

Follow up letter



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

11 March 2022

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

Meeting for Sufferings 4 -6 March 2022

Dear Friends

It was good to be with you all again, both online and in person, at the first Sufferings of 2022. We made important decisions that will help us on the way to reviewing our structures in a coherent manner, and concluded our meeting with the rich experience of firmly grounded worship.

The Arrangements Group will convene next Tuesday (15 March) to review the meeting, and as always your feedback is welcome. In addition to – or perhaps instead of – the option to contact sufferings@quaker.org.uk you can complete a short [questionnaire](#) which we hope will inform our future planning. The way we meet and the way you all feel about it is ever-evolving and the Arrangements Group looks forward to hearing your views.

On Friday evening we heard a lively report from Caroline Nursey about the wide range of work undertaken in our name. The report is attached, along with the organisational diagram that appeared in your December papers. Oliver Robertson told us more about the work of QPSW later in the meeting, bringing 'Faith in Action' to life. The list of staff and their areas of responsibility that Friends requested is also attached.

Our focus on Saturday morning was on how we organise ourselves as a worshipping community. Having heard of the progress made by the group set up to review Yearly Meeting and Yearly Meeting Gathering, we agreed to add to their remit a review of Meeting for Sufferings itself.

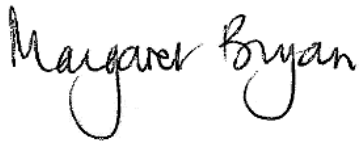
We also accepted a modest change in the reporting arrangements for QCCIR and QWRC, and considered the latest report from the trustees engaged in looking at simplification of our structures.

Breakout rooms after lunch provided an opportunity to thresh these ideas further, and we look forward to collating the thoughts and comments that arose from these discussions.

The worship on Sunday morning was a moving conclusion to our weekend together. Oliver Robertson's prepared ministry follows the minute, and can be widely shared.

Finally, communication of 'what goes on at Sufferings' is part of a representative's role. We were reminded that in April 2021 we received minutes about the term 'overseer', the use of which is at odds with commitment made at YM 2021 to becoming an actively anti-racist faith community. We asked meetings to consider what they were doing about this and to let us know. The matter will return to our meeting in December, and we look forward to hearing from as many AMs as feel able to respond.

In Friendship

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Bryan". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name and last name clearly legible.

Margaret Bryan
Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings

The following papers are included in this mailing:

- Functions checklist
- MfS minutes March 2022
- Caroline Nursey's (Clerk of BYM Trustees) spoken report
- Priorities of the BYM work diagram
- Quaker Peace & Social Witness staff list - who to contact about what
- *Go to the Limits of Your Longing* by Rainer Maria Rilke, the poem read at Friday night's Epilogue.

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

	Requirement	March 22
A	To set the priorities for the centrally managed work	
B	To issue public statements in the name of BYM	
C	To receive regular interim reports from BYM trustees	7
D	To receive the BYM trustees' annual report & accounts for information	
E	To make a report on its own activities to YM	11
F	To determine the dates of YM	14
G	To deliberate on how best to support the spiritual life of the yearly meeting and to further the development of its visionary and prophetic role	23
H	To keep under review and to test as appropriate the existing and new concerns referred to it by AMs and others	22
I	To foster communication throughout the yearly meeting	16, 19
J	To receive minutes from area meetings	19
K	To make appropriate entries in the prison and court register	4
I	To appoint representatives to attend other Yearly Meetings	
M	To receive information about changes in the composition or status of general meetings and gatherings	
N	To make changes in the composition of area meetings	
O	To give assistance to area meetings in the amicable settlement of disputes	
P	To hear appeals against area meeting decisions	6
Q	To give guidance on policy matters referred to it by the BYM trustees from time to time	11, 12
R	To authorise action and minute as required under other sections of <i>Quaker faith & practice</i>	
S	To set up an arrangements group and support and working groups to assist its own work as it sees fit	



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

At a meeting of

Meeting for Sufferings

Held at Friends House and by video conference on 4–6 March 2022

Minutes

MfS/22/03/01 Opening Worship

During opening worship *Quaker faith & practice* 29.02 was read.

MfS/22/03/02 Membership of Meeting for Sufferings

Since our last meeting we have received the following nominations and requests for release for Meeting for Sufferings until the rise of Yearly Meeting 2024:

Please note Faith Goodfellow, the Meeting for Sufferings alternate for Northumbria Area Meeting (AM) now wishes to be known as Faith Lydiard.

Release requests received:

Ann Bettys – Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee alternate
Valda Dagnell – West Somerset AM alternate
Barbara Davey – East Scotland AM alternate
Sheila Houldin – Wirral and Chester AM representative
Caroline Kibblewhite – Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee representative
Lesley Richards – Worcestershire & Shropshire AM alternate

Nominated:

Jenny Brand – North East Thames AM alternate
Barbara Davey – East Scotland AM representative
Abi Dominy – West Somerset AM alternate
Jane Kelly – South East Scotland AM representative
Christine Habgood-Coote – Sussex West AM representative
Paul Mountain – Worcestershire & Shropshire AM alternate
Robert Thompson – East Scotland AM alternate
Glenn Tomkinson – Cumberland AM alternate

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

Sila Collins-Walden – Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee
Voirrey Faragher – Cornwall AM

Other visitors:

Sarah Donaldson – Group to Review Yearly Meeting & Yearly Meeting Gatherings
Convenor

Neil Jarvis – BYM staff, Recording Clerk's Office

Cato Pedder – BYM staff, Media Officer

Finn Pollard – Church Government Advisory Group Convenor

MfS/22/03/03 Agenda

The Clerk has introduced the draft agenda, and we note the request to consider our response to the war in Ukraine. We agreed to make time for this in our agenda on Sunday morning.

MfS/22/03/04 Prison and Court Register

Maria Huff, a member of Banbury and Evesham Area Meeting, appeared at City of London Magistrates' Court in January 2022. Maria was found guilty after a trial for failing to comply with an instruction by a police officer at an Extinction Rebellion (XR) protest in central London in August 2021. She was ordered to pay £797 and given a nine-month conditional discharge. This is Maria's second charge for XR, the first being in 2020 from an action in 2019.

Arne Springorum appeared in court after participating in an Insulate Britain action asking the government to commit to a programme of insulating all Britain's energy-inefficient homes by 2030. Arne worships with the Quaker Worship Group in Prague and is in international membership of Friends World Committee for Consultation. He is known as an attender at Wandsworth Local Meeting (Kingston and Wandsworth Area Meeting).

Arne and eighteen other defendants were ordered to appear at the High Court. Sixteen were convicted of contempt of court for defying injunctions banning their protest blockades of the M25 during a campaign of civil disobedience last autumn, five were given custodial sentences and eleven received suspended sentences. Arne, along with two others, was freed after the judge ruled there was insufficient evidence to prosecute them. Arne returned to the High Court the following day to hang a banner reading "insulate or die" from a balcony overlooking the great hall. Led by his faith, Arne made a statement that he acts out of love.

We agree to include this information in the Prison and Court Register and we hold Maria and Arne in the Light.

MfS/22/03/05 Quaker recognised bodies

We receive an application from the Quaker Truth and Integrity Group (QTIG) to register as a Quaker Recognised Body (QRB) (MfS 2022 03 06). We agree to this request and ask for the registration to be reviewed after a period of five years.

MfS/22/03/06 Appeal to Meeting for Sufferings

Meeting for Sufferings has received notification of an appeal regarding termination of membership, which has been made following guidance set out in 4.25 of *Quaker faith & practice*. It is our duty to appoint a group to consider the appeal. We ask Central Nominations to bring forward the names of five Friends to form the appeal group.

MfS/22/03/07 Report from BYM trustees

We have received a short report from Caroline Nursey, the Clerk of BYM Trustees, along with minutes from the Trustees' meeting held on 12 February 2022 (MfS 2022 03 08).

Today we have been reminded of the principles underpinning our centrally managed work:

- Thriving Quaker Communities
- A sustainable and peaceful world
- Simple structures and practices
- with everything distinctively Quaker, integrated and well governed

and heard from Caroline about the wide range of work carried out in our name.

We are grateful for this overview and deeply appreciative of the breadth and quality of the work being undertaken.

MfS/22/03/08 Meeting for Sufferings annual report to Yearly Meeting

We receive a draft annual report of our work in 2021 prepared by our Assistant Clerk to be sent to Yearly Meeting. We agree to the report, with some additions suggested in the Meeting.

MfS/22/03/09 Church structures fit for the next generation

We receive a paper from the Recording Clerk, MfS 2022 03 11, which introduces several matters concerning the creation of simpler, more inclusive and sustainable governance structures for our discernment this weekend.

MfS/22/03/10 Review of Yearly Meeting and Yearly Meeting Gatherings

In 2019 Yearly Meeting asked Meeting for Sufferings to review Yearly Meeting and Yearly Meeting Gatherings. After agreeing terms of reference for a review group, Meeting for Sufferings appointed Friends who began their work in early 2021. We receive an interim report of the Yearly Meeting Review Group (YMRG) (MfS 2022 03 12). This concerns Stage 1 of their task and is a review of how well Yearly Meeting and Yearly Meeting Gathering are meeting their purposes and whether the purposes need to be changed or updated.

Sarah Donaldson, convenor of the review group, introduced the report, and Friends were invited to comment and ask questions.

In focussing on section 5 of the report, Friends recognise a strong desire to make time for discernment in worship. This can be a very powerful experience in all meetings for business as well as at Yearly Meeting and Yearly Meeting Gathering.

We agree with the review group's assessment that a review of MfS is needed alongside that of YM and YMG, in order to resolve issues of accountability and transparency. We thank the committee for their report and look forward to hearing about the next phase of their work.

MfS/22/03/11 Reviewing Meeting for Sufferings

Last year, Yearly Meeting asked Meeting for Sufferings to consider whether its role needs to be reviewed. We receive a paper from the Recording Clerk with proposals for how this might be achieved (MfS 2022 03 13).

We note the advantages, set out in the paper, of combining this review with the work of the Yearly Meeting Review Group. We agree therefore to extend the group's remit and approve the proposed additions to the group's terms of reference in the appendix to the paper (Appendix p45). We heard a plea for the review group to seek views from Friends not well represented at present, and to have amongst its membership Friends of diverse views and experience. We ask Central Nominations Committee to bring forward nominations for one or two new members of the review group to enable them to take on this additional work.

MfS/22/03/12 Reporting arrangements for QCCIR and QWRC

Trustees have been engaged in a review of the terms of reference for QCCIR and QWRC, and new terms of references are being drafted.

Both committees currently report to Yearly Meeting through BYM Trustees. These two committees represent our church to others – QCCIR to other churches and faith communities and QWRC to other yearly meetings and Quakers in the world. Trustees and the committees themselves have proposed that QCCIR and QWRC should report to the Yearly Meeting through Meeting for Sufferings, as the senior representative body of the national church, instead of primarily through BYM Trustees.

Following our consideration today we agree that Meeting for Sufferings is the most appropriate body to take responsibility for hearing from our committees engaged with the church's external relationships. We look forward to receiving annual reports and communicating this work to Yearly Meeting in our own annual report. We ask the group reviewing the purpose of Meeting for Sufferings to include this work in their considerations, with a view to asking Yearly Meeting to amend the constitution in due course.

MfS/22/03/13 Simplifying BYM structures

Meeting for Sufferings and BYM Trustees have been jointly discerning on the need to simplify our central structures. Today, we receive an update from BYM Trustees on recent work and a proposal for taking it forward (MfS 2022 03 15).

We welcomed this report on the progress of the project to simplify central governance structures, and in particular the results of the workshops to which over 200 Friends contributed their insights. We welcome the fact that the four functions of conscience, stewardship, planning and diplomacy are rooted in Quaker spirituality. Above all we must remember that in listening to a range of viewpoints we seek only one – the will of God. We will do this better if our meetings are truly diverse.

We know from our previous discernment that Friends are willing to think radically about change and we look forward to receiving and commenting on possible models for simplifying our central structures in due course.

MfS/22/03/14 Yearly Meeting 2022

We have heard a report from Siobhan Haire, the Yearly Meeting Clerk nominate, on plans for Yearly Meeting 2022.

We are excited by the prospect of our first blended Yearly Meeting, the documents for which are already available online.

Over the past few years we have considered diversity, privilege, equity and accountability. How long does it take to bring minutes to life?

We are grateful to Yearly Meeting Agenda and Arrangements Committees for the considerable work to prepare and hold Yearly Meeting.

MfS/22/03/15 Yearly Meeting 2023

We receive minute YMAC 2021 12 16 from Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee recommending the date for Yearly Meeting 2023. We agree to the proposed dates of 29 April to 1 May 2023.

MfS/22/03/16 Breakout groups: church structures fit for the next generation

We have spent time in small groups together discussing how to approach creating church structures fit for the next generation.

MfS/22/03/17 Quaker Peace and Social Witness

At our meeting in February 2021, we received Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee's (QPSWCC) new strategy covering 2020 to 2025. We had an update on its implementation in July 2021, and today Oliver Robertson brought us a report on how the staff team is responding to deliver the work (MfS 2022 08 18). We welcomed the clear outline of work and recognised that it is important for the different areas to be connected both internally and with meetings. Friends would like to receive a list of staff members and their areas of responsibility.

MfS/22/03/18 Appointments

Central Nominations Committee brings forward to following names for service or release as indicated:

Book of Discipline Revision Committee

Re-nominate to serve from May (Yearly Meeting) 2022 to Yearly Meeting 2025:

- Anya Nanning Ramamurthy – Lancashire Central & North AM
- Judith Thompson – Devon AM

Release from service with immediate effect:

- Christine Trevett – South Wales AM

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Release from service with immediate effect:

- Jenny Brierley – York AM

Release from service at 9 April 2022:

- Nick Eyre – Lincolnshire AM

Church Government Advisory Group

Nominate to serve with immediate effect until 31 December 2024:

- Martin Burnell – South East Scotland AM

Pendle Hill Friend in Residence

Nominate to serve as the Friend in Residence for 2022:

- Nim Njuguna – London West AM

Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations (QCCIR)

Renominate to serve from 1 May 2022 to 30 April 2025:

- Claire Bowman – Central England AM
- Penelope Cummins – Thaxted AM
- Judith Mason – Banbury & Evesham AM
- Janet Scott – Cambridgeshire AM
- Evelyn Shire – Craven & Keighley AM

Release from service with immediate effect:

- Debbie Cates – Cambridgeshire AM

Quaker Housing Trust

Nominate to serve from Annual Retirement Meeting (ARM) 2022 until ARM 2025:

- Beverley Goddard – West Wiltshire & East Somerset AM
- Rici Marshall Cross – South East Scotland AM

Renominate to serve from ARM 2022 to ARM 2025:

- Mark Bitel – South East Scotland AM

We appoint and release the Friends named accordingly, and thank them for their service.

For information the following appointments were made as between meeting decisions:

Church Government Advisory Group

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

- Peter Parr – Sussex East AM

Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee

Appointed to serve from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2024

- Ann Floyd – Chilterns AM
- Mark Borthwick – South East Scotland AM
- Sila Collins-Walden – North Scotland AM

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee

Appointed to serve with immediate effect until YM 2022:

- Gill Reid – West Scotland AM

MfS/22/03/19 Responding to racism

We receive a minute from Mid-Wales Area Meeting recording its reflections on how Friends in the area are responding to racism. Yearly Meeting in 2021 made a commitment for us to become an actively anti-racist faith community. This minute has been shared to encourage all Area Meetings to continue this work.

MfS/22/03/20 Changes to chapter 16 of *Quaker faith & practice*

Church Government Advisory Group asks us to consider suggested changes to chapter 16 of *Quaker faith & practice* (MfS 2022 03 24). These changes are required to reflect procedural changes to the registration of marriage in England and Wales.

While a new Book of Discipline is being prepared, Yearly Meeting delegated responsibility for minor factual amendments to *Quaker faith & practice* to Meeting for Sufferings (YM 2019 minute 21 and our minute MfS/2019/07/05 refer).

We agree to these changes.

MfS/22/03/21 Letter of greeting to other Yearly Meetings in European and Middle East Section (EMES)

We receive from Quaker World Relations Committee a draft for our letter of greeting to Friends in Ireland and other European Yearly Meetings. We agreed an additional sentence in the meeting.

We ask the clerk to sign these letters on our behalf.

MfS/22/03/22 Use of the term 'overseer'

We have been reminded that we are currently experimenting with alternative terms to 'overseer' to describe Friends in our meetings with responsibility for pastoral care, in response to our growing understanding of the hurt felt from the historical connotations of hierarchy and oppression. In April 2021 we agreed to consider the results of this experimentation at the end of 2022. We ask Area Meetings to send minutes to Meeting for Sufferings before the end of the year.

MfS2022/03/23 Ukraine

We meet at a time when major armed conflict has arisen again in Europe. We gathered in worship to hear prepared ministry from Oliver Robertson, Head of Witness and Worship, on this complex web of issues. It was salutary to be reminded that things are always more complicated than they seem at first, and we explored what action we might take in a situation where any action may have unintended consequences. His introduction is published with these minutes.

There are many things that can and will be done, and we hope Friends will share with QPSW and each other what they are doing. There will be times to pray, times to protest and times to engage with others, including Friends in other YMs. However strong our feelings we cannot solve this alone. By focussing on the needs of those close to the conflict on all sides we are making steps towards the kind of world we want to see. We are not necessarily called to be amazing. We are called to be faithful, to find the truth and to proclaim it.

We will forward this minute to QPSWCC for their forthcoming meeting.

Prepared ministry

Friends, let us hold in the Light the people of Ukraine. Let us hold in the Light the people of Russia. Let us hold in the Light the people of Afghanistan. Let us hold in the Light the people of Ethiopia. Let us hold in the Light the people of Myanmar. Let us hold in the Light those affected by conflicts we have forgotten or have never even heard of, because the consequences of war will scar lives

just as they are doing in Kyiv. Let us hold in the Light the people working for peace. Let us hold in the Light the people who are not.

Prayer can be a great comfort, and a powerful spur to action. But what will comfort us and what will comfort others may be very different. We need to hear the voices of people affected by today's wars, so that their lived experience can help us better understand how God is leading us in that situation. But whose voices are we hearing? Pay attention to the news you notice and the events that move you, as it can be a window into your priorities and your prejudices.

So how do we connect with people living close to armed conflict? During worship last weekend, one meeting put up on their walls the names of Russian and Ukrainian peacemakers. Many Friends have joined the online meetings for worship of Quakers in Kyiv, and of Friends House Moscow, which has been quietly building peace since the end of the Cold War. Whose voices should we be raising up? Which stories should we be challenging?

Often times taking a pacifist stance, of faithfully maintaining 'our testimony that war and the preparation for war are inconsistent with the spirit of Christ', is itself a challenge to a dominant narrative. Its value is often to remind people that there is another way, that even when war may seem the only answer there is still a choice and an alternative.

That alternative is not passivity. Friends and others have long experience of nonviolent resistance. People may nonviolently demonstrate, as thousands of Russians have been this past week, and being arrested for it – including children. People may refuse to support occupiers, both passively – such as not going to work – and actively – such as damaging the weapons they are forced to make. Many of the most powerful acts of nonviolent resistance manage to both challenge the oppressive action and assert the humanity of everyone involved. When Syrian protestors gave flowers and water to soldiers, it showed both that they were not a threat (so making it harder to shoot them) and meant that the soldiers could see them as people like themselves. Such actions are not about victory over an enemy, but about turning an enemy into a friend.

One of the ways Quakers have often acted on our conviction that we are all God's children, that everyone has value and worth, is to support the people shunned by others. This can be about practical support, and it can also be about reminding the rest of the world that these are people too.

When I think of the people who may be shunned, I think of conscientious objectors. It will take some considerable courage to be a conscientious objector to military service today in Russia and in Ukraine, though for different reasons. Quakers have long upheld the right to refuse to kill; how can we support those who are holding firm to that stance even in the most trying circumstances? Would we support COs who come to Britain? If we didn't, are we confident others would?

When I think of people being shunned, I think of those people fleeing Ukraine who are not white. People of colour in Ukraine, students from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, have been reported to have been hampered or attacked as they tried to flee, denied support and accommodation in Ukraine and neighbouring countries because they are not Ukrainian. How can we support them, and in so doing uphold the notion that all refugees should be treated equally?

And when I think of people being shunned, I think of Russians around the world. It's probably very lonely being a Russian in a lot of countries right now. Are we helping to ensure that any outrage over the Russian government's actions does not turn into hatred of all Russians, those with no links to the government, no influence over its actions?

Many of us may be feeling, that's all well and good, sharing stories and holding in the Light and so on, but what can we actually DO? How can we stop the bloodshed or at least mitigate its impacts?

We may be able to give money, to give time, to offer hospitality, to undertake relief work, to use our resources and our riches as individuals and as communities. But the reality is that the role we can play from here in Britain, at this time of war, may be more limited than we would like. Friends may be familiar with the hourglass model of peace work, where there is space before war and after war to carry out many actions for peace, but at the time of conflict itself, where the hourglass pinches in the middle, there is very little opportunity.

There can sometimes be a temptation to think of what great thing we can do, on a par with the times past when Quakers organised the Kindertransport or advised the Russian Tsar. But those things could only happen because of groundwork being done, relationships being built, for years beforehand. Have we built the foundations we need for such work today? Has someone else, so that our role is to support? We aren't necessarily called to be amazing. We are called to be faithful.

One of the things we can get from our faith and our long-established testimony against war is a clear vision of the world we want to see, the divine commonwealth that God is calling us to live in. Some of the greatest strides towards that world have come after very dark times. What are the changes that are needed? What work do we need to do now to clear the way for such changes to happen? What are the existing institutions and practices that need to be celebrated and maintained, even if they are imperfect? What would need to happen for Russia's neighbours not to see it as a threat? What would need to happen for a military alliance in Europe to feel unnecessary?

As Paul Parker was quoted last month, "war today is the failure of yesterday that leads to unimaginable human suffering on all sides. Imagine what could happen if we were willing to invest as much in peace as we currently do in preparing for war."

Just imagine Friends. Then let us get to work.

MfS/22/03/24 Closing worship

We have closed our meeting in worship together.

MfS/22/03/25 Deputy Recording Clerk

Juliet Prager is leaving the role of Deputy Recording Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting after 9 years, and this is her last meeting with us. We wish to record our thanks for the support she has consistently given to Meeting for Sufferings, to Friends in their meetings and to all those with whom she has worked. We wish her well.

Margaret Bryan
Clerk

Caroline Nursey (BYM Trustees clerk) Introduction MfS March 2022

Usually I tell you about our *previous* trustee meeting and seek input from you on matters we'll consider at the *next* meeting. This time is a bit different because the substantive items from our meeting appear as separate items on this weekend's agenda.

So, I won't talk about our meeting now – though I'm happy to take questions on anything in the minutes or my cover note.

Instead, I thought I'd say something about the actual work that BYM is doing – which I expect you'll find more interesting than trustee deliberations! And as we're early in the triennium, I hope it will provide helpful background.

All BYM's work is now organised under one of the three priorities agreed in 2018:

Thriving Quaker Communities

A sustainable and peaceful world

Simple structures and practices

...With everything distinctively Quaker, integrated and well governed.

(You may remember the diagram which we should probably have recirculated for this meeting. You can find it at the end of this document).

A large part of BYM's work to support Thriving Quaker Communities is now being carried out by Local Development Workers (LDW's). If you live in a part of the country that had a Vibrancy Worker as part of the pilot scheme, then you'll know all about this, but if you're in the last two waves and have only just got an LDW or expect one later in the year – then it'll be much less familiar.

LDWs are supporting LMs and AMs in a whole range of ways. Recently, one helped an LM carry out a spiritual review, and another supported an AM trustee body as it considered what to do when Friends could not be found to serve as trustees. In several parts of the country, LDWs are supporting networks of AM and LM clerks and, where there are problems within a particular meeting, LDWs are finding the RESTORE framework useful as a way to have difficult conversations. (The RESTORE framework was discussed at the last Quaker Life Rep Council so you can get hold of it from your Quaker Life representative or your LDW or from anyone in Quaker Life).

Many meetings have been struggling to work out how to hold meetings safely in various stages of the pandemic, so Quaker Life is providing support and trying to ensure that the needs of children, young people and families aren't forgotten.

Online sessions for young people themselves, and others for people working with children and young people have been popular. As usual, programmes are being planned for Junior Yearly Meeting and for Yearly Meeting. A youth development

worker has been recruited to work in Yorkshire (funded jointly by the AMs in Yorkshire) and we're hoping to be able to recruit two more youth workers in the coming months.

Staff have supported meetings in considering diversity and inclusion too.

UK-wide, staff in Quaker Life are supporting a new group for AM clerks of trustees and their next meeting will be on induction and training; and a new Outreach Network has been set up and has just started holding meetings. Revised safeguarding model documents are now available for AMs in England, and staff are working with Friends in Scotland and Wales to adapt them for each nation.

And a couple of things to look out for in the next few months: resources for meetings that employ staff are being updated and online treasurer training will be available in the early summer.

The *second* BYM priority is working with, and on behalf of, Quakers towards a peaceful and sustainable world. This fits largely within the QPSW team though our comms staff are key as are LDWs.

QPSW's new Faith in Action team has been created to make our advocacy more effective, and to support Friends and meetings in their witness. Look out for opportunities to feed into a needs analysis that will help shape this area of work.

Of course a massive part of the team's work will be around the climate crisis. Last year, the main focus was COP – and you heard about that at the December MfS so I won't go into it now - except to say that an evaluation is underway to be clear what we achieved. Many people in this room who were involved with COP know anecdotally that we did have impact - particularly in getting 'loss and damage' issues up the agenda – and the evaluation will help us do even better in future.

Sometimes BYM makes public statements or signs on to statements made by others on topics where we have agreed positions. (By the way these come to me for sign off as well as to QPSW or other clerks if it's in their area). Developing each requires careful work by staff. (You may have seen 2 about Ukraine before the invasion and another one today).

As part of our Peace Education work, a new report and videos have been produced making the case for peace education in schools, work with teacher trainers continues, and the 'Our Shared World' project works with wider civil society to promote the peace education part of the sustainable development goals.

In East Africa, we continue to support partners to deliver a range of community-based peace projects and campaigns, and a handbook has just been published 'Practical peacebuilding: learning from East Africa', which is available on BYM's website.

I know there are several people here who have served as Ecumenical Accompaniers. The first group since the start of the pandemic flew out this January and have been welcomed by Palestinian communities who have been experiencing increased violence and demolitions, and continued settlement expansion.

Throughout the pandemic, EAPPI staff have remained in regular contact with communities, expressing solidarity, documenting reports of violations where possible, and disseminating this information to NGOs in the UN Protection Cluster. Staff devised and implemented two online campaigns to raise awareness about the occupation, and BYM has continued with advocacy such as challenging the government's upcoming bill that would ban public bodies from having ethical divestment policies - including divestment from companies that profit from the occupation of Palestine.

And, of course work continues too through the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva and other partner organisations that BYM supports with grants. QPSW staff work very closely with QUNO.

Our *third* priority is simplification - within BYM itself and giving support to AM and LMs on local simplification too. I won't spend time on this as it comes up elsewhere on the agenda except to say that a lot is going on locally in many parts of the country, and if we can get this right it will free up so much time for our other two priorities.

There's a lot of work that is less visible too, but vital. For example, the collections at Swarthmoor Hall have been surveyed to work out how to protect them when building work starts there. And work has started to review our vast archives and to prepare the Reading Room at Friends House for reopening in a new way later in the year (with pre booking of appointments and for materials).

We've got a new finance system, and a new intranet to help staff communicate better with each other. We're getting a new Contact Management System. All these make the *visible* work possible.

The Quiet Company has won an award for customer service during Covid – recognition for keeping in touch so well with clients. And I know you'll be pleased that the café and bookshop have reopened. It's great to see that the Quiet Company's Bake the Difference project supporting ex-offenders to find employment in the hospitality industry has restarted – and they will be cooking our meal tomorrow evening!

Finally, we need funds to support all this work, so the fundraising team has been exploring with Friends the idea of Giving Champions in local meetings and expanding our online 'in-memory' resources to include a remembrance space.

If you want to know more about any of this, Paul Parker and other members of Management Meeting are here and can say more. And do ask if you have questions about anything in our trustee minutes or the cover note.

Caroline Nursey
4 March 2022

Criteria for all work

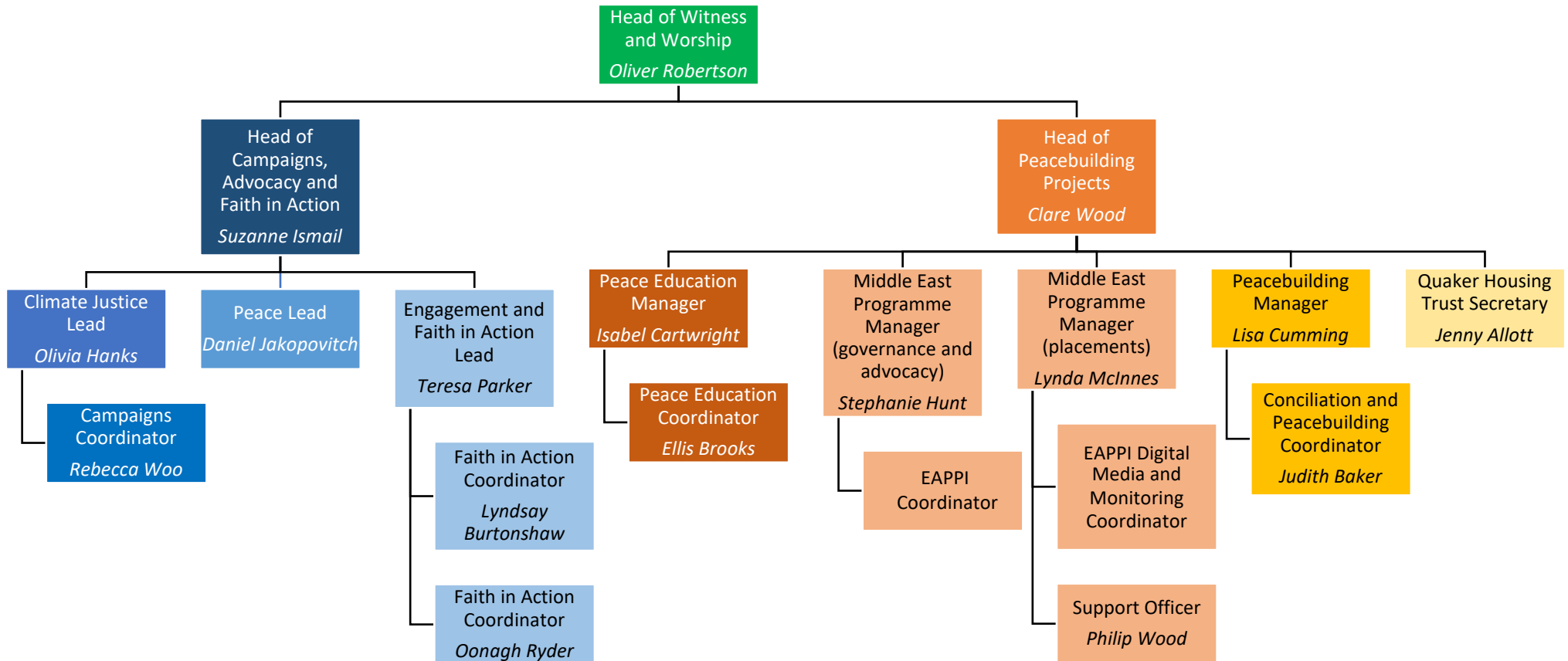
being sustained or developed

Strands of work

priorities for investment and development



QPSW staff and structure in 2022



Contact us on qpsw@quaker.org.uk or call 020 7663 1071

Go to the Limits of Your Longing

Written by Rainer Maria Rilke

Listen

God speaks to each of us as he makes us,
then walks with us silently out of the night.

These are the words we dimly hear:

You, sent out beyond your recall,
go to the limits of your longing.
Embody me.

Flare up like a flame
and make big shadows I can move in.

Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror.
Just keep going. No feeling is final.
Don't let yourself lose me.

Nearby is the country they call life.
You will know it by its seriousness.

Give me your hand.