet with local Friends; this will be our only in-person committee meeting in this year.
- vi. Arrange for the maximum impact of Friends' exchanges with our guests to YM on interfaith concerns, including a Special Interest or worship-sharing event at YM 2022

A Workplan for 2022–2023

Overall, we aim to strengthen our collaborative relationships between BYM and the other churches and faiths in Britain in times that do not stand still, but offer glimpses of the peaceable kingdom. Taking each of the aims that are set against the strategic priorities, this draft proposes that we attempt to complete the following during the year June 2022 to June 2023:

1 develop opportunities to work with other faiths and churches at national, regional and local levels to promote anti-racism in wider society

Increase our engagement with the CTE and CTBI (through BYM Diversity & Inclusion Officer, Edwina Peart) and increase our communications on this concern with local Friends involved in interchurch and interfaith activities.

Engage in developing our emerging anti-racist identity as a church amongst other churches and faiths.

2 help to promote our religious concern for the earth's sustainability

Introduce at least one new channel of communication to support any localized interfaith or interchurch work on this concern, in active collaboration with related staff in QPSW and FWCC/QWRC as we move through the COP26 experience

3 help to build collaborations around the social concerns raised by other faiths and churches as well as our own

Seek ways to explore how we can hear more from local active Friends involved in interfaith exchanges

4 create opportunities and channels that support local faith outreach and the voice of Quakers across Britain and Ireland, to explain better our faith, practice and testimony

Arrange for the maximum impact of Friends' exchanges with our guests to YM on interfaith concerns, including a Special Interest or worship-sharing event at YM 2023

Engage from a theological grounding on themed events on anti-racism, the historical Quaker involvement in slavery and our responsibilities in the climate emergency.

Offer active support for one event that aims to explain the Quaker faith to other religious groups.

5 develop ways of enriching our spiritual growth as a committee through our work

Develop additional committee worship events or conversations to enrich our community and learning.
Continue to share opportunities to access materials or events for personal spiritual growth.

6 develop occasional events to bring access to worship around our work to the wider BYM and staff

Offer other events or new materials each year to the wider BYM or staff community to share our work and worship and to support local interfaith initiatives.
Visit Friends in Wales in person in June 2023.

7 increase the range of Friends involved in our work, to broaden our experience of working with a more diverse group of Friends in ecumenical and interfaith topics

Identify and co-opt one or two Friends outside of our committee to represent us and our work on specific projects or topics, ensuring that we receive their reports and meet with them.
In particular, co-opt Friends with theological knowledge and understanding to engage with us on national matters that, within the interfaith and ecumenical agendas, require statements of Quaker faith, conscience and discipline.
Invite QWRC, QPSW, QL and YFGM representation to attend any events of common interest.

8 review and redevelop our communications with all parts of BYM and explore wider access to our work

Implement and improve our new communications methods to support internal and external dialogue and understanding of interfaith difference and religious literacy, involving specialists outside the committee to draft informed responses to consultations as necessary.

9 keep under review our ways of working and worshipping, so as to improve our discernment as led by God and not by our own will

Ongoing responsibility of the Clerks and Elders of this Committee for the manner of holding meetings for worship for business.
Ensure that in this year, one meeting over a weekend is held in person and consideration is given to blending other meetings or events.

Arrange our meetings in line with the budgets set and taking into account the climate impact of our activities and any other directions set by Meeting for Sufferings.

10 articulating the theological implications of changes in Quaker practices

Submit contributions to the discernment of reviews of Meeting for Sufferings and Yearly Meeting.

Annex: QCCIR Duties (within ‘Our Faith in the Future’ framework)

<p>a. appoints Friends to represent Britain Yearly Meeting on inter-church bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, • Churches Together in England. <p>b. appoints Friends to represent Britain Yearly Meeting on the Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom.</p>	<p><i>Faith in the Future</i> E</p>
<p>c. liaises with Friends representing Britain Yearly Meeting on inter-church bodies in Scotland and Wales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action of Churches Together in Scotland/ Scottish Christian Forum • Churches Together in Wales (Cytûn). <p>d. arranges meetings/gatherings for Friends active in inter-church and interfaith work within Britain and Ireland, encouraging dialogue and mutual support.</p>	<p><i>Faith in the Future</i> B</p>
<p>e. identifies, considers and clarifies theological, social and other related issues arising in the life of Britain Yearly Meeting from our inter-church and interfaith involvement within Britain and Ireland. QCCIR will aim to draw these issues to the attention of Meeting for Sufferings.</p> <p>f. produces booklets, pamphlets and study guides on inter-church and interfaith topics.</p>	<p><i>Faith in the Future</i> D/F</p>
<p>g. produce an annual written report focusing on the strategic role of the committee, the significance and impact of work, and future plans (see item 2c).</p>	<p><i>Faith in the Future</i> B</p>
<p>h. comply with the requirements set out in Quaker Faith and Practice and with the applicable policies and procedures adopted by Meeting for Sufferings, Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees, Management Meeting and other Central and Standing Committee of Britain Yearly Meeting</p> <p>i. ensure that its work, including that of any working groups is manageable and achievable within available resources</p>	<p><i>Faith in the Future</i> C</p>

j.	respect the existence of the climate emergency and will aim to minimise the impact of its operations and travel, including in respect of its meetings and the meetings of any working groups.	
k.	ensure that the Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC) is regularly updated on inter-church and interfaith developments, which may inform or impact upon our dialogue with Friends worldwide.	<i>Faith in the Future</i> B
l.	promote interfaith and inter-church dialogue through hosting guests from other faiths or churches during Yearly Meeting.	<i>Faith in the Future</i> E
m.	draft responses on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting to consultations on issues of faith, order, life and work, which are relevant to the activities of Britain Yearly Meeting.	<i>Faith in the Future</i> F
n.	nurture Friends (Members and Attenders) – especially within local meetings – in their awareness and understanding of the inter-church and interfaith dimension of religious and spiritual life, encouraging them as appropriate, responding to requests for information and facilitating mutual learning and sharing knowledge.	<i>Faith in the Future</i> B/F
o.	work with others across Britain Yearly Meeting to develop efficient mechanisms for collaboration (see item 2d).	<i>Faith in the Future</i> E
p.	engage young adult Friends (Members and Attenders) in aspects of its work to develop expertise and to provide continuity (see item 4e).	<i>Faith in the Future</i> B

Minute from QCCIR to Meeting for Sufferings

At a meeting of

Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations

Held via videoconference, 22–24 October 2021.

QCCIR/21/10/11 Three-year Strategy for QCCIR

We have received the revised draft of the strategy for our work which we considered outside of our regular cycle of meetings. We have taken into account the Separated Minute of a meeting of Meeting for Sufferings, 2 October 2021, which reads:

‘MfS/21/10/12 Yearly Meeting 2021

We receive minutes 14, 27, 28 and 37 of Yearly Meeting 2021 which lay several tasks upon Meeting for Sufferings.

1. We ask Church Government Advisory Group to bring for our approval draft factual alterations to Quaker faith & practice to reflect the decision to lay down Quaker Stewardship Committee from Yearly Meeting 2022.
2. We lay down the group appointed to review Quaker Stewardship Committee (appointed by minutes MfS/19/02/11 and MfS/19/04/10) and thank Friends for their service with this work.
3. Meeting for Sufferings will take responsibility for oversight of area meeting compliance; we ask staff to bring an annual report to Meeting for Sufferings with necessary recommendations to enable us to do fulfil this duty.
4. Yearly Meeting asked four central committees to continue consideration of the three themes from Yearly Meeting, climate justice, gender diversity and anti-racism. We ask Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group to encourage Quaker Life and Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committees to share with us examples of successful practice and look forward to hearing interim reports when appropriate
5. The role of Meeting for Sufferings

We receive and note Yearly Meeting minute 28 which asks us to consider the role of Meeting for Sufferings and whether this needs to be reviewed. Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group invited the Recording Clerk to set out for us how this might be achieved (paper MfS 2021 10 15b). Meeting for Sufferings is already

reviewing Yearly Meeting and Yearly Meeting Gathering and an interim report is due next year. Our minute of December 2020 said:

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.

We wish to make time at a future meeting, possibly December 2021, for further discussion and ask Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group, working with the Recording Clerk, to plan for this.

Margaret Bryan, Clerk.'

With emendations under Aim (c) and the Workplan 2021/2022 (i), we adopt the draft and ask our Clerk to send it with this covering Minute to Meeting for Sufferings.

Elaine Green, Clerk

Reports and Epistles from the BYM representatives attending European Yearly Meetings in 2021

Representatives:

- Belgium and Luxembourg YM – Jane Harries, South Wales AM / CCR De Cymru
- Finland YM – Mary Woodward, South East Scotland AM
- France YM – Joyce Taylor, East Scotland AM
- German YM – Jessica Bishop, North London AM
- Ireland YM – Tina Cunningham, West Scotland AM and Mike Clark, North Wales AM / CCR Gogledd Cymru
- Netherlands YM – Laura Karadog, North Wales AM / CCR Gogledd Cymru
- Sweden YM – Gordon Benson, Pendle Hill AM
- Switzerland YM – Jonathan Lingham, London West AM

Belgium and Luxembourg YM was cancelled this year.

Both Sweden YM and Norway YM were held this year, but unfortunately as they were online, they took place in their native tongues with no opportunity for translation so our nominated representatives were unable to participate.

This paper provides written reports from BYM's representatives where these have been provided and links to the epistle from the Yearly Meeting if available.

Finland Yearly Meeting – “The power of hope”

23–25 April 2021, online

I was first appointed to visit Finland Yearly Meeting in 2019, and was delighted to be asked to attend again this year. Following that first visit I returned to Ilkko Lutheran Centre in the autumn for the second of the Finns’ annual gatherings. One of the Finnish Quakers was at Britain Yearly Meeting that year, and our paths crossed several times, including at the tea for overseas visitors, and the session about visiting other YMs. I also spent time with him and his family in the summer, when I went to Finland to visit my nieces.

Friendships made in those visits meant that I continued to be in [irregular] contact with Finnish Quakers during 2020 and received their twice-yearly newsletters, some of the pieces being in English. I had been invited to attend their Yearly Meeting in 2020, but this was cancelled when the pandemic began. I was invited to join Finnish Quakers who agreed to be together in spirit each evening at 9pm: later that year they started meeting for worship via Zoom, first once and later twice a month, and I joined them when I could. I also began trying to learn Finnish via Duolingo, and was pleased to discover that, although I couldn’t say much in Finnish, I could recognise an increasing number of words in ministry and conversation. Thankfully, Finnish Friends continue their regular practice of translating both Finnish to English and English to Finnish whenever possible.

It had been hoped that the gathering this spring would be for Finns in person, at Ilkko, but a worsening of the Covid situation in Finland meant this had to be cancelled. At their autumn gathering last year they had experimented with having Friends join them by Zoom. This was so successful that a whole weekend using Zoom was planned for the spring, and I was warmly invited to attend all the sessions which were going to be bilingual. Their business meeting, and a discussion about money, were going to be solely in Finnish.

Finland’s YM Clerk, Aino Vesanen, sent this in the email outlining the weekend programme:

The theme of our weekend event is “The Power of Hope” (The Finnish title “Toivon voimaa” has another meaning, too: “I wish for strength”) because we are currently living in a situation where our minds can easily be overwhelmed with hopelessness. The pandemic affects everything, prevents communities and individuals from living together and creates loneliness. That is why we need the power of hope - the silent faith that carries us to the future. During this annual meeting weekend, we get to see each other through Zoom, and also share our thoughts on how we can, as a community, strengthen the power and hope that carries us towards easier times. You can participate in all or just part of the program, as you like.

It was a great joy to log into the Friday evening session and see familiar faces as well as faces new to me – including Abigail who was joining us from Uppsala in Sweden. We began with worship-sharing about things that gave us hope, comfort, or strength. Friends read poems, shared words and pictures, or spoke from their own experience, weaving a blanket of love and comfort to wrap around ourselves in the dark times. After a break for food and/or conversation, Lari Junkkari gave his bilingual talk “Know what you don't know - mysticism at the heart of religion”, showing us how much Quakers have in common with mystics from all times and religions.

Saturday began with silent worship followed by an opportunity for conversation. The business meeting which followed dealt with the usual things – including, delightfully, a membership application. I had said I would stay as long as I could cope with non-stop Finnish, and fully expected to give up after half an hour or so. Imagine my surprise and pleasure when I made it to the end of the four-hour session, having recognised a lot of words and learned a number of new ones. The agenda was in Finnish and English, which helped, and I was deeply touched when some of the speakers put in a sentence or two of English, just for me.

I was interested to hear that the Finns had had their first experience of communal fund-raising, in which they pledged to contribute 50 cents from central funds for every euro raised to help homeless/ poor people in Helsinki. I was also pleased to learn that they have almost completed the production of the very first Quaker pamphlets in Finnish, and that the work on the Finnish Quaker archives, which was initiated at the YM in 2019, was progressing and proving extremely interesting. At the end of the session I was congratulated and pronounced “a woman with *sisu*” – a Finnish word denoting stubborn endurance and determination (and incidentally one of the very first Finnish words I learned!) I feel honoured to be seen as an honorary Finn!

Saturday evening's session was entitled “Ecstatic Dance Meeting for Worship” – a session with silent worship bookending an hour's shared music playlist, to which everyone was invited to listen and react in their own way. I thought I would go to be polite, but didn't expect much of myself: I surprised myself by entering deeply into the music and finding myself at the end of the session in a state of very deep peace. This is definitely something I'd like to experience again.

Sunday began with worship and conversation, and then moved into a discussion, which was only in Finnish. I should have liked to stay, as they were discussing money and the conflict between wanting to offer financial support to disadvantaged people and feeling that it is the state's responsibility to look after them – “do we need alms or should we focus on social influencing?” I gather it was an extremely deep and helpful discussion, which enabled those present to become clearer about how as a Yearly Meeting they should approach such financial matters.

The final session was one presented by our Friend Ann Kerr from Glasgow Meeting, introducing the suggestion that Finland YM might like to share in some degree with Glasgow's study circles this year. Glasgow Friends are focusing on the climate emergency by studying three relevant Swarthmore lectures, in preparation for COP 26 later this year.

The idea itself was fascinating – that links be established between Glasgow Meeting and Friends in other countries – the USA, South Africa, and Finland, all places with which Friends in or known to Glasgow Meeting have connections, and that all could learn from each other. Ann had frequently to pause to allow her words to be translated for those Finns whose English was not fluent, and for their questions and remarks to be translated for her. It was very clear to me that, although the idea of joint sessions was enticing, the practicalities were against this: not simply because of the need for translation of discussions, but also because of the time and effort the Finns would have to put in to understand and digest the lectures, whether in recorded or written form.

Finnish Friends seemed interested in the idea and were going to discuss ways in which they could take forward the desire to engage with the subject in their own group[s] while also exploring the possibility of international discussions and sharing of ideas, practice, and experience.

The next Finnish gathering will be at Ilkko in the autumn, and I really hope to be able to be there in person. Meanwhile I shall continue joining in Finnish worship, working on my Finnish, and telling anyone who might want to listen about the joy I have found with my Finnish Quaker family. I will be eternally grateful for the discernment that led to my being offered the opportunity to share in the life of Finland Yearly Meeting.

Mary Woodward

France Yearly Meeting

29 October–1 November 2021, La Solitude, Bordeaux and online

I attended the annual meeting of Quakers in France by Zoom which was of some regret as the monastery where it was held not only looked a beautiful setting but is also a producer of very fine Bordeaux wine.

The theme of the assembly, organised by Quakers in Nouvelle Aquitaine was “Let action follow hard on the heels of conviction”. This theme was illustrated first by the story of Sophia Sturge (1849–1936) who was a British Quaker suffragist, social reformer and peace campaigner. Disturbed by what she heard about starvation in Ireland she moved there and was appalled at what she found. Her response was to

set up a basket making industry in Connemara, teach girls to make baskets and develop a self-sustaining enterprise.

Friends spoke about the effect of Covid which had made them feel that large collective actions were less possible but that small actions at an individual and local level were still worthwhile.

We heard the story of the boy throwing stranded starfish back into the sea who was challenged by a passer-by saying that his actions could not make a difference as there were so many fish. The boy responds by throwing another starfish into the surf and saying “well, it has made a difference to that one”

The highlight for me was the two guest speakers on Saturday – Terry Waite live by Zoom and Bruce Kent in a recorded interview.

Terry Waite spoke movingly about his background, his imprisonment in Lebanon and the nature of negotiations to secure hostage release, which he has continued to do, and what he learned from his experience. Negotiations require face to face contact which is always an enormous risk, followed by building a relationship of trust, getting to the root of the problem and then working out a solution. In his case things went wrong when trust was broken by political interference and resulted in his 5 years of solitary confinement. He said he never felt a close presence of God – he felt alone and isolated – but he did not lose his faith as faith is not dependent on feeling – indeed to be dependent on feeling alone, you can be led astray. His experience taught him many valuable things – to be in harmony with himself, his environment and his neighbour. He was grateful for his Anglican heritage and without books he was able to draw on his memory of Psalms and texts but he also learned of the importance of silence which led him to Quakers on his release.

Bruce Kent, retired Catholic priest and one of Britain’s most prominent and internationally acknowledged peace campaigners through his work with Pax Christi and CND, spoke about the 1,000 mile walk he made in 1988 from Warsaw to Brussels at a time of great tension. When asked what made him believe that his actions could make a difference, he said he did what he did because he thought it was right and did not think about consequences. Things are changed, he said by people acting on their convictions.

Being part of the small group on Zoom at a blended meeting had its limitations. Sessions in small groups or with activities were not designed for us and the poor bandwidth was a challenge for those dealing with the technology. This resulted in a feeling of being an observer rather than a participant. I was not officially welcomed or asked to introduce myself but I could understand that the clerks and others were very taken up by the needs of the attendees. The assembly was conducted bilingually in French and English and I was able to make a small contribution in French. The Nouvelle Aquitaine Friends had put a great deal of thought and careful preparation in to the Assembly through stories, speakers and activities on the theme

of “Act Now”. In the final session everyone was asked to write down one action they would commit to and put it in a stamped addressed envelope. Each envelope will be posted to the participant, as a reminder, next February. This is the second year I have attended and I am getting to know Friends in France and I hope to worship with them in person in the coming year when I am in France

Joyce Taylor

France Yearly Meeting Epistle

The epistle of France YM can be found [here](#).

German Yearly Meeting

At the time of preparing the Meeting for Sufferings papers, there was no written report available. The epistle of German YM can be found [here](#).

Ireland Yearly Meeting

At the time of preparing the Meeting for Sufferings papers, there was no written report available. The epistle of Ireland YM can be found [here](#).

Netherlands Yearly Meeting Gathering

28–30 May 2021, online

“Let us then try what love can do” (William Penn)

“Our life is love, our life is peace, our life is tenderness and bearing with each other, and forgiving and helping each other with a tender hand” (Isaac Pennington)

I want to thank Peter Spreij, clerk, and all Friends at Netherlands Yearly Meeting Gathering for their welcome and support before and during the Netherlands Yearly Meeting Gathering.

The gathering made me regret that I couldn't be there in person due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Despite problems connecting online, I was inspired by the valuable contributions from Kees Nieuwerth and Timmon Wallis. I knew of Timmon's work already from my days on the Northern Friends Peace Board and as former clerk of the Liverpool Quaker Peace Group. Kees work, however, came as a wonderful gift to me as I am very much at a crossroads in my Quaker faith and feeling a concern to reach out to other Christian churches and other faiths in my Quaker journey.

I knew the business, conducted in Dutch, with no simultaneous translation available and documents in advance also only in Dutch, would be beyond my comprehension. I therefore concentrated on the two main addresses, one in Dutch by Kees Nieuwerth* on Friday and the other in English by Timmon Wallis on the Saturday. Kees had provided an excellent translated text of his talk of which he was able to elucidate a few parts when he broke off to speak in English.

Kees spoke of his commitment to ecumenism and his strong belief that this is valuable, and indeed crucial work for our world. His conviction, that faith groups with all their historical roots, wrongs and rights are a vital part of a healing power for all who live on this planet, struck me the most about him and his work and stays with me. Much of the contemporary narrative we hear on organised religion is proclaiming the harm that it has done and continues still to do. It was therefore extremely revitalising and nourishing to hear Kees' positive message of the good that faith groups bring to the world: the benefits and indeed necessity of coming together as a 'world council' with Quakers playing an active role in this.

I will follow up my experience by writing to Kees and ask more about his work. I will also be getting in touch with Charles Tauber, the conveyor of the Coalition for Work with Psychotrauma and Peace, as we had an interesting conversation in the breakout room on Saturday. He was telling me that his psychological advisor is Bryn Jones, a Friend from Wales.

It was also lovely to meet Martine Kuipers from Groningen and Diana Hedrick from Maastricht and hear of their Quaker work. Martine talked about the 5th May, the Netherlands' Liberation Day when the Dutch celebrate the end of Nazi occupation (1945), following Remembrance Day on 4th of May. This year, the current German chancellor Angela Merkel came to the Netherlands to give an address with the message of peace and to commemorate the liberation of the country from the Nazi regime. The public event was attended by concentration camp survivors who shared their experiences with the German chancellor. Martine said that this was an extremely important event in the history of Europe and the European Union's noble and inspiring peace-building objective.

Diana Hedrick talked of her commitment to handing out copies of the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) newsletter to students at Maastricht University. She wanted to emphasise the importance of having paper copies of this as students are inclined to take a leaflet that is offered to them and are more likely to read it than yet another email or attachment in their phone and computer-screen-dominated lives. This is something which can be overlooked in our ecological drive to make all business 'paperless'.

I was inspired by the gathering and my Quaker roots were refreshed by my overall experience with Netherlands Yearly Meeting. I have lots to follow up on! Regrettably, the limited opportunity for social time due to my connectivity problems and the

language barrier, and getting to know the Yearly Meeting properly meant that I am still somewhat of a stranger to Dutch Friends and the majority still, sadly, little known to me. I will however continue to uphold Netherlands Yearly Meeting in my prayers and thoughts, and I would be very happy to remain in touch to continue our Quaker links.

I am looking forward to sharing my experience through our local meeting and area meeting newsletters.

Edward Bruce

* Kees Nieuwerth, Quaker representative to the European Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. Address to Netherlands Yearly Meeting Gathering 2021: The Challenge of the Ecumene for and from us as Quakers.

Netherlands Yearly Meeting Epistle

The epistle of Netherlands YM epistle can be found [here](#).

Norway Yearly Meeting

Norway YM was held online without the opportunity for translation so our nominated representative was unable to participate. The epistle of Norway YM can be found [here](#).

Sweden Yearly Meeting

Sweden YM was held online without the opportunity for translation so our nominated representative was unable to participate. The epistle of Sweden YM can be found [here](#).

Switzerland Yearly Meeting

21-24 May 2021, Herzberg and online

I had the privilege of representing BYM at this year's Switzerland Yearly Meeting, in what is their centenary year; and of taking our greetings to them.

In my former (working) life, I used to visit Switzerland quite often, and was looking forward to travelling there again. Covid put paid to these ambitions. A blended meeting was arranged instead, with some Swiss Friends meeting face-to-face (though masked and socially distanced) in a bright and peaceful retreat-cum-conference centre in the heart of the Swiss countryside near Zurich, with glorious views over the valley to the mountains beyond – think *Sound of Music* here. Others joined by Zoom, me from the comfort of my own sofa in central London. Despite this

I felt genuinely welcomed, alongside representatives from Ireland, South Africa, Germany, Austria, and France yearly meetings. Our working languages were German and English, and Swiss Friends were adept in taking turns to act as interpreters for any readings and presentations.

The main theme adopted for the weekend was the work of the Geneva-based organisation, the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO). We heard presentations from their Director and three staff members on their programmes. They do not campaign or lobby. Instead they use spirit-led “quiet diplomacy” to encourage better listening and understanding among the diplomatic community in Geneva, which is home to many international organisations¹. Their work is currently focused around four themes: peace and disarmament, climate change, sustainable and just economic systems, and human rights and refugees. I am pleased that BYM continues to be one of their main donors, granting them over £500,000 in 2020: our money is being very well spent.

I conclude by reporting that Switzerland Yearly Meeting, while small (80 members) is perfectly formed. Nearly half of their membership took part in the weekend...eat your heart out, BYM! Like us Covid has forced them to embrace the available technology: it was used well at their Yearly Meeting, and provides them with new opportunities for online worship and outreach. And also like us, they face many of the same challenges, such as declining income, an aging membership, and finding Friends to do all the jobs that need to be done.

I am very grateful to Swiss Friends for letting me be with them. My participation helped strengthen my sense of Quakers being a truly international community, working for the same outcomes. I was glad to have given service in this way.

Jonathan Lingham

Switzerland Yearly Meeting Epistle

The epistle of Switzerland YM can be found [here](#).

¹ The World Trade Organisation (WTO); World Health Organisation; UNAIDS; Conference on Disarmament; International Organisation for Migration (IOM); International Labour Organisation (ILO); UN Human Rights Council; UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Sustainability – living up to our commitment

Sustainability Monitoring Group report to Meeting for Sufferings December 2021

1 About this report

The Sustainability Monitoring Group (SMG) exists to help Meeting for Sufferings review whether Quakers in Britain, including our centrally managed work, are meeting our commitment to becoming a low-carbon, sustainable community.

This report covers what we have learned about the commitment and our actions. There is also a section about the group (section 6).

We also propose updating some of the details in the Recommendations for Action. This is covered in paper MfS 2021/12/10b.

We have tried to make this report as helpful as possible to Meeting for Sufferings. So it's short, and we haven't tried to cover everything, but we hope it gives a helpful overview, with links to further information so that Friends can find out more if they wish.

We also think it's worth sharing the notes from this year's Yearly Meeting preparation session, 'Canterbury Ten Years On', when we shared our reflections about how the commitment has developed since 2011.

2 Our commitment

Meeting for Sufferings adopted [A Quaker Response to the crisis of climate change](#) in 2009. Two years later, in 2011, Yearly Meeting made a [commitment to sustainability](#) and asked Meeting for Sufferings to work with area meetings and our staff to make better known our current witness and to give thought to appropriate aims for our corporate commitment and the framework which will allow our successes to be shared.

To help take this forward, MfS adopted the Recommendations for Action in 2014, and then agreed a revised version in 2017 – the full document is included below in Appendix A. It covers five broad areas:

- Eldership
- Oversight
- Living Faithfully
- Right Ordering
- Witness

The next sections give examples of activities we're aware of in 2021, in relation to each heading.

2.1 Eldership

This section is about understanding, articulating and deepening the spiritual underpinning of the commitment.

- BYM commissioned the [Climate Crisis: Spiritual Nurture and Learning Project](#) project, delivered by Woodbrooke to enable Quakers in Britain to deepen and articulate the spiritual basis of our commitment. Work has included a monthly session organised with QPSW staff, supporting Friends' spiritual preparation for COP26. Participants report feeling supported and not alone.
- The theme for Yearly Meeting 2021 was 'For our comfort and discomfort: living equality and truth in a time of crisis'. This built on the 2019 theme of 'power and privilege' (plans for Yearly Meeting 2020 had to be changed in response to the pandemic). Yearly Meeting [minutes are available online:](#)
 - minute 33 focuses on Faith-based action for climate and reflects where we have reached as a Yearly Meeting
 - minute 35 drew the different strands of YM together, and asks different bodies to take parts of the work forward
 - minutes from JYM and the children and young peoples' groups also record discernment about the climate crisis
- We anticipate the Book of Discipline Revision Committee will include more about the spiritual basis of our commitment to sustainability in the new book, and is likely to draw on the YM minutes as well as other sources.

2.2 Oversight

This section focuses on how Friends can connect, learn from and inspire each other.

- Through the *Climate Crisis* project (see above) Woodbrooke has consulted with the young people's climate group of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) and is now working with them to co-create an intergenerational course.
- The *Climate Crisis* project includes organising gatherings, to enable Friends to strengthen our shared commitment. Since the start of the pandemic, national gatherings have become less practicable, and Woodbrooke notes that it's still uncertain whether a national gathering is the best approach; regular online events and regional events are more cost-effective and inclusive.
- BYM staff including Local Development Workers, and Woodbrooke staff, have been organising sessions for children and young people.

- BYM continues to work with the [Friends World Committee for Consultation \(FWCC\)](#) to connect Quakers in Britain with Friends around the world.
- Locally and regionally, Friends have considered and taken action on sustainability together. In some parts of Britain this has been supported by the Local Development Workers employed by BYM. There are too many to list here, but examples include a residential gathering on a farm in Cornwall, and the preparation of Friends in South West Scotland in advance of COP26.
- The [Loving Earth project](#) has expanded and has a growing reach among Quakers – through its newsletter and word of mouth.

2.3 Living Faithfully

This section is about how we, as individual Quakers, live out the commitment in our day-to-day life.

- Through the [Climate Crisis](#) project (see above) Woodbroke is developing opportunities for Friends to learn and support each other.
- The [Loving Earth project](#) asks those who make panels to commit to a lifestyle change, or to lobby for change.
- Many Quaker communities have found ways for Friends to encourage and support each other. Again, there are too many to list here, but examples include: car-sharing to attend Meeting for Worship; use of zoom to avoid travel; sharing a glut of produce; an educational visit to the local recycling centre; and taking the Loving Earth project to local community and faith venues.

2.4 Right Ordering

This section is about how Quaker communities organise ourselves.

- Through the *Climate* Crisis project (see above) Woodbroke is developing opportunities for Friends to learn and support each other in relation to property management. This has been slow to develop, because most Meetings have not been focused on their buildings during the pandemic. Woodbrooke is also gathering a list of people who can support Meetings with this work.
- Many Quaker activities had to adapt unexpectedly in 2020. In-person meetings have resumed gradually during 2021. All national committees have only met once in-person during 2021, and most will meet only once in 2022.
- We don't have data about local, area or regional activities, but anecdotally our understanding is that carbon emissions of all these activities in 2020 and 2021 are likely to have been much lower than in 2019.

- BYM publishes sustainability information on the [Friends House website](#). The Quiet Company has adopted a new [Strategic Environmental and Sustainability Plan 2021-2030](#).
- BYM had been planning to working towards a more detailed breakdown of travel data, to help manage and cut carbon use. This hasn't been possible recently due to pandemic measures.
- For this reason we don't have detailed information about MfS' carbon footprint, but it's worth noting that before the pandemic Meeting for Sufferings required 1,000 journeys a year, many of them long-distance.
- We note there is some tension between Friends about in-person meetings. While some Friends are extremely keen to resume as many in-person meetings as possible, others are concerned about whether this is consistent with our commitment to become a low-carbon, sustainable community (as well as being worried about health risks). Meeting for Sufferings may wish to reflect on how it lives out this part of the commitment.

2.5 Witness

This section is about Quaker faith in action.

- Yearly Meeting delegates the work of translating our faith into action to Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC). There is a wealth of information available about QPSW's work to date on [climate and economic justice](#).
- In 2020 and 2021 QPSWCC reviewed and revised its strategy. Sustainability and climate justice is now one of two core strands. The committee minuted:

“In the face of overwhelming evidence of rapidly increasing destruction of the Earth, we are called to work for a world that prioritises ecological repair and well-being. To this end we will call for and work towards a just solution to the climate crisis; with national and worldwide economies operating within ecological limits and upholding the wellbeing, dignity and equality of all.”
- Yearly Meeting 2021 (minute 35) supported and affirmed the priority placed by QPSWCC on work on sustainability and climate justice. It asked QPSWCC to take this work forward, and asked Meeting for Sufferings to receive interim reports and to share examples of successful practice.
- Staff, particularly those in QPSW and the communications team, have been actively speaking out on behalf of Quakers, and supporting local Friends' witness during the year.
- BYM and QUNO Geneva continued to collaborate, and both had a strong presence at COP26. Staff have also worked closely with other churches for

many years; this contributed directly to a strong faith presence at COP26. Information about this work has been shared widely via Quake!, blogs and social media (including videos from COP26).

- Friends in South West Scotland put a huge amount of energy, and made full use of Glasgow Meeting House, during COP26 to welcome visitors, host events and provide a space for informal meetings and discussions.
- Many Friends have been actively involved in acts of witness, or engagement with elected representatives. Some have faced criminal proceedings as a result.

3 Committees for centrally managed work

3.1 What are the committees doing?

We have reviewed committee papers and minutes. Please note that committee meetings and their agendas have had to adapt to the pandemic as well as in other respects. Since October 2020 (when we last reported):

- **Meeting for Sufferings (MfS)** recorded the witness of two Friends who hold a concern about climate change, in the Prison and Court Register.

In October, MfS spent time considering the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow and asked staff to issue a statement.

- Climate change has been a major consideration for **Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC)**. It has adopted a new strategy, with Sustainability and Climate justice as one of two interlinked strands (alongside Peace and Peacebuilding). The committee's vision, guided by the spirit, includes:
 - spreading the work less thinly, in order to achieve more overall;
 - supporting greater action by local and area meetings and Quaker Recognised bodies, as well as working on behalf of Friends;
 - being more agile - responding quickly where needed;
 - drawing on the gifts and skills of members, attenders and employees.
- **Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC)** has not considered sustainability specifically at its meetings. QLCC considered sustainability in 2019 but concluded that proper attention was being paid to this by others; QLCC also agreed then that QPSWCC would oversee the Woodbrooke *Climate Crisis* project (see above). QLCC oversees Local Development Workers, who are actively involved in working with local Quaker communities, including on sustainability and climate issues.

- **Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC)** adopted three discretionary objectives for 2021:
 - To improve our communications to British Friends to enable them to engage more actively in worldwide Quaker concerns, including racial and climate justice.

During the year, QWRC considered inclusion and diversity, and minuted: ‘We will consider how we can shake the boundaries of what we do to raise the issues of gender, race and climate justice.’

- **Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR)** has not specifically considered sustainability this year.

3.2 Co-ordination

In 2018, Meeting for Sufferings agreed that there should be a meeting of representatives from key committees: *...to ensure collaboration, resourcing, effective communication, and co-ordinated responsibility for all required tasks...* (minute MfS 2018 04 06).

The first gathering took place in 2018, and later that year Meeting for Sufferings reflected:

Experiments in holding meetings of representatives of BYM committees, like the one held in July, seem a good way forward and there are often unexpected benefits in gathering together for liaison and mutual encouragement. ... we ask for these to be held regularly. (minute MfS 2018 07 20)

There have now been four of these meetings. Both members of the Sustainability Monitoring Group joined the meeting held in May this year. It was a helpful meeting, and good to hear how much is being done.

4 Local and Regional Quaker Communities

All Area Meetings have been asked to include information in their annual reports about their actions on sustainability (minute MfS 18/07/17, Sustainability: Reporting on Actions’ refers). Quaker Stewardship Committee collects the annual reports, and has been reviewing them: unfortunately it hasn’t been possible to include an update in this paper.

In future, staff will take on this task. We hope staff will consider how best to support and encourage AM trustees to share news of local activities. This might (for instance) be through some short guidelines about what to include in their annual reports; or it could be through a simple survey.

We have the sense many meetings are doing valuable work, but don't tell others about it. Some [stories of how local meetings are living out the commitment](#) are shared on BYM's website – for inspiration and mutual encouragement.

5 Reviewing the Recommendations for Action

Last year we said we were considering whether it would be helpful to update some sections of the Recommendations for Action. We are now ready to bring proposals, which are set out in paper MfS 2021/12/10b.

6 About the Sustainability Monitoring Group

The Sustainability Monitoring Group (SMG) is responsible for monitoring the Yearly Meeting's commitment to Sustainability. The group supports Meeting for Sufferings in overseeing the Yearly Meeting's commitment to sustainability. SMG monitors receipt of reports from Trustees, committees and area meetings that are sent to MfS; that agreed activities are undertaken; and that MfS pays attention to our sustainability commitment in its meetings.

6.1 Membership

The Group should have three members but since early 2020 there have been just two of us. The current members are Caroline Howden (East Kent AM) and Peter Aviss (Sussex East AM) and whose terms of service are due to end in December 2021 and July 2022 respectively.

We ask MfS, with assistance from the Standing Nominations Group, to strengthen the group's membership.

Prepared by:

Peter Aviss (SMG)

Caroline Howden (SMG)

Juliet Prager (Deputy Recording Clerk)

November 2021

Becoming a low-carbon, sustainable community: Reviewing the Recommendations for Action

1 Background

In 2011, our Yearly Meeting made a commitment to become a low-carbon, sustainable community.

In 2014, advised by the BYM Sustainability Group [check name], Meeting for Sufferings adopted a set of Recommendations for Action. The recommendations were revised in 2017.

Since then, Yearly Meeting has revisited the commitment, and QPSW Central Committee has made significant changes to its strategy.

We also have the sense that COP26 has shown us the benefits of working alongside other faith groups and communities - locally, nationally and internationally - rather than focusing primarily on the Quaker community.

The recommendations are grouped in five sections. The sections remain relevant and useful, but we propose to update some of the details in the action points.

2 Proposed changes

2.1 General

In some of the recommendations, the emphasis has been shifted from an implication that an (often unnamed) central body or staff member should deliver something, to encouraging all Friends and Meetings to be actively engaged.

Some of the suggested changes reflect a growing concern about climate change in non-Quaker communities. So, while working within Quaker communities remains vital, Friends aren't restricted to the Quaker context, but can do some of this work joyfully with other groups, neighbours, friends and family.

2.2 Introduction

Includes a new reference to the discernment of Yearly Meeting 2021.

2.3 Eldership

An additional sentence, noting that this commitment is deeply connected to other aspects of Quaker faith. This recognition is included (albeit in slightly different language) in the minutes of Yearly Meeting 2021.

Replace 'department' with 'committee' - this is a more accurate reflection of the situation, as committees (rather than staff) set priorities.

2.4 Oversight

Changes to reflect shifts in the way we now organise ourselves:

- 'Friends House' is no longer the best way to refer to BYM staff
- National face-to-face gatherings may always not be possible, or even the best way to bring Friends together

2.5 Living faithfully

An emphasis on getting useful advice and information from expert sources rather than expecting it to be provided by Quaker bodies. Specifically, the Quaker Sustainability Toolkit is now out of date; revising it is not a priority for QPSW, given that many other excellent resources are widely available elsewhere.

Recognition that Woodbrooke has been commissioned to deliver much of this support; BYM staff (not limited to Quaker Life or QPSW) works with Woodbrooke on this project. Although BYM and Woodbrooke staff continue to liaise with Living Witness, there isn't a specific task to allocate to Living Witness at this time.

A new recommendation has been added encouraging Friends to consider lifestyle change alongside their extended networks.

2.6 Right ordering

Emphasis on getting useful advice and information from expert sources rather than expecting it only to be provided by Quaker bodies.

Updating to reflect the way Meeting for Sufferings has asked AMs to report (this may change, but it's the current situation).

2.7 Witness

Changes to recognise QPSWCC's new strategy.

1 Recommendations for Action (draft revision, 2021)

Changes are shown in blue text

Becoming a low-carbon, sustainable community: Revised Recommendations for Action

Introduction

Add:

In 2011, Yearly Meeting made a commitment to become a low-carbon, sustainable community ('Canterbury Commitment').

In 2021, Yearly Meeting renewed and strengthened this commitment. The meeting recognised the climate crisis is here and called for climate justice. It called for personal witness to build into collective action; for eldership, building resilient communities, right ordering and witness. It acknowledged that climate justice is anti-racist work.

Our overall aim is to encourage and support Friends and meetings in implementing these commitments.

These recommendations are grouped in five key areas:

1. Eldership: rooting the Commitment in our Quaker faith
2. Oversight: strengthening our community
3. Living faithfully: changing our lifestyles
4. Right ordering: Quaker core activities and property; and
5. Witness: working for systemic and policy change.

Friends and meetings vary in their situations and hence in their priorities, suitable approaches and needs for support. Their needs change over time. We must therefore be responsive, with a wide and evolving range of resources in each of the five areas, and regular communication to bring those resources to Friends' and meetings' attention in a variety of ways. We also need strong networking among Friends and meetings so they can share ideas and good practice and learn from each other's experience.

The following sections identify aims and make broad recommendations in each of the five implementation areas. We have not specified which organisation should take the work forward except in a few cases where this has already been discerned.

a) Eldership: rooting the commitment in our Quaker faith

The aim

While Friends mostly feel ownership of our corporate sustainability commitment, many understand it in secular or practical terms and find it hard to say what is Quaker about it; others have a clear idea of its spiritual basis for themselves, but

may not recognise the relevance of others' spiritual paths and experiences. Our spirituality may relate to sustainability in many ways. It may enable us, for example, to engage with loss and suffering, to celebrate beauty, to connect with others in the work for transformation, and to discern our way forward.

We need to make the commitment real and relevant to Quakers as an expression of our faith. That means:

1. Recognising and being able to articulate how our own spiritual experience and practice relates to sustainability
2. Recognising and being able to acknowledge other Friends' spiritual experiences and practices – both similar to and different from our own – and their relationship with sustainability

Add:

3. [Recognising that our commitment to sustainability is deeply connected to our commitment to equality, truth and simplicity](#)
4. Recognising all of these as part of our corporate faith and practice
5. Being able to bring Quaker insights, values and practices to bear on sustainability issues in our lives and communities and the wider world.

Recommendations

This section of the Recommendations for Action is essentially about eldership – supporting Friends in their spiritual practice, worship, ministry, learning and discernment as these relate to our sustainability commitment. These need attention at all levels, from individual Friends and local meetings to the Yearly Meeting and other national and international Quaker bodies. In particular:

1. Local and area meetings should provide opportunities for worship-based explorations where Friends can share how sustainability is part of their faith, and how that shapes their lives, relationships and actions.
2. Quaker bodies including central committees, Quaker Recognised Bodies and other organisations, should make opportunities (including for their staff, members and networks) to explore how their work connects sustainability with Quaker faith.
3. Central [departments committees](#) and other Quaker bodies should work together to provide Friends and meetings with resources and support for learning and discernment related to sustainability and its basis in Quaker faith.
4. There is a particular need to support ministry in all its forms, from spoken contributions in meetings for worship to publications, art, drama and spirit-led action.

b) Oversight: strengthening our community

The aim

Community is fundamental to the Canterbury Commitment and underpins the whole of our recommended approach. In local meetings and in our Yearly Meeting we aim to strengthen our communities, grounded in love and worship. Such communities can be the settings where Friends and meetings engage more fully with the Commitment:

1. Listening to one another, relating constructively, working through pain and loss linked to living in a violent and unsustainable civilisation, as well as the tensions and conflict that arise out of our different responses, and supporting each other in opportunities for insight and growth
2. Strengthening our shared identity and developing a shared understanding of how Quaker faith and practice relates to becoming a low carbon, sustainable community
3. Discerning the way forward in our Commitment, rooted in the Light and following the leadings of the Spirit
4. Supporting one another in implementing the Commitment, sharing learning, insight and celebration
5. Becoming more resilient, able to cope with change and adversity.

Recommendations

The Canterbury Commitment should be owned and implemented by BYM as a whole including individual Friends, local meetings, central committees, Woodbrooke, listed informal groups and other Quaker organisations. We all have a responsibility for embedding the Commitment in every group and every decision we participate in. Our witness should also be connected to the work of international Quaker organisations, other yearly meetings and non-Quaker organisations.

1. Regular and ongoing dialogue ~~involving Friends House, local meetings between Friends in their local and area meetings~~ and other Quaker organisations is needed to build community and share resources.
2. ~~Face-to-face Gatherings~~ are also vital for maintaining and developing our community and our focus on becoming low-carbon and sustainable. We see a need for such events to take place regularly, ~~ideally every year but at least every two years.~~ Gatherings should be inclusive and enable all Friends to participate and contribute.
3. Regional, ~~and~~ national and online networks can be ways for Friends and meetings to build community and share resources ~~without relying on paid staff at Friends House~~. Further networks ~~will~~ may be needed.

c) Living faithfully: changing our lifestyles

The aim

We aim to support Friends in developing low-carbon, sustainable and spiritually enhancing ways of living.

Recommendations

Lifestyle change is about more than carbon reduction, it is about all of our priorities and choices including patterns of family and social life, consumption and work. We recommend ongoing and increased encouragement and support for local meetings to be adventurous in helping Friends to live sustainably – adopting, in doing this, approaches that are sensitive and loving, while also radically transformative. This means sharing the joys we find in a simple lifestyle freely chosen, while offering compassion and support to those who find change difficult.

A wide variety of resources are required to address Friends' different and changing needs. For some, personal climate impact calculators are a vital part of understanding and reducing their carbon emissions; for others it is more important to have opportunities to talk about feelings. Some want simple, practical guides to action; others like to do their own research.

- ~~1. Regular revisions are needed in resources for sustainable living such as those included in the QPSW/Living Witness Sustainability Toolkit (footprint guides, guides for practical action, study group session plans). New versions should be brought to Friends' attention in a variety of formats.~~

There are many useful resources (such as footprint guides, guides for practical action and study group session plans) published by other organisations. BYM, Woodbrooke and other Quaker bodies can signpost to useful materials. Friends are encouraged to make full use of these resources.

- ~~2. We hope that Living Witness, QPSW and Quaker Life will continue to work together BYM and Woodbrooke work together~~ to support Friends in deepening dialogue and making lifestyle changes, in particular including through group activities. A variety of approaches are available. Friends are encouraged to make use of these opportunities.
- ~~3. We need to provide opportunities for Friends to connect~~ Friends are also encouraged to connect with each other through talks, workshops, etc. Friends' experience of the practical, social and spiritual aspects of lifestyle change should continue to be shared regularly in a variety of ways, from face-to-face contact and networks to blogs, newsletters, talks and workshops.

Add:

4. Lifestyle change is about living in the world. Friends are encouraged to engage with, learn from and mutually support family, friends, neighbours, and others, so that we can walk with and alongside each other on this journey.

d) Right ordering: Quaker core activity and property

The aim

Our aim is to support Quakers in Britain (including BYM departments and committees, area and local meetings, and other Quaker organisations) in making the Canterbury Commitment a core part of fulfilling their religious and other

purposes, in making all of their activities and assets low-carbon and sustainable, and in being patterns and examples for the wider community.

Recommendations

Quaker meetings, organisations and committees may struggle with the complexity of addressing their core purposes in low-carbon, sustainable ways. They may need support to get beyond seeing these as conflicting goals, and they may need technical help with addressing buildings, land, travel, food, waste and use of money. Friends particularly face dilemmas about travelling to meetings and maintaining historic meeting houses, which are seen as vital for maintaining and developing community.

Local meetings, central committees and other Quaker organisations should be encouraged to organise themselves in low-carbon, sustainable ways. This includes looking at how they meet, where and how often.

- ~~1. Resources should be developed to support Quaker bodies in discernment that takes account of the Canterbury Commitment...~~

Quaker bodies are encouraged to draw on available resources to support their discernment in ways that takes account of the commitment, including weighing up the effects of their decisions on a wide variety of issues, and considering creative alternatives. This includes drawing on specialist resources available from non-Quaker sources (for example, professional expertise regarding properties or fuel).

- ~~2. A way needs to be agreed to monitor and review progress by local meetings in developing low-carbon, sustainable core practices and premises. This might include collection of data such as annual energy use, and a regular questionnaire or survey of local meeting activities. Central committee and staff support would be required. The results should form part of the BYM Trustees' Annual Report.~~

Area Meeting Trustees should include information about the area meeting's work to become a low-carbon, sustainable community in their annual reports. This might include data such as annual energy use, and local meeting activities gathered through surveys.

- ~~3. Encouragement and support should be given to~~ All parts of the Quaker community are encouraged to follow the example of BYM Trustees in ensuring that our investments are consistent with being low-carbon and sustainable, and in particular to disinvest from fossil fuels.

e) Witness: taking political action and promoting systemic change

The Aim

To create structures and policies – locally, nationally and globally – which enable people to live low-carbon, sustainable lives; and a transformed economy and society which is low-carbon and just.

Recommendations

We ~~have heard that~~ know Friends ~~want to take more political action and to be~~

~~supported~~ are keen to influence governments and public bodies, to call for and create systemic change in economics and society. In particular:

1. Friends and local meetings need ongoing support:
 - to use their experience of the joys and challenges of changing their lives and meetings as a foundation for engaging others in their local community, national businesses and politicians
 - to take radical action for change from the current system and to be part of building the alternative
 - to speak out for systemic change and for climate justice.

~~This support comes from the centrally managed work (where the lead committee is the QPSW Economics, Sustainability and Peace subgroup) along with other Quaker organisations including Living Witness and Woodbrooke.~~

~~Many parts of the centrally managed work are engaged, including Turning the Tide, Parliamentary Engagement, Peace Education, and the Peacemaker scheme. A continuing effort is needed to strengthen and connect up the Canterbury Commitment aspects of their activities.~~

2. Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee's current strategy focuses on two core interlinked themes: Peace and Peacebuilding, and Sustainability and Climate Justice. This approach was supported and affirmed by Yearly Meeting in 2021. QPSWCC's strategy recognises the importance and urgency of the climate crisis, and the vision includes:
 - achieving more by focusing on fewer activities
 - prioritising work where Quakers have a distinctive approach that can enhance change
 - supporting greater action by local and area meetings and by Quaker Recognised Bodies while also undertaking centrally-managed work
 - greater agility – for us to respond quickly where this is needed, even if this means laying down or pausing some work
 - cross-programme activity
 - drawing on a wide range of skills and gifts offered by members, attenders and staff
3. British Friends should continue to ~~be supported to~~ connect with work on climate change and sustainability beyond BYM. There are opportunities to share our experience and contribute to work for change, in particular with international Quaker bodies, other churches and faith organisations, campaigning organisations and movements.

We recommend that Quaker bodies of all kinds continue to speak out publicly on systemic change and climate justice, making the links to traditional Quaker concerns for peace and justice. Advice and other resources are needed to help them to do this. Public statements can help to strengthen our Quaker community and identity, and affirm our shared values.

Living up to our commitment: local Quaker communities

Quaker Stewardship Committee Report to Meeting for Sufferings

1. Background

In July 2018, Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) asked Quaker Stewardship Committee (QSC) to gather material and then to report annually on how Area Meetings were responding to the commitment for Quakers to become a low carbon community. Area Meetings were subsequently encouraged to include a statement of their actions on sustainability in their Trustees' Annual Report.

2. Sustainability Reporting in 2019 Area Meeting Annual Reports

Trustee Annual Reports for Area Meetings are usually required to be published by 31 October of the year following the reporting year. This information has been used to write this report.

Some Area Meetings, including Dorset & South Wiltshire, Mid-Thames and Mid-Somerset, sent separate reports on their work on sustainability to Friends House, in addition to commenting in their Annual Reports.

3. Activities and progress made in becoming a low carbon community

Looking across all of the reports received, it is clear that the great majority of Friends in Area Meetings have taken the concern for sustainability seriously and sought to act with intent to reduce their carbon emissions.

The Sustainability Monitoring Group] set five objectives for Quaker action on sustainability. Reading all the Area Meeting reports was a joy. Reports for 2019 referenced ongoing progress in addressing the carbon footprint of Meeting Houses, Friends working together to identify and make the changes needed in their own lives, and public action to press for wider change in society.

This summary takes each objective in turn and includes examples of activity reported. The examples are illustrative and in no sense comprehensive. Friends are encouraged to sample Area Meetings' Annual Reports for themselves, to see the full range of committed and energised activity taking place:

1. Eldership: rooting the Commitment in our Quaker faith

In reports, the link between Quaker work on sustainability and our Quaker faith was

generally implicit rather than explicit. However, many reports referred to Friends getting together to reflect and discern on sustainability.

For example, Sheffield & Balby held a range of events including an all-age workshop led by Young Friends, and other workshops focusing on imaging a better future, and hope for the future. The Area Meeting also held two special Meetings for Worship for business and has a climate emergency reading group.

Elsewhere Friends' discernment addressed some challenging aspects of sustainability, for example Chilterns held discernment on the issue of population growth.

2. Oversight: strengthening our community

Sustainability is a topic that has brought Friends together across Britain, strengthening our Quaker communities and building wider links. The reports include many references to discussion groups, shared learning, reading groups, conferences and workshops among Friends and reaching out into our wider communities.

For example, Central England's Junior Peacemakers and Peace Hub organised workshops for schools including on the topic of climate justice. Their Low Carbon Commitment Forum led a session Climate Changing People's Lives – Young People's Perspectives and was part of a faith group that organised an ecumenical environmental conference entitled No Planet B: Acting out Faith in the World and attended by about 100 people.

Devon commented that Friends have been supportive of efforts to develop a low carbon sustainable way of living both as a community, and individually for many years and that more recently, the focus has been on activities which will lead to a better understanding of climate issues amongst the wider population, rather than simply 'putting our own house in order'.

This included Friends in Bideford Meeting who are involved in a sustainable fish education project which works with local schools and parents, to promote healthy local fish and support for a healthy ocean.

3. Living faithfully: changing our lifestyles

Many reports referred to support and encouragement for Friends to make changes to their lifestyles including reducing use of plastic, eating less meat and dairy products, repairing and re-using items, and cutting energy use.

For example, Mid-Thames referenced Friends at Newbury who have made lifestyle changes to cut meat and dairy consumption and reduce foreign travel.

Leicestershire has sustainability as an agenda item at every AM and has encouraged Local Meetings to do the same. Activities in 2019 included two shared lunches at Loughborough where Friends were encouraged to bring food that was locally sourced, organic, animal friendly and fairly traded. Several Friends also

helped with a visit by an “energy bus” to Loughborough, the aim of which was to draw the public’s attention to how to reduce energy use in the home. The Area Meeting’s Sustainability Group organised an apple pressing day, at which 15 bottles of apple juice were produced.

4. Right ordering: Quaker core activities and property

The reports cover a wide range of action to address the impact of Quaker activity in general, and to make Meeting Houses more sustainable in particular. Key themes included:

- a) reference to work done in earlier years that continues to deliver benefits: for example, Lincolnshire commented that improving the energy efficiency of their buildings has been a focus since 2010.
- b) the challenge of improving sustainability while respecting the cultural and heritage value of many of our Meeting Houses: for example, Craven & Keighley referred to this challenge, in relation to replacing the gas boiler at Settle Meeting House.
- c) the challenge of reducing energy used in getting to and from Meeting for Worship and other Quaker events given the timing and location of Quaker events and lack of public transport, particularly in rural areas: for example, Cornwall reported that they have decided to hold all Area Meetings in St Austell, rather than travelling to different Local Meetings, in part to make it easier for Friends to use public transport.
- d) making the most of Quaker green spaces including gardens and burial grounds: for example, Ipswich and Diss have taken advice from Suffolk Wildlife Trust and reported that Leiston now have a number of resident hedgehogs who hibernate in areas deliberately not tidied up for that purpose.
- e) achieving, or working towards, awards as A Rocha eco churches: for example,

Devizes (West Wiltshire & East Somerset), Heswall (Wirral and Chester), and Peterborough (Cambridgeshire) have attained a silver standard: Bradford on Avon (West Wiltshire & East Somerset) is working towards the gold standard, and Lancaster (Lancashire Central & North) is carrying out an eco church survey.

5. Witness: working for systemic and policy change.

Many reports referenced activity to raise awareness of the climate emergency and lobbying for change. This included action by Area and Local Meetings, and by individual Friends. Many Area Meetings are supporting Friends who have been active with Extinction Rebellion.

Reports reference writing to politicians and taking part in non-violent direct action. For example, Bath Friends (West Wiltshire) helped to organise a climate hustings in advance of local elections. South East London Friends held a public event at Blackheath Protecting our planet: Yes we can. Abergavenny (Southern Marches)

held a series of public climate conversations. Swarthmoor AM reported that one of their Young Friends was co-organiser of a local school strike, to draw attention to the climate emergency.

4. Reporting and tracking measures of energy consumption/ greenhouse gas emission

While some AMs are reporting and tracking their energy use, (their own or that of individual Friends), most are not. It is not therefore possible to generate meaningful information at a national level, or to compare energy use one year with another. The position for 2020 will be even less clear because energy used by Meeting Houses is will be significantly reduced, but this will largely be due to the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic. It will not be possible to distinguish the impact of reduced use if buildings, from the impact of energy saving measures.

However, a significant number of Local Meetings use electricity from green energy suppliers. Data from Friends House on the national scheme negotiated with Good Energy demonstrates that almost 150 Local Meetings are participants, with a resulting annual collective saving to date of about 675 tonnes of carbon emissions.

5. Activities planned in the future

A number of Area Meetings report plans for further activities in relation to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from their buildings. While there is limited detail of these plans and many will have been impacted by Covid 19, there is a clear intention in a number of Area Meetings to do more.

For example, Frenchay (Bristol AM) carried out a major survey in 2019, with a view to reducing the building's carbon footprint and plan to carry out a further survey on its heat loss. And one Meeting spoke for many Friends in honestly recording that

“we have hardly started thinking strategically on sustainability in our AM”, while hoping to do more.

6. Reporting in future Annual Reports

Reporting has evidently been a challenge for many Area Meetings.

Quantitative reporting on energy use and emissions appears to be especially challenging. Allied to this is the question of the value of reporting the contribution to carbon emissions from Meeting Houses alone, when compared with the impact of the lifestyles of individual Friends.

Reporting on sustainability through Trustees' Annual Reports and Accounts reduces the need for a separate exercise to collect information. However, this approach means it takes a long time for information on sustainability to be brought together. Accounts have to be drawn up and examined and annual reports written. These need to be filed with the relevant Charity regulators and then reviewed by Quaker

Stewardship Committee. The whole exercise takes over a year which means the information is out of date by the time it reaches Meeting for Sufferings. The Sustainability Monitoring Group are considering if there is a better and faster way of collecting this information, without adding unnecessary burdens to AM trustees.

Mary Aiston
Quaker Stewardship Committee
05/05/2021

Yearly Meeting 2021 preparation session

Canterbury: ten years on

1 Introduction

This session was led by Caroline Howden and Peter Aviss, members of the Sustainability Monitoring Group. This small group was established by Meeting for Sufferings to monitor sustainability actions by Yearly Meeting and in local Quaker communities.

This was one of two preparatory sessions at YMG to look at Sustainability and Climate Justice. They represent the journey that Quakers have been on for a number of years, moving from discussions on sustainability and being carbon neutral, to the widening debate of Climate Justice. This session was structured around input from Peter and Caroline; small group conversations; and worship.

This document contains the contribution shared by Caroline and Peter during the session.

2 The last 10 years

We thought it would be useful to remind people about the [Canterbury Commitment](#) and work undertaken in the last 10 years as well as what's been good and what has been difficult.

Canterbury Commitment

*"Sustainability is an urgent matter for our Quaker witness. It is rooted in Quaker testimony and must be integral to all we do corporately and individually."
(A framework for action 2009-2014)*

A concern for the Earth and the well-being of all who dwell in it is not new, and we have not now received new information which calls us to act. Rather we are renewing our commitment to a sense of the unity of creation which has always been part of Friends' testimonies. Our actions have as yet been insufficient.


John Woolman's words in 1772 sound as clearly to us now:
"The produce of the earth is a gift from our gracious creator to the inhabitants, and to impoverish the earth now to support outward greatness appears to be an injury to the succeeding age."
(Quaker faith & practice 25.01)

We ask area meetings to consider how truth prospers with regard to sustainability, taking care to relate this to all our testimonies – peace, truth, simplicity, equality and care for the environment.

We encourage local and area meetings to practise speaking truth to power at local level by establishing relationships with all sections of local communities, including politicians, businesses and schools, to encourage positive attitudes to sustainability.

To individual Friends we issue a clear call to action to consider the effect of their lives on the world's limited resources and in particular on their carbon usage. We ask Friends to keep informed about the work being done locally, centrally and throughout the Quaker world and to educate themselves.


But above all that, Friends keep in their hearts that this action must flow from nowhere but love.



Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
in Britain at the Yearly Meeting
held in Canterbury at the University of Kent
30 July – 6 August 2011

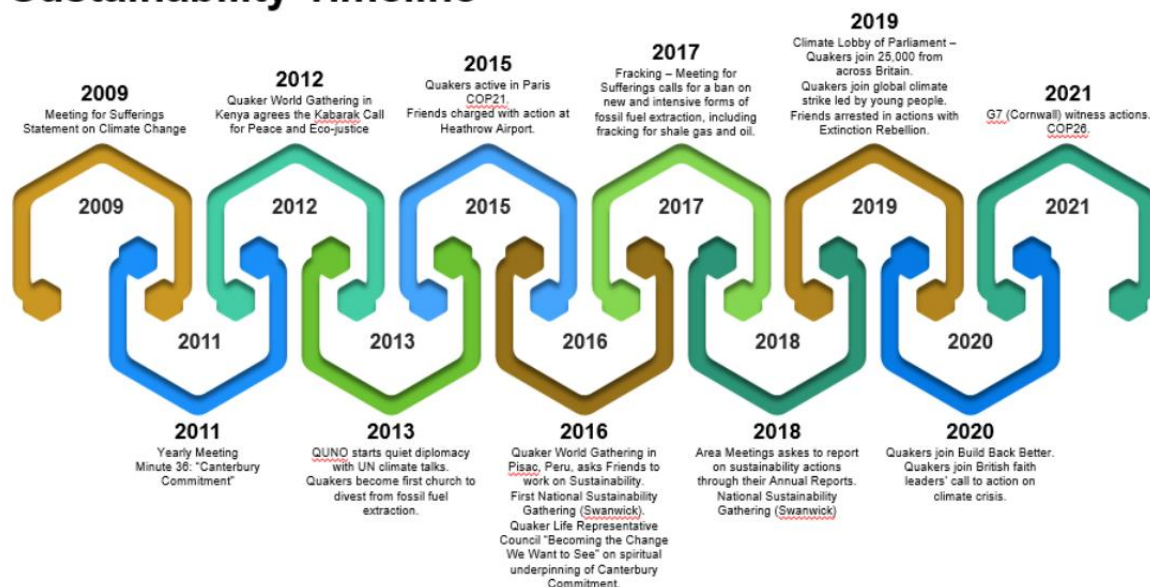
Minute 36

Our Canterbury commitment



"The action we are ready to take at this time is to make a strong corporate commitment to become a low-carbon, sustainable community."

Sustainability Timeline



What's been good

Corporate commitment

- ✓ Our commitment is rooted in faith
- ✓ We can take a long-term perspective
- ✓ 'The whole is greater than the parts' - in Quakers we have the whole range of perspectives and approaches - Friends can be active through funding, writing letters, influencing policy, direct action, changing small habits
- ✓ We can speak out on the experience of lived experience

Co-ordination

- ✓ Friends have come together in national sustainability gatherings
- ✓ Through the BYM website, Friends have shared '[sustainability stories](#)' online
- ✓ We can link local, national, and international - particularly with the [Quaker United Nations Office \(QUNO\)](#)

Resources, tools

- ✓ Lots of energy, creativity, purpose
- ✓ Some very persistent Friends
- ✓ Materials are available from [QPSW](#) and [Living Witness](#)
- ✓ [Woodbrooke](#) is a resource for learning and spiritual nurture

Central structures

- ✓ BYM offers national support for local actions - examples include:
 - Fracking - [Meeting for Worship on Pendle Hill](#) organised by local Friends, promoted and supported by QPSW staff
 - [Climate lobby](#) 2019
 - [Pilgrimage](#) to COP 26

- ✓ Quaker encouragement and mutual support around the globe; hearing the voices of Quakers in other parts of the world who are affected by climate change (BYM supported [Friends World Committee for Consultation \(FWCC\)'s work on sustainability](#) by funding a communications officer)
- ✓ Meeting for Sufferings - sustainability is on the agenda at least once a year
- ✓ Sustainability has been a priority for [Quaker Peace and Social Witness](#) since before 2011 and continuing

What's been difficult

Corporate commitment

- Friends don't find it easy to articulate the faith basis to the commitment
- Some Friends feel despair that other Friends don't share their sense of commitment - some feel isolated in their Meetings and experience burnout, despair, grief
- MfS said in 2016 that it encourages and supports networking - but doesn't want to co-ordinate (because this could be seen as 'telling Friends what to do')
- There is considerable resistance to the idea of local Friends reporting to MfS or other central bodies

Resources, tools

- There is a limited understanding of how to change hearts and minds
- Quakers want 'Quaker-branded' tools, but BYM doesn't have the skills or capacity to produce bespoke tools (e.g. carbon footprint calculator; building retrofit guidance), and the best tools are produced by others
- A Quaker Carbon calculator was developed soon after Canterbury; there were issues with retaining the information; lots of grumbles about whether it was too complex or not good enough; questions about whether it was worth doing at all; and no capacity to maintain it
- Woodbrooke's current project (which helps Friends explore the spiritual underpinning of the commitment; supports lifestyle changes; and will convene gatherings) took a long time to develop

Co-ordination

- Among Friends there are many different views about priorities (both topics and ways of working); Friends with strong views can be dismissive of others' views
- There is a tendency towards a scattergun approach; and a reluctance to consider impact or do the work involved in planning, resourcing, monitoring and reporting
- Some Friends want national structures to prioritise issues which don't accord with the priorities discerned by QPSWCC, or are outwith the capacity of our central structures - examples might be investing in the development of new technologies, or joining Extinction Rebellion.

Central structures

- The different parts of our central structures haven't always found effective ways to collaborate
- The division of responsibilities between different committees hasn't always been clear - for example: - what is the role of Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC)

or Quaker Stewardship Committee (QLCC)? - what should Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC) be doing? - and how does QPSW's work relate to the role of Meeting for Sufferings?

- There is a tendency in some Meetings to see sustainability as work done 'on our behalf' rather than 'by us together'

3 Our experience

In small groups, Friends were asked:

Please share your personal and local experience of meeting Canterbury commitment. What are your own examples of living out the Canterbury commitment?

4 Case studies – introduction

We've been asked to share with you some case studies to highlight just some actions that Quakers around Britain have been doing to take the commitment.

Meeting for Sufferings (in the *Recommendations for Action*) has asked us all to look at this commitment in five headings:

- Eldership - rooting the commitment in our Quaker faith
- Oversight - strengthening our community
- Living faithfully - changing our lifestyles
- Right ordering - Quaker activity and property
- Witness - taking political action and promoting systemic change

We decided to give one example under each heading.

Eldership - rooting our commitment in our Quaker faith

Even though Friends are engaged with the commitment, many understand it in secular or practical terms. We find it hard to say what is *Quaker* about it. Some of us have a clear idea of its spiritual basis for ourselves, but may not recognise the relevance of others' spiritual paths and experiences.

Our spirituality may relate to sustainability in many ways. It may enable us, for example, to engage with loss and suffering, to celebrate beauty, to connect with others in the work for transformation, and to discern our way forward.

We can connect with God in different ways: through silence, through each other, music, art, sport, nature.

We're going to share a very simple example of a parent helping her children to notice, celebrate and love the earth. This was written by [Maud Grainger](#):

No Screens, Yes to Walks

We have begun a 2 days a week no screen rule. Our children get to decide which days they think they can best cope without it. On the no screen days I am trying to

engage them in other activities.

I don't think screens are necessarily bad; they can distract, calm, teach and entertain. The new rule is more about wanting them to know they can turn them off – that they have the power over the screen and not the other way around.

Yesterday was a no screen day and so we went to some local hills and had a fantastic walk. We had been given a leaf identification sheet from cubs and made ourselves some clipboards with an old cardboard box and washing pegs. We took to the hills and loved every second.

Sometimes we just need to get outside. It is through making these connections we can continue to remind our children of the wonder of creation and the beauty of the world. How can they grow up with a flair and passion for the natural world if we don't remind them of it?

As we began to come home, my daughter, often to be found watching you tube, said 'I love walks mummy, can we go on one again tomorrow?' I need to remember these words during the summer holidays. To take them to places they can run and run and run.



Oversight - strengthening our community

Community is fundamental to the Canterbury Commitment. In local Quaker meetings, in other Quaker communities, and in our Yearly Meeting we aim to strengthen our communities, grounded in love and worship. Our communities are places and spaces where we can engage more fully with the Commitment.

There are many examples of meetings spending time together to learn, reflect, encourage and prepare for action. Leeds Quakers organised a trip to the Council's recycling centre to learn about what happens to their rubbish. We have held national sustainability gatherings.

In 2019, forty Quakers from Devon and Cornwall gathered for a weekend on a farm.

Their ministry came through singing, dancing and other wordless activities, but they also wrote a minute of record, which I'm going to read now.

In this beautiful place, we shared gratitude, love, worship and relationships with people, animals and the land, as we explored our Quaker responses to the climate and ecological crises.

We listened to diverse ideas and reactions to the sense of big change ahead, acknowledging shock, grief, acceptance and hope, as well as spontaneous moments of joy. We heard that people have different paths, from rebellion to providing sanctuary, from sharing ideas through stories, music and art, to teaching and learning practical and relationship skills. We enjoyed eating novel vegan recipes and burnt marshmallows from the firepit.

We learnt that joining together as a community in a peaceful rural setting was an inspiring and nurturing experience. Using our head, heart and hands together, we discerned that love must be the bedrock of all our responses: let us see what love can do.



Living faithfully

Lifestyle change is about more than carbon reduction. It's about all of us making choices in our family and social lives, consumption and work. We are encouraged to share the joys we find in a simple lifestyle freely chosen. We're also asked to be compassionate, and support each other when change is difficult.

Quakers in Loughborough collected examples of how Friends were changing their lives. They've gathered these together into an attractive [booklet](#), designed to encourage and inspire each other and the rest of us. The booklet's freely available online. Some of the changes are quite big; others are small. They looked at aspects of life that affect us all - food, gardens, travel, energy, cleaning. Some seem large

and daunting, but most are relatively simple:

- I have asked people not to buy me presents for birthday, Christmas.
- I've installed triple glazing
- I lend and borrow books.
- We try to eat seasonably, no strawberries, grapes, etc, out of season.
- I use handkerchiefs instead of tissues.
- We make presents: crochet, sewing, preserves.
- I ask shopkeepers if they have paper bags and explain why I'm asking.

And some of them were disarmingly honest:

- I have a dilemma: I know my house is too big for one person and that this raises my carbon footprint. I would be happy to be in a smaller house but not to move from where I am, due to the good community spirit.

Each of these changes is small. Gathered together, they create a bigger picture of people doing what they can, supporting each other, and sharing a commitment.



Right Ordering - Quaker core activity and property

Working together means we can be more than the sum of our parts. And this applies to our shared activities and resources. Our shared commitment calls us to try to make all our activities and assets low- carbon and sustainable. Again, we could have shared any number of case studies with you. We've heard about Area Meetings in Scotland and Cornwall changing where, when and how they meet, to cut down on travel time and costs. We heard about Leiston meeting in Suffolk which deliberately doesn't tidy parts of its garden, and now has resident hedgehog.

Actually, we have two examples to share with you here. We didn't want to miss the opportunity to talk about the [Quiet Company](#), which works on our behalf. Since the company was set up in 2007, it has given £6.7million in gift-aid to Quaker work. It welcomes hundreds of thousands of people to Friends House and Swarthmoor Hall

every year, introducing them to the Quaker story, offering warm hospitality. And because Quaker values are at the heart of this work, sustainability is really important.

So, for instance:

- The carbon footprint has been reduced by 30% since 2009
- The packaging used by the Quaker Bookshop is 100% sustainable
- There is no single-use plastic at Friends House and Swarthmoor Hall, and most materials can be recycled
- The Seed Kitchen restaurant was designed to serve only vegan and vegetarian meals
- Most ingredients used at Friends House are sourced in the home counties, within 100 miles, are organic wherever possible are organic.
- The company manages waste carefully, and doesn't send anything to landfill
- The Quiet Company is a Living Wage employer, and actively seeks to employ people from disadvantaged groups

Friends House has been given Green Tourism Gold accreditation. The Quiet Company has been really hit hard by the pandemic, but we are reassured that, as it rebuilds, it will keep being as sustainable as possible.



We'd also like to share a story from a local Quaker meeting. Lots of Meetings have been working to improve their buildings. This is what Cardiff Quakers wrote, last December:

43 Charles Street is home to Cardiff Quakers who meet there on Sunday mornings and at other times throughout the week for Worship and to take care of all aspects of running our meeting community – spiritual, pastoral and practical. During the week rooms are hired out to a variety of charities, groups and health and well-being practices, co-ordinated by a small management team. Around 6 plus years ago, it became clear that significant refurbishment was needed improve the standard of the building, which was becoming shabby. In the process of drawing up plans and

seeking grants, Quakers on the Meeting House Development Steering Group were aware of opportunities to put into practice our testimony to sustainability, and looked into options for more environmentally friendly building methods and design.

The A Rocha Eco Church Award programme helped us to think about all sorts of questions about our building and land, our worship community, personal lifestyle and collective activism. For a while it has been uncertain whether we will be going ahead with the refurbishment or whether we will be able to undergo a more ambitious rebuild project. We have achieved the Bronze award with the building as it is, and look forward to working towards Silver either as we upgrade the existing building or redevelop the whole site.



Witness: taking political action and promoting systemic change

One of the wonderful things about our Quaker movement is that we're in community with people and we can each play our part in changing the world. Quakers lobby our MPs, write policy documents, and donate to campaigns. Some of us are able to take direct action.

Sue Hampton is a Friend from the Midlands who has taken action with Extinction Rebellion and been charged in court more than once. She's a grandmother, an author, and describes herself as a Rebel for Life. Earlier this year she wrote an article about a recent experience, which was published in The Friend:

When the idea of a sitting alone in a road was first aired, I was opposed to more disruption of ordinary lives, preferring to inconvenience fossil fuel companies and the banks that finance them. Yet two weeks ago I blocked a road in Harpenden, one of many sitters nationally. Sometimes we shift position as the world changes.

Covid has meant little opportunity for nonviolent direct action on the streets. There was talk of Building Back Better, but the overall drop in emissions proved smaller than we need to achieve every year. Our government continued to pursue carbon-heavy projects: a massive roadbuilding plan, expansion of eight airports, HS2, even a coal mine. The home secretary targeted 'seriously annoying' activism in a bill to increase police powers, with specific reference to solo protest.

When I saw footage of an earlier 'Rebellion of One' (RO1) protest, I was moved by the power of vulnerability. Tthe first of May marked the second anniversary of

parliament's declaration of a Climate Emergency, yet seventeen out of twenty-one progress indicators are unmet. Science agrees that 2050 is too late. So I borrowed a buggy and cut out a figure labelled ALL THE WORLD'S CHILDREN, remembering Gail Bradbrook's words: 'We can only protect those closest to us when we remember our love for those furthest away.' Love requires climate justice, and my privilege carries an obligation to act on behalf of those least to blame for this crisis, including children already dying. Otherwise overwhelmed by climate grief, I find peace and hope in doing the most I can manage.

My location was a relatively easy one. There was some mild abuse but a great deal of support: gratitude, offers of drinks, and the gift of a plant. Cars edged past me. Having persuaded me to move over a little, the police closed the road to traffic in one direction. Eventually I lay down and was arrested. That, in the end, was a choice. Six arrests in, the initial trauma has ebbed away. It offers a platform to keep telling the truth at the police station and in court, and without it, the national action would have been ignored by local papers. Being a Quaker helps with silent, spartan isolation. After five hours I was charged with Wilful Obstruction of the Highway and bailed.

There were times during my protest when I doubted. What was I hoping to achieve? I was told I was wasting police time, but I believe my action had an impact on the officers concerned. Two hundred sitters didn't end government greenwash, but the pressure is cumulative. And there's no giving up on life on earth.

5 Future commitments

In small groups, Friends were asked to consider:

- ❖ Have you heard anything new?
- ❖ What have you heard that you would like to try?
- ❖ How does listening to the Spirit help you in our testimony to Sustainability?
- ❖ Who are you walking alongside in this journey? Who are your partners, allies?

6 Worship sharing

During worship-sharing we heard ministry, including Advices and Queries 42:

We do not own the world, and its riches are not ours to dispose of at will. Show a loving consideration for all creatures, and seek to maintain the beauty and variety of the world. Work to ensure that our increasing power over nature is used responsibly, with reverence for life. Rejoice in the splendour of God's continuing creation.

7 To finish...

We hope Friends will be inspired by this poem written in response to Friends' witness at the time of the G7 summit in 2021:

Words of Witness

Twelve circled Friends gathered
silently, separately, *awefully*
in the designated car park
for containing
protestation against injustice.

Twelve settled into a stillness fringed by
sounds, colours, scents and humans of every kind,
with sunshine beating down and
the music of a distant melodic dog,
they held the Carbis Seven.

'Baby Come Back' sixties version vied with
Tigrayan refugees chanting 'STOP THE GENOCIDE...'
Foot-tapping Boogie piano and bass vied with
a most serene, balletic Kazakh dance and
twelve held the Carbis Seven.

The Estonian cruise ship moored up alongside -
there to house the boys and girls in blue.
She looked on at the silent
Twelve surrounded by
the plastic-free, the vegan-friendly, the natural, the DIY and
the sustainable energy in abundance that day.

By placard and loud protest, the messages were simple:
'You are funding terrorism....'
'Only love can save us...'
'Stop the man-made famine....' because
'Extinction is for ever...'

Twelve Friends gathered their things and
stood with thousands.
Twelve shared in the procession
with knowledge and faith that
'Lives begin to end the day we become silent about things
that matter.'



Lesley Chandler
June 12th G7

We had also hoped to show a short (3.24') [video about Quaker Faith in Action](#) which Friends may want to see as it brings in more voices.

As we were preparing for this session, we heard some inspiring stories. But we have only been able to share a tiny number of them, and so much is happening. *What are your stories? What stories will you be able to create, to share in ten years' time?*

Sustainability Monitoring Group
August 2021

UN Climate Change Conference (COP26)

During this meeting we will hear about Quaker work at COP26 from staff.

Friends are encouraged to explore some of these blogs, videos and resources. Please note – staff are still adding to the Facebook and YouTube channels. We're also expecting to produce a fuller compendium of local Quaker action around COP. This should go out via *Quake!* in early December.

1. **Quakers in Britain statement** ahead of COP26: both the [full written version](#) and a [short film](#) based on this.
2. **A short summary of [Quaker witness at and in the run up to COP26](#)**: This includes central and local work and will be added to in due course.
3. **[COP26 video playlist](#) on the **BYM YouTube channel**** These are longer (15mins-1hr+) films including:
 - Paul Parker and Grace Da Costa, explaining more about BYM work at COP 26
 - Recording of Livvy Hanks speaking at a side event in the official 'blue zone' making the moral case for 'loss and damage' finance
 - Recording of Livvy Hanks and Lindsey Fielder-Cook (QUNO) sharing reflections on the negotiations at an event hosted by Glasgow Quakers.
 - Recording of our 'Quakers and the UN climate talks' workshop
 - A short fundraising video
4. **[COP26 video playlist](#) on **Facebook****: mostly short (less than 4min) reflections from staff and partners about their work in Glasgow. You can also search for these on Facebook and Twitter using #QuakersAtCOP
5. **[Press release about our vigil for loss and damage finance](#)**: this was held in the final week of COP26 to draw negotiators' attention to one of our key campaigning asks
6. **A short statement [commenting on COP26 outcomes](#)**
7. **[COP26 is over, but this is not the end](#)**: Blog written by Livvy Hanks (coming soon)

Quaker Recognised Bodies

Introduction

Meeting for Sufferings is asked to re-register a Quaker Recognised Body, and to register a new one.

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 group's 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.

A) Review of QRB

When Meeting for Sufferings grants QRB status, it asks for each organisation to be reviewed in due course.

Action required

Meeting for Sufferings is asked to agree to renew the registration of this organisation as a Quaker recognised body for a period of five years.

Living Witness

Originally recognised in December 2016. Review due in 2021.

Externally regulated. Staff link: Originally Chris Walker and now Oonagh Ryder

Original information

Name: Living Witness

Constitution: the group is a registered charity (charity registration no. 1119938)

Type of Group: “external”

Foundation: The group was established in 2002, with a grant from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. It was registered as a charitable trust in July 2007. In 2008 it merged with Quaker Green Action, the group of British Friends concerned with our sustainability witness since 1986.

Aims: Living Witness aims to support the development of Quaker corporate witness to sustainable living for the public benefit, and explore ways of taking it to the wider community in Britain and elsewhere.

Governance: Living Witness is a charitable trust. In 2015 the trustees met twice in person and twice by teleconference, using Quaker Business Method.

Membership: The group is open to anyone to join. Membership of the group shall be open to all members and attenders of the Society. Membership shall begin when a record is made in the minutes of the Group or of its Committee.

Finance: The annual budget of the group is approximately £10,000.

Publications and activities: Living Witness produced four issues of earthQuaker in 2015, including a special issue leading up to the General Election in May.

From May 2014 to May 2015, Laurie wrote a monthly column for The Friend entitled Gleanings, exploring the links between sustainability and Gospel Order. The Friend has plans to publish the articles as a small book.

Current contact details:

Laurie Michaelis, group coordinator
5 Hutchcomb Road,
Oxford, OX2 9HN

Email: laurie@livingwitness.org.uk

Group website: www.livingwitness.org.uk

Staff link: Chris Walker, Sustainability & Peace Programme Manager

Links with Quaker work: Living Witness work closely with Britain Yearly Meeting and Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre to provide advice, analysis, study guides and resources for spiritually-grounded action concerning sustainability in person, in print and on the internet.

Living Witness' main area of activity in 2015 was supporting the work of BYM Sustainability Group.

Living Witness also support a number of international Quaker projects concerned with peace and the environment, including supporting the work of the Quaker UN Office.

Archives: not known.

Review Notes

Governance: In 2020 and 2021 the trustees have been meeting roughly every six months by Zoom, using Quaker Business Method.

Finance: Expenditure in 2019 was approximately £6,500; during the pandemic expenditure has been much reduced – about £300 in 2020.

Publications and activities: Activities have been largely curtailed during the pandemic apart from an “Eco-listening” group which meets fortnightly on Zoom, sharing our experience of engaging in the climate and ecological crises in a worship sharing format. This group is open to anyone to attend.

In 2019 Living Witness was developing a programme to support young adults in their engagement with the climate and ecological crises. This has been paused and trustees are now considering how to take it forward. We are also considering how to restart some of our former activities, which included gatherings and a regular newsletter.

Staff link is now: Oonagh Ryder, Activism Support Coordinator

Links with Quaker work: Living Witness has worked closely in the past with Britain Yearly Meeting, Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, the Quaker UN Office and Quaker Council for European Affairs to provide advice, analysis, study guides and resources for spiritually-grounded action concerning sustainability in person, in print and on the internet.

B) Request for registration

RJ Working has applied to be registered as a QRB. Staff have looked at the documentation provided by the organisation and consider that the criteria have been met.

Action required

Meeting for Sufferings is asked to approve this organisation as a Quaker Recognised Body.

RJ Working

Introduction: RJ Working is a not-for-profit Community Interest Company based in Cornwall, which promotes and delivers Restorative Processes. It works to equip children and young people with the language, principles and confidence to lead Restorative Practice development in their school communities.

Activities: RJ Working designs and delivers programmes for young people and children and the adults who care for them. The programmes involve dynamic interactive group work and experiential learning, and are designed to tackle inequality and conflict by promoting the Restorative model, and empowering young people to lead developments in their school.

'Restorative' is a means of conflict resolution, and of building collective social and emotional capability for dealing with harm. It is based on the principles of peace through justice and equality through diversity.

Over the past ten years RJ Working's focus has evolved, and it now mostly focuses on working with children and young people, including in schools. Although the website (which is due to be updated) describes it as working in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, in practice the organisation is starting to expand nationally and internationally. It recently started to deliver courses with Woodbrooke, and has run workshops for Quaker Values in Education, QCEA, and at Yearly Meeting Gathering.

Quaker links: RJ Working was set up by four individuals, three of whom are Quakers. The CEO, Deborah Mitchell, current chair, Lesley Chandler, and two other board members, are Friends.

Cornwall Area Meeting has encouraged and supported the development of RJ Working, and minuted support for it be recognised as a QRB last January.

RJ Working works closely with BYM's Peace Education programme.

Deborah Mitchell describes the work as expressing Quaker testimonies, and affirms that Quaker values are embedded in the workplace through presence and discussion. There is no formal relationship with the Society of Friends. RJ Working feels it is important not to be defined as a 'religious organisation' as this would significantly narrow the scope and make it ineligible for most of the grant funding it currently relies on.

RJ Working wishes to be a QRB to gain 'the affirmation and recognition conferred by inclusion in the QRB 'family'.... it would be a huge source of support to be

recognised by Quakers in this way, and would be a communication with the wider world of our deep connection and commitment’.

Governance: RJ Working is a not-for-profit Community Interest Company (company 8093114). It is managed by a board of 9 directors who employ a chief executive officer and other staff. It is in the process of becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). BYM staff have reviewed the Articles of Association.

Type of Group: External

Foundation: 2012

Finance: Income is from grants and provision of professional training (for example of teachers and social workers). The turnover for the year ended 30 June 2020 was just over £80,000.

Winding up: Cornwall Community Foundation, a charity, would receive any assets in the event of winding-up.

Current contact details:

Deborah Mitchell, CEO

deborah@rjworking.co.uk

0753 5656007

Website: www.rjworking.co.uk

Staff link: Ellis Brooks, Peace Education Coordinator

Michael S Booth

Church Government Advisor

November 2021

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

*Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and for ever.
Amen.*

This reading – the New Zealand Anglican Lord's Prayer – quoted from The Friend in our opening worship, resonated throughout our meeting, even as we carried out the most secular of our tasks.

We had several items this time that tidied up governance – our own governing document to take account of Yearly Meeting decisions, revisions to the scheme of delegation to be clear what can be decided by our sub committees and by staff, and an update of our agreement with the Quiet Company.

We looked at the risk register: it now reflects our view from September that risk is lower than last year because of mitigations that have been implemented and because we can see how to work within the constraints of the pandemic. We decided that we need more trustee oversight of cyber security and health and safety and agreed ways to address this.

We were joined by the Clerks of Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee and of Quaker Life Central Committee for one of our three sessions where we considered matters that are important for them.

The Operational Plan and budget are developed by staff and agreed by trustees annually. They fit into longer term discernment by various bodies:

- 'Our Faith in the Future' that is a vision for Quakers in Britain developed by Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) and agreed in 2015.
- Priorities for the work of BYM developed by trustees over a couple of years – incorporating discernment by MfS at various stages – and finalised in 2019.

The three strands of work and three criteria for all our work are described in the diagram below.

- Strategies developed by QPSW and by Quaker Life (adopted in 2020 and 2019 respectively).



The Operational Plan for 2022 sets out plans for each strand of work within the funding envelope agreed by trustees to move towards a balanced budget for 2023. The plan – and recent work around COP in particular – show how our work is increasingly integrated, and new staffing structures are more flexible so that we can respond where led.

For 2022 we'll still be running a large deficit, despite taking a higher return from our investments as agreed at our last meeting. We are reliant on the Quiet Company to enable us to reach a Balanced Budget in 2023 (and it is very hard to anticipate the extent to which the pandemic and problems around supply chains and staffing will affect this) – so generous financial contributions from Friends over the next few years will be essential to allow us to do the work we're planning.

Fortunately, we do have strong reserves which we feel is sensible given the current level of uncertainty. We hope that we will be able to draw down on these in coming years to make BYM more resilient for the future and – if all goes well – to invest in key areas of work. We have asked Finance and Property Committee to consider this further.

MfS representatives wanting to know more about the Operational Plan or budget might like to ask detailed questions at the preparation meeting on 30 November.

Yearly Meeting has discerned the climate crisis as a concern for our time and the QPSW strategy and new structure of staffing in QPSW and the communications team help us work on this.

While the central committee Clerks were with us, we heard about convening, engagement and speaking out work carried out before and at COP26. It was inspiring to hear how staff worked alongside Friends from across the Yearly Meeting (and we will all hear more about this at MfS).

We had a monitoring report on the Climate Crisis project led by Woodbrooke and funded by BYM. The project seeks to help Friends understand and be more confident in articulating the spiritual underpinning of the Quaker Commitment to caring for the earth and creation; to provide advice, guidance and support which enables Friends to make practical changes to individual lifestyles and take community-level action, particularly around the use and management of property; and to build a stronger community to support and strengthen individual and corporate response.

We heard too from the central committee Clerks about their work in previous and coming months and the challenges that they face.

In our final session, we concentrated on our third priority – simple structures and practices in our local and national organisation.

As those who were on MfS in the last triennium know, one strand of this is exploring whether a memorandum of understanding would be helpful between the trustee bodies of AMs and of BYM so that we are clear about respective responsibilities towards each other. Two trustees have been holding meetings with AM trustees and these continue alongside securing legal advice. This is likely to come to MfS sometime next year.

We also heard how work is going on simplifying central governance structures. The MfS Clerk was involved in a group last year that did some initial threshing on this. Two trustees held sessions at the Yearly Meeting Gathering and continue with a series of online sessions this autumn. (Details of those still to be held are included below and it would be helpful to have MfS members at these.) Multiple reviews of various parts of the central organisation and ways of working are underway. We look forward next time to hearing the outcome of a meeting convened by the Recording Clerk to pull together those tasked with organising these reviews so that we can see the wider picture. It's likely that a formal paper will come to trustees and to MfS in the first half of 2022.

Our Clerk and the BYM Treasurer will speak to some of these items at MfS and we are happy to discuss any areas at the preparation meeting on 30 November.

Caroline Nursey
Clerk of BYM Trustees

Attached: Minutes of the meeting on 12 November of BYM Trustees

Dates of remaining workshops on exploring ways to simplify our central governance structures:

- 23 November, 12pm
- 26 November, 8am
- 30 November, 8am
- 1 December, 6pm
- 8 December, 8am
- 12 December, 4pm
- 13 December, 8am
- 15 December, 6pm

Registration [here](#).

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Friday 12 November 2021 by video conference

Minutes

Present: Georgina Bailey, Linda Batten (Treasurer), Alison Breadon, Nick Eyre, Kate Gulliver, Ellie Harding, Carolyn Hayman, Caroline Nursey (Clerk), Silas Price, Graham Torr (Assistant Clerk), Frances Voelcker, Danielle Walker Palmour (from minute 16), Chris Willmore.

Prevented: Kit Fotheringham, Jenny Brierley.

In attendance: Paul Henderson-Grey, Head of Operations; Paul Parker, Recording Clerk; Juliet Prager, Deputy Recording Clerk; Maureen Sebanakitta, Head of Finance and Resources (to minute 17).

Visitors: Robert Almond and Jeff Beatty, Co-clerks Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee, and Alan Pearmain, Clerk Quaker Life Central Committee, (minutes 12 to 15).

BYMT/21/11/01 Decision to hold an on-line meeting, welcome and introductions, agenda check, conflicts of interest check

We record our decision to hold this as an on-line meeting. 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 heard the New Zealand Anglican Lord's Prayer quoted in The Friend, 5 November 2021.

BYMT/21/11/02 Minutes received

We receive the following minutes:

- Property Development Steering Group 28 June
- Audit Committee 14 September. We note minute 04 concerning a review of BYM's response to the pandemic. We invite Audit Committee to take this forward.
- Quaker World Relations Committee 18 September. We note the queries raised by the committee about its proposed new terms of reference (minute

04) and that the trustees involved have met the QWRC clerk and secretary to clarify. A revised draft is in preparation.

- Quiet Company 23 September
- Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations 22–24 October. We note minutes 04 and 14 concerning the review of the committee's terms of reference. We are grateful to the committee for its diligent engagement with the review and we ask the appointed trustees to continue their work. We want the revised terms of reference to give the committee flexibility and empower it to bring more gifts from Friends to undertake its much-valued work. We understand that, at its next meeting, the committee will consider further its need for core members and we look forward to receiving the results of its discernment regarding numbers.

BYMT/21/11/03 Gold minutes annual check

We have reviewed our minutes from September 2020 to September 2021 and agree to identify the following as Gold minutes:

- BYMT-2020-09-08b Loan agreement between BYM and Quiet Company
- BYMT-2020-09-08c Overdraft
- BYMT-2020-11-06 George Knipe Charity and Swarthmoor (South West Cumbria) Area Meeting
- BYMT-2020-11-12 Responding to racism
- BYMT-2021-02-10(b) Marsh legacy
- BYMT-2021-02-11 Approach to support for governance
- BYMT-2021-02-15 Communications strategy
- BYMT-2021-04-05 Memorandum of understanding with QUNO (Geneva)
- BYMT-2021-06-12(b) Safeguarding policies
- BYMT-2021-06-13 Collections development policy
- BYMT-2021-09-06 (part) Nomination of BYMT Clerk

BYMT/21/11/04 Annual return

The annual return for 2020 has been submitted to the Charity Commission within the deadline.

BYMT/21/11/05 Meeting dates 2023

We agree to meet on the following dates:

- Saturday 11 February (9.30am to 4.30pm), online
- Wednesday 5 April (receipt of accounts) (7.30pm to 8.30pm), online
- Friday 9 to Sunday 11 June (6pm Friday to 12pm Sunday), residential
- Friday 1 to Saturday 2 September (12.30pm Friday to 1pm Saturday), online
- Friday 10 November (9.30am to 4.30pm), online

BYMT/21/11/06 Recording Clerk's report

We receive an update from the Recording Clerk (paper BYMT 2021 11 04) reporting on updates and news under the headings of BYM's strategic priorities:

- Thriving Quaker communities: library and archives; local development rollout where the final phase has now been scheduled; regional youth development workers; Friends Trusts Limited
- Sustainable and peaceful world: Quaker Peace and Social Witness strategy and resultant restructuring; COP26 climate summit
- Simpler structures and practices: the meeting later this month convened by the Recording Clerk to consider the interactions between various reviews underway and when and what will come to Yearly Meeting, where we will be represented by three trustees.
- Distinctly Quaker: communications; equality, diversity and inclusion
- Integrated: external relations
- Well-governed: impact; information governance; contacts database; reshaping the governance team; events and committee meetings; safeguarding
- Operations: Quiet Company; Bake the Difference; Swarthmoor Hall; facilities and managed services.

Involvement in COP26 has been dominant during the period since we last met and we will discuss this further later this morning. We have asked about communications, anti-racism and our contact relationship management database.

BYMT/21/11/07 Risk register review

We receive an updated register of the strategic-level risks (BYMT 2021 11 05). We note these have been revised in light of our discussion in September on risks resulting from the Covid pandemic and that increased attention is being given to cyber security.

We agree that strategic oversight of IT should be placed under Finance & Property Committee and ask for revised terms of reference for the committee to be brought to our next meeting.

We ask Nominations Group to bring a name for a health and safety champion. We ask clerks and staff to consider how communications should be addressed in our agendas and papers.

BYMT/21/11/08 Finance and resources

We receive minutes of the Employment Committee held on 27 September (BYMT 2021 11 06e) and of the Finance and Property Committee held on 18 October. (BYMT 2021 11 06a).

We note Finance and Property Committee's minute FP21/34 approving revisions to the investment policy and we receive a copy of the updated policy (paper BYMT 2021 11 06d).

We agree to adopt the investment policy. This document is made available to all Friends on the Trustees' page of BYM's website; we ask for it to be updated.

The Head of Finance and Resources has given a quarterly finance report for the period to 30 September 2021 which includes an income and expenditure statement and balance sheet (paper BYMT 2021 11 06b). We note both income and expenditure are currently approximately 20% lower than this time last year. We have been advised on the current risks and mitigations in place.

The Health, Safety and Environmental Committee has provided us with its annual report (BYMT 2021 11 06c). We are reassured that appropriate measures are being taken to ensure the health and safety of our staff, and appropriate action is being taken following accidents. We are grateful for the additional work that is being done in response to the Covid pandemic. We note the committee is incorporating environmental performance into its remit and we are pleased to see its list of future actions to help improve sustainability in the future.

BYMT/21/11/09 Scheme of delegation review

We adopted a scheme of delegation in 2019 which documents the powers we choose to retain and the powers we delegate to our sub-committees, to the Recording Clerk and to Management Meeting. This is reviewed every two years and we receive a paper outlining some suggested changes (BYMT 2021 11 07).

We agree to the new version, as amended in the meeting.

BYMT/21/11/10 Revised governing document

Yearly Meeting adopted new terms of reference for BYM Trustees in August 2021 and consequently three changes are needed to our charity's Governing Document. These changes are:

- A small reduction in the number of trustees (from 15 to 14) as a consequence of new arrangements for the appointment of the Assistant Clerk of Trustees following the laying down of Committee on Clerks.
- Allowing Trustees to meet by video conference if they wish to.
- Allowing Trustees to delegate some day-to-day decision-making to staff.

We agree to the new draft, plus revision of the preamble to bring usage into line with the Definitions section.

Yearly Meeting gave authority to the Yearly Meeting Clerk to sign a new version. Afterwards, we ask staff to make necessary arrangements with the Charity Commission.

BYMT/21/11/11 Revised draft Hospitality and Facilities Agreement

At our meeting in September, we asked our Nominations Group to seek an additional director for the Quiet Company and for the Recording Clerk to bring us a revised hospitality and facilities agreement to accommodate this (minute BYMT-2021-09-14). We receive a revised draft which also includes other minor updates (paper BYMT 2021 11 09).

We accept this revised agreement and send a copy to The Quiet Company for ratification at their Board meeting. We ask our clerk to sign the agreement.

BYMT/21/11/12 Operational plan 2022–24

We welcome Robert Almond and Jeff Beatty, Co-clerks Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee, and Alan Pearmain, Clerk Quaker Life Central Committee, who join us for the following four agenda items.

We agree the operational plan set out in paper BYMT 2021 11 10. We are hopeful that this programme of work – set out against our three strategic priorities – will help us be a simpler charity that can more effectively support our church.

We note that there are numerous strands of work under simpler structures and practices and realise that we will need to consolidate some of those and, perhaps, to prioritise among them.

We are pleased to see the iterative improvements in our approach to planning – particularly the greater emphasis on monitoring and evaluation so that the impact of our work can be better known and inform future planning cycles. We note how operational managers will be using the plan to manage and co-ordinate work, and report to Management Meeting and us on progress. The plan is very helpful to us in overseeing BYM's work and we look forward to using the plan as link trustees when we talk to staff teams.

BYMT/21/11/13 Budget 2022 and forecasts for 2023 and 2024

We agree the budget for 2022 set out in paper BYMT 2021 11 11. We are pleased that this meets our aspiration to achieve a balanced budget by 2023 although we recognise that, in this time of uncertainty, various factors might delay this happening.

- Quiet Company – profits should improve, but this isn't guaranteed because of the pandemic, and labour and supply chain uncertainties.
- Investments – recently, markets have been doing very well, but we cannot be sure that this will be sustained in the medium-term. Trustees have decided to draw down 6% of the capital value of investments. This relies on capital gains, plus income; if there are no gains, or if the capital value depreciates, our projected income will reduce.
- Legacies – which are always unpredictable.

- Contributions from Friends – which may not be sustainable at the current level.

Our reserves are above the level agreed in our policy and this feels prudent in this time of great uncertainty. However, it means that it is likely that we will be able to invest in Drayton House to generate income longer term as well as in other infrastructure that will make us more resilient.

We ask Finance & Property Committee and Management Meeting to consider whether and how we might align our level of reserves with our reserves policy over the next few years, and how our business model should work. We are optimistic that it may be possible to invest more in our priorities in future years.

BYMT/21/11/14 Climate Crisis

The Recording Clerk has given us an oral update on BYM's work at COP26 which is due to close today. Civil society and faith groups have been very active in attempting to get targets agreed and to hold governments to account in meeting them, and BYM staff and Friends have been an important part of this.

COP sets our work for us in this area in holding our government to account and turning the disappointment about outcomes into the righteous fury that can make change. It's increasingly clear that the climate crisis affects the poorest people of the world worst and that our work on race and inclusion intersects with that on climate.

We are pleased to hear that we have been able to work so closely with QUNO and other Quaker bodies. We are grateful to our staff for the exceptional work that they have delivered at and around COP and for the integrated communication across our national community of Quakers.

We receive an update on the legacy-funded project 'Climate Crisis: Spiritual Nurture and Learning' from Woodbrooke. This report covers the first half of 2021 and we are grateful for this work.

Times have moved on and we ask Woodbrooke to consider how to move beyond support for the existing activists in the Yearly Meeting and to work out how to engage with those Friends who are not already active in this area.

BYMT/21/11/15 Update on strategic priorities: engagement with Central Committees

We have discussed with Central Committee clerks how our central committees are delivering our strategic priorities.

Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) Central Committee has held a series of sessions with Friends from across the yearly meeting designed to find ways to bring in more engagement from Friends locally, and more thought is needed to find the best ways of doing this. The committee will be looking at the matters referred to them

by Yearly Meeting – including the climate emergency – at their November meeting. The new strategy sets out to make QPSW more agile and this will be critical following COP26.

We uphold QPSW Central Committee as it continues to consider governance in the light of the priority of simplification. We ask the Central Committee to remember that what matters is to achieve impact through our work.

Holding Quaker Life Representative Council, revealed that there are serious splits in some meetings about when and how it is safe to start meeting in person. Quaker Life Central Committee is considering this alongside how to maintain the engagement of unattached Friends that Zoom has helped, and whether some form of non-geographic membership would work.

We are very supportive of the Committee's work on anti-racism and note the thinking underway about incorporating the work of Quaker Stewardship Committee into their programme.

BYMT/21/11/16 Update on anti-racism work

We have heard an update from Georgina Bailey who is our trustee anti-racism champion.

We are encouraged by the conversations that Georgina has had with central committees and the work that is being done within those committees and by staff.

Given that this is now a yearly meeting priority, more staff time will need to be devoted to anti-racism and anti-oppression more widely.

We ask our Nominations Committee to find a trustee to serve alongside Georgina as an anti-oppression champion to drive forward equality, diversity and inclusion in relation to race and other areas.

BYMT/21/11/17 Simplification: central governance structures

Ellie Harding and Carolyn Hayman have updated us on the series of open workshops with Friends across Britain that they are running. The focus of these workshops is to consider how to encourage participation in our central governance that is more inclusive and sustainable.

We look forward to hearing from the meeting being convened by the Recording Clerk, that seeks to explore how various review and simplification processes fit together.

We encourage the group to continue their work. We agree to meet informally to thresh ideas in January and note that a formal paper may be ready to come to us – and later to MfS – in the first half of 2022.

BYMT/21/11/18 Memorandum of understanding between BYM Trustees and AM Trustees

Chris Wilmore and Kate Gulliver have shared progress with us.

Conversations with AM trustees are helping to refine ideas and to highlight the key questions and sensitivities. Alongside this, legal advice is being secured.

BYMT/21/11/19 Nominations and appointments

a) We receive a report from our Nominations Group (paper BYMT 2021 11 17) and agree to the following appointments:

Audit Committee

- Ian Cook, Manchester & Warrington AM (2022)
- Kit Fotheringham (2022 and 2023)
- Janet Slade, Manchester & Warrington AM (2022–2024)

BYMT Elder

- Kit Fotheringham (2022 and 2023)

Clerk of Finance and Property Committee

Danielle Walker Palmour (2022 and 2023 subject to reappointment as a trustee from 1 January 2023)

Senior Staff Disciplinary and Grievance Group

- Elaine Green, Ipswich & Diss Area Meeting (2022–2024)

Anti-Oppression Champion

- Georgina Bailey (2022) (second term)

Reference points for developing an MoU with area meetings

- Graham Torr (2022)

BYMT Assistant Clerk

- Graham Torr (2022)

We agree to these appointments.

We agree to explore induction as part of our board effectiveness work.

b) Our clerks bring us the names of Kate Gulliver and Silas Price to replace Chris Willmore and Georgina Bailey on the Nominations Group from 1 January 2022 for 2 years (subject to Kate Gulliver's reappointment as a trustee from 1 January 2023). Georgina Bailey will continue until the end of February 2022 so that there can be a period of handover.

We agree to this.

BYMT/21/11/20 Link Trustees

We receive paper BYMT 2021 11 18 with a proposal to re-start the link trustee system in January 2022.

We agree to the proposal as amended in our consideration, and ask our Assistant Clerk to make the necessary arrangements including consulting with the Nominations Group and trustees on the assignment of trustees to areas of BYM's work.

BYMT/21/11/21 Trustees' news

We receive a report of the recent activities of Trustees (BYMT 2021 11 19).

BYMT/21/11/22 Meeting for Sufferings preparation

We have prepared for Meeting for Sufferings to be held on 4 December and for the pre-meeting for MfS members to be held on 30 November at 7pm.

BYMT/21/11/23 Communicating trustees' work

We have considered how to communicate our work to others.

BYMT/21/11/24 Reviewing the meeting

We have reviewed the meeting.

BYMT/21/11/25 Time with Recording Clerk

We have spent time with the Recording Clerk.

BYMT/21/11/26 Time without staff

We have spent time without staff.

Caroline Nursey

Clerk