

# Calling letter



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

17 June 2022

## To members of Meeting for Sufferings

Dear Friends

I am looking forward to welcoming you all, whether online or in person, to our second blended meeting of the year, on Saturday 2 July.

I encourage you to attend in whichever way suits you, but please note that, once everyone has registered, arrangements for the day's catering will be made. Although last minute changes to plans can sometimes be unavoidable, please bear in mind that this leads to an amount of food waste that we would prefer to avoid.

Over the course of the last few meetings we have heard a lot about simplification. Arrangements Group thought it would be good to know what is already happening in the Yearly Meeting to make the aim of a 'simple church and simple charity' a reality. Our preparation session on 28 June, led by Helen Drewery (South London AM) and Lesley Richards (Wales and the Marches AM), will enable us to understand what steps have been taken in their areas and provide learning for us all.

As you are aware, at our last meeting we agreed to add the review of Meeting for Sufferings to the remit of the group set up to look at Yearly Meeting and Yearly Meeting Gathering. There is a consultation underway – you may have read about this in *Quake!* – and I urge you all to contribute. Please follow the link to the consultation [here](#). NB the deadline for responses is 15 July, so there is no time to lose!

Two items in the morning session fall under the heading of faith in action.

### **Truth Integrity and Democracy**

During 2021 we considered the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill and saw how Quakers were active in campaigning for amendments to it. Now that the Bill has passed into law, more legislation is threatening our fragile democracy. This item will be an opportunity to consider the matter fully. A recent article in the Friend by Grace Da Costa may provide useful background.

<https://thefriend.org/article/creeping-authoritarianism-grace-da-costa-makes-the-case-for-resistance>

## Speaking Out

There will also be a chance to hear from the Friends House Communications team about recent developments, and about our actions in respect of the war in Ukraine.

As we prepare for these items let us be mindful of Advices 33 and 34, in particular – “Remember your responsibilities as a citizen for the conduct of local, national and international affairs. Do not shrink from the time and effort your involvement my demand”.

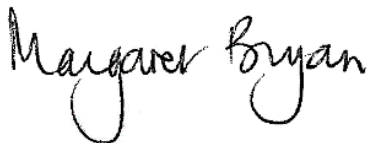
Many of you were at Yearly Meeting in May, and in the afternoon we will reflect on the experience and the actions we will want to take forward. Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee will also give us an idea of the plans for Yearly Meeting in 2023.

## Other business:

- Some of the usual administrative matters, including nominations and the registering of Quaker Recognised Bodies
- A report from BYM Trustees and receipt of the [Annual Report and Accounts](#).

As ever I look forward to a period of worship to close the meeting.

In peace,



Margaret Bryan  
Clerk

## Papers enclosed with this mailing

Agenda

MfS Arrangements Group minutes from meetings in March and May 2022

MfS 2022 07 03 Membership (to follow)

MfS 2022 07 05 Truth, integrity and democracy

MfS 2022 07 07 Coming together of area meetings

MfS 2022 07 08 Appointments (to follow)

MfS 2022 07 09 Reflections on Yearly Meeting 2022

MfS 2022 07 10 BYM Trustees report and minutes

MfS 2022 07 11 Quaker Recognised Bodies

MfS 2022 07 12 War in Ukraine

## A reminder of how you can prepare for the meeting

- Register for the Meeting and for the optional online session on 28 June to hear from Lesley Richards, Clerk of Symud Ymlaen (Moving Forwards) and Helen Drewery, Clerk of Pan London Governance Steering Group, on the proposals for different configurations for area meetings.
- 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](mailto:sufferings@quaker.org.uk)), before the meeting to be received by morning of **30 June**.



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

## Agenda

### Meeting for Sufferings – 2 July 2022

In-person at Friends House and by video conference,  
open for arrivals from 9.30am for 10am start

	Item	Paper
<b>10am</b>	<b>Session 1</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b>Opening worship</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Welcome and introductions</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Membership</b> (To follow)	<b>MfS 2022 07 03</b> To note
<b>4</b>	<b>Agenda</b> Adoption and acceptance of the agenda	
<b>5</b>	<b>Truth, integrity and democracy</b> <b>Quakers and democracy in Britain</b>	<b>MfS 2022 07 05</b> For discussion
	<b>Shuffle break</b>	
<b>6</b>	<b>Speaking out – policy in action</b> <b>A presentation from staff on the speaking out policy</b>	<b>Presentation</b> For information
<b>7</b>	<b>Emerging alternative forms for area meetings</b> A report of work underway in considering new ways for area meetings to come together, and possible work ahead for Meeting for Sufferings	<b>MfS 2022 07 07</b> For discussion
<b>12.30pm</b>	<b>End of Session 1</b>	

12:30pm Lunch break

<b>1.45pm</b>	<b>Session 2</b>	
<b>8</b>	<b>Appointments (To follow)</b>	<b>MfS 2022 07 08</b> For decision
<b>9</b>	<b>Reflections on Yearly Meeting 2022</b> Reflections and business for Meeting for Sufferings	<b>MfS 2022 07 09</b> For discussion
<b>10</b>	<b>Report from BYM Trustees</b>	<b>MfS 2022 07 10</b> For information
	<b>Shuffle break</b>	
<b>11</b>	<b>Quaker Recognised Bodies</b>	<b>MfS 2022 07 11</b> For decision
<b>12</b>	<b>War in Ukraine</b> To receive Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee Separated Minute QPSWCC 22/15	<b>MfS 2022 07 12</b> For information
	<b>Closing worship and reflection</b>	
<b>4pm</b>	<b>End of Meeting</b>	



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

At a meeting of

## **Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group**

Held online from 19:00 – 20:15 on 15 March 2022

### **Minutes**

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

**Prevented:** Anthony Woolhouse

**In attendance:** Neil Jarvis, Juliet Prager

#### **1. Matters arising**

We have not identified any matters arising from the minutes of our last meeting that have not been included in our agenda.

#### **2. Minutes from Meeting for Sufferings held 4-6 March 2022**

We have reviewed the minutes of the meeting held 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

We have identified 6, 9, 12, 22 as continuing minutes and 10 (revised terms of reference for Review Group), 11 (reporting lines for QWRC and QCCIR and incorporation of their reports in our report to Yearly Meeting) and 23 (Ukraine) as “Gold minutes”.

#### **3. Report from Support Group**

We have received the report from the Support Group and noted the points made.

#### **4. Correspondence and feedback**

We have reviewed other correspondence and feedback received subsequent to the meeting and have noted the points raised.

#### **5. Amended Meeting for Sufferings report to Yearly Meeting**

We have reviewed the draft Meeting for Sufferings report in the light of comments made in session at the last meeting and made amendments accordingly.

## **6. Date of next meeting**

There being no further business for us to take, we part, looking to meet again online at 19:00 on 31<sup>st</sup> May to plan the session of Meeting for Sufferings scheduled for 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

We note that we expect subsequent meetings to be held as follows:

- 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



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

At a meeting of

## **Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group**

Held online from 19:00–20:30 on 31 May 2022

### **Minutes**

**Present:** Margaret Bryan, Robert Card, Ivan Hutnik, Jane Mace, Jean Scott-Barr  
Jane Wilde

**Prevented:** Anthony Woolhouse

**In attendance:** Neil Jarvis, Paul Parker

#### **1. Meetings attended by the Clerks and others**

The Clerk attended the Clerks' away day on 9<sup>th</sup> April, working through the three strategic priorities agreed by trustees.

#### **2. Forward agenda**

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

We have noted a commitment to keep the YM2021 themes on our agenda.

#### **3. Planning for MfS in July**

We agree to hold this as a blended meeting at Friends House and online.

We agree to hold a preparation meeting on the topic of restructuring as modelled by work amongst London Area Meetings and by Friends in Wales and the Marches.

We have roughly drafted an agenda for the Meeting.

#### **4. Any other matters**

We have reviewed comments from the Support Group. We ask the clerk to liaise with the Group regarding the issues raised.

## **5. Date of next meeting**

There being no further business for us to take, we part, looking to meet again online at 19:00 on 12th July to review the session of Meeting for Sufferings scheduled for 2nd July.

We note that we expect subsequent meetings to be held as follows:

- 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

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](mailto:sufferings@quaker.org.uk).

*Minutes received since last Meeting for Sufferings*

Body sending minute	Minute	Initial steps and decisions	Subsequent steps (if any)	Status
Swarthmoor (SW Cumbria) AM	Minute 2/3/22 [Hosting refugees]	<b>31/3/22 Minute received</b>  <b>31/5/22 Tabled at MfSAG</b> This minute also sent to Quiet Company and BYMT. Since the AM sent the minute the matter has been resolved.		Complete
QPSWCC	QPSWCC 22/15 Ukraine	<b>14/3/22 Minute received</b>  <b>31/5/22 Tabled at MfSAG</b> MfSAG agreed to share this minute for information.		At Meeting for Sufferings in July 2022
Meeting of Friends in Wales	Responding to racism (no minute number – from meeting 26/2/22)	<b>Minute received</b>  <b>31/5/22 Tabled at MfSAG</b> This minute provided information about ongoing work in Wales.		For information
Mid Somerset AM	02.05.22 Area Meeting Trustees	<b>15/5/22 Minute received</b>  <b>31/5/22 Tabled at MfSAG</b> MfSAG noted there is ongoing correspondence with AM		On hold pending further correspondence

Updates to previously received minutes

<b>Body sending minute</b>	<b>Minute</b>	<b>Initial steps and decisions</b>	<b>Subsequent steps (if any)</b>	<b>Status</b>
Central Nominations Committee	2019/11/28 Membership question: attenders serving on central committees	<b>01/12/20 Minute received</b> <b>11/1/21 Tabled at MfSAG</b> MfSAG agreed to include this in the February 2021 meeting.	<b>6/2/21</b> MfS determined to set up a review group. Terms of reference will return to future meeting <b>4/21</b> Terms of reference agreed <b>12/21</b> Review group appointed	Ongoing
Lancashire Central and North AM	21.9.1 Employment practices in BYM	<b>8/11/21 Minute received</b> <b>1/2/22 Tabled at MfSAG</b> MfSAG asked Deputy Recording Clerk to engage with Area Meeting and relevant bodies (eg Employment Committee, Trustees, Management Meeting, QLCC) with aim to return to MfSAG for including in agenda at MfS later in 2022.	<b>31/5/22</b> MfSAG has noted a report is in preparation and will hopefully be included at MfS in October	Preparing for including at MfS later in 2022
West Weald AM	21/23 Minute to MfS [Trustees and Membership]	<b>15/11/21 Minute received</b> <b>1/2/22 Tabled at MfSAG</b> MfSAG asked staff to correspond with Area Meeting on background and rational for current practice	<b>31/5/22</b> This matter relates to the minute received from Mid-Somerset. Correspondence is ongoing.	Pending further correspondence with AM

## Quakers and democracy in Britain

*The world has entered a new and deeply troubling phase in its history. Standards of truthfulness and integrity in public and commercial life are being undermined to the extent that democracy itself is under threat.*

Part of '**Living Truth – A Rallying Call for Quakers – Final statement** arising from Quaker Truth and Integrity Group conference held on 25-30 April 2022'

Quakers have engaged with political power since our earliest days. Much of our witness work, putting faith into action and living out our beliefs, involves influencing and changing laws, public policy, behaviour and public/political attitudes. Quakers have long been committed to democratic principles.

Democracy extends far beyond voting at elections. Democracy provides an environment that respects human rights and fundamental freedoms, and in which the freely expressed will of people is exercised. People have a say in decisions and can hold decision-makers to account. People have equal rights and everyone can live free from discrimination.<sup>1</sup>

Democracy is closely related to the rule of law, a principle of governance in which all people, institutions and entities, including the state itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly known, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international human rights norms and standards. The rule of law is fundamental to international peace and security, political stability, economic and social progress, and protecting people's rights and freedoms.<sup>2</sup>

### Background and recent context

In recent years we have seen restrictions on democratic rights in the UK. Since the introduction of the Lobbying Act 2014, Quakers in Britain convened a network of civil society groups concerned about, and affected by, the restrictions this Act placed organisations' campaigning ahead of general elections. The network adopted the name 'Civil Society Voice'. The Civil Society Voice network has developed into a vital space for organisations to discuss and take joint action on a range of threats to civic space. These threats include the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act and criticism of charities who are exploring racism, colonialism and white privilege.

Recent years have seen an acceleration of policy, legislation, rhetoric and behaviour that threaten both the structures and the culture of democracy. Examples include (with whether they impact democratic structures or culture in brackets):

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/democracy>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/what-is-the-rule-of-law/>

- The newly-passed Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act, which restricts the right to freedom of assembly, criminalises the traditional way-of-life of Gypsies and Travellers, and increases punishment of offenders (structures);
- Forthcoming legislation to replace the Human Rights Act with a UK Bill of Rights, designed to “curb” our “rights culture” and link rights to “good” behaviour (structures);
- The proposed Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions Bill, which will enable the government to prevent local authorities from investing in line with the democratic wishes of their electorate if their approach is different from the policy of the UK Government (structures);
- Rhetoric by some politicians and parts of the media that attacks migrants, ethnic minority groups and anti-discrimination campaigners (culture);
- The Elections Act 2021, which will likely restrict voting by introducing voter ID and give the government more influence over the Electoral Commission (structures);
- A lack of interest by government in listening to responses to official consultations from those who disagree with their plans, and no meaningful changes to their plans (culture);
- Increased lying, law-breaking and corruption in politics, which in turn is likely to cause voter disillusionment and a rise in extreme ideologies (culture).

This has led BYM staff to question whether the UK is moving away from democracy and towards authoritarianism, where the government has all the power, and where individuals, civil society and other institutions are powerless to bring about change. In 2021, the UK was added to the CIVICUS human rights watchlist of countries, which includes Afghanistan, Belarus and Nicaragua, due to a rapid decline in fundamental civic freedoms.<sup>3</sup>

Many Quaker-Recognised Bodies (QRBs) with remits that relate to areas of public policy try to effect policy change. These include the Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network (QARN), Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture (Q-CAT) and Quakers in Criminal Justice (QICJ). The new Quaker Truth and Integrity Group (QTIG) aims to protect and promote truth and integrity in public life, a key aspect of our democracy: they have committed to ‘Formulating a public Declaration advocating the renewal of our democratic institutions, the ethical norms that govern them, and working to gain support from others for that declaration’.

### **Relevance to Quaker testimony**

Democracy is about equality. A thriving democracy is a lived example of the Quaker testimony to equality. By enabling everyone to have an equal right to participate in public life, we demonstrate that wisdom and insight can come from anywhere. By

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<sup>3</sup> <https://monitor.civicus.org/UnitedKingdom/>

ensuring that we are all equal before the law, we demonstrate the equal value of all people.

Democracy is about peace. By giving people a way to express themselves and to have their views heard, we create a society that permits difference and enables people to live alongside each other peacefully. By having a political system where the rules are clear and respected, including by losers of elections, there is greater support for the decisions that are made.

Democracy is about truth. People wanting to wield political power have an obligation to give an honest account to those on whose behalf they want to rule, and to allow open debate on the issues of the day. In the 1990s and early 2000s, BYM ran a programme on truth and integrity in public life.

The weakening of democracy makes it harder for us to campaign for positive change in any area. It will create a poorer 'operating environment' for our work on peace and climate justice. Authoritarian leaders tend to focus on populist policies such as war, fossil fuel extraction, and attacks on minority groups. They do not engage with civil society organisations campaigning for an alternative vision to theirs. Often the most visible aspects of democracy (elections, parliaments debating laws) will continue, while other ways for non-politicians to become involved are further limited. This does not accord with the Quaker goal of helping each person to flourish and develop all their gifts for the use of God and the community.

### **Issues for consideration**

Democracy matters, and now is a crucial time to protect and promote it in our country. However, there are many organisations already campaigning on this. We need to consider if we can make a positive difference in this area, and what we would be trying to achieve. We need to ask if we can add something to existing campaigns, or conduct our own unique campaign that is likely to bring about positive change.

Existing BYM work on democracy has been carried out by public affairs staff, based in the Communications & Fundraising Department. As mentioned above, much of this has been through the Civil Society Voice group, which we convene. However, our work in this area is based on minutes now nearly a decade old. It would be helpful to have a newer, and clearer, mandate for any Quaker action on democracy.

Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee will be considering this issue at its meeting, taking place the week before Meeting for Sufferings.

### **Key questions to consider**

- Is there something distinctively Quaker we have to say on the issue of democracy? How is this concern rooted in Quaker testimony?
- Is there a particular role that Quakers could play in protecting and promoting democracy in Britain?

## **Appendix: Relevant Quaker minutes and statements**

### **‘Living Truth – A Rallying Call for Quakers’: final statement arising from Quaker Truth and Integrity Group conference held on 25-30 April 2022**

The shared acceptance of the means by which the truth is discerned in the public realm has collapsed.

The world has entered a new and deeply troubling phase in its history. Standards of truthfulness and integrity in public and commercial life are being undermined to the extent that democracy itself is under threat. This radical departure from our traditional Quaker Testimony has been a source of deep concern for many Friends, leading to the establishment of the Quaker Truth and Integrity Group in late 2021.

As an initial step, QTIG arranged an online conference which took place over the week of 25 April 2022. Over 100 Friends took part in four sessions of deep discernment.<sup>4</sup>

As a Quaker Recognised Body<sup>5</sup>, we start from the recognition that every so often, a cultural tide sweeps across the affairs of a nation. This happened in this country with the advent of the welfare state and the National Health Service. A spirit of solidarity, born out of the privations of the war and the great depression of the 1930s reflected a sense of optimism and purpose. This happened again but in a different direction towards the end of the 20th century in favour of the individual, entrepreneurship, and a process of privatisation that has been a driver for increasing inequality in terms of economic resources and power.

We see signs of authoritarianism emerging, where truth is deliberately distorted, where politicians claim ‘alternative facts’, where those in power expect to act with impunity, where respect for the judiciary is undermined; indeed, the very basis of democracy is being destroyed.

We see the Internet, social media that remove some editorial control, and the widespread use of algorithms in the development and implementation of public policy as part of and as symptoms of this development; but we do not see these technologies as intrinsically good or bad. They exist and it is how they are used that determines whether they contribute to a vibrant democratic society or militate against it.

One speaker reminded us that early Quakers held that ‘people should have the right to disagree. Citizens should have the means of seeking truth together through a

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<sup>4</sup> A report of the event and links to the video recordings of the session will appear on our website at <http://quakertruth.org> shortly.

<sup>5</sup> Recognised at Meeting for Sufferings in March 2022.

framework of law (as a means of preserving public peace); minorities<sup>6</sup> should be protected from overmighty majorities who might hound out dissent<sup>7</sup>. In his view, Quakers were major contributors to the development of what we call liberal democracy and representative government. And we hold fast to this conviction now expressed in *Advices and Queries* (34): Remember your responsibilities as a citizen for the conduct of local, national, and international affairs. Do not shrink from the time and effort your involvement may demand<sup>8</sup>.

All this is set against the backdrop of the climate emergency and Covid and a deeply destructive resistance to the acceptance of scientific findings. This matters, because such resistance, just like that to verifiable facts, is corroding the vital trust we need for a functioning democratic society.

The conference heard clear calls for a fundamental overhaul of our democratic institutions; a constitutional convention or commission (convened by a broad coalition of civil society organisations and faith groups); and a declaration of what are acceptable norms in public life: politics, business, and media. There is a need to re-establish trust in the division of power between the executive, the legislative and the judiciary where disagreement is worked through without vilifying the people involved.

The conference heard a call for establishing norms in public behaviour which allow for 'losers' consent'; where the contest between ideas and ideologies is played on a fair and level pitch, where those who do not win the argument can accept the result without feeling that the winning side won by lying and manipulating the public.

The Quaker Truth and Integrity Group understands that many others are working and have worked over a long time to address these issues. As a group, we are ready to contribute to this work and we commit ourselves - with this statement - to take this work forward. We invite you to join us. The immediate priorities for our work to be:

- Formulating a public Declaration advocating the renewal of our democratic institutions, the ethical norms that govern them, and working to gain support from others for that declaration
- Working with other groups who are addressing the same and similar issues; the ways in which this can be done are evolving, but we see the possibility for organising a series of webinars with politicians and others in public life who support the ethical norms embedded in the public Declaration.
- Revealing and publicising the extent to which politicians of different parties work together in Parliament for the common good.

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<sup>6</sup> Here, the term minorities is used in the sense applicable in the 17th century in what is now the USA and refers specifically to religious minorities.

<sup>7</sup> This is a quote taken from the recording of that session in which the speaker referred to, quoted and paraphrased early Friends including William Penn.

<sup>8</sup> Quaker faith & practice, section 1.02 (34) accessed on 29 April 2022 at: <https://qfp.quaker.org.uk/chapter/1/>

- Educating ourselves and others in finding ways to question the messages we receive through all the news channels, i.e., the promotion of digital literacy
- Educating ourselves more in terms of the use of social media to reach out to others effectively.
- Notwithstanding the difficulties in doing so effectively and without unintended negative consequences, finding ways of upholding those people in public life who have the courage to ‘do the right thing’, to be truthful and to act with integrity. We are considering developing an award in this context.

We are energised and encouraged by the participation in and response to our initial work in convening this conference. We see this work as of this moment, critical, urgent, important, and laid on us. Please join us in this work if you can. Please uphold us in other ways if you can’t.

### **Extract from Meeting for Sufferings minute [MfS/21/10/08](#) on the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill (PCSCB)**

During our consideration today Friends have expressed their deep unease about the threats to our democracy and civil liberties. To some it is a clear abuse of political power.

We are united in supporting BYM’s work on the PCSCB and affirm our church’s commitment to upholding democracy, defending civil liberties and human rights, including the right to freedom of assembly. We stand alongside groups whose portrayal in the media and public discourse serves to marginalise them, and recognise that it is incumbent upon us to use our privilege to empower and support those who lack such privilege.

Faith groups, charities, civil society organisations and community groups have a right and a duty to speak out on matters about which they have expertise, and where they are impelled by conscience to campaign for change.

### **Some recent BYM statements on public affairs**

- [Quakers ‘alarmed’ by Queen’s Speech](#), May 2022
- [Quakers opposed plans to weaken human rights in the UK](#), March 2022
- [Quakers join more than 1,000 faith representatives ‘horrified’ by refugee bill](#), March 2022
- [Faith and belief leaders urge MPs to approve changes to Policing Bill](#), February 2022
- [Quakers appalled by Human Rights Act “overhaul”](#), December 2021
- [Quakers join Human Rights Day call to action](#), December 2021
- [New Chair of Charity Commission must not be politicised](#), October 2021
- [Human dignity requires a legal framework](#), June 2021
- [Quakers improve new law](#), April 2021



## Area Meetings coming together

One of the responsibilities of Meeting for Sufferings is 'to make changes in the composition of area meetings' [Qf&p 7.02 n]. 'Any proposals for reorganisation shall, after agreement between the area meetings concerned, be presented to Meeting for Sufferings for endorsement.' [part of Qf&p 4.12]. As some fairly major changes are being worked on, Sufferings is invited to consider whether you are content with the general direction of travel.

Across BYM there is concern that we find ourselves putting a disproportionate amount of effort into keeping the Society of Friends running, leaving too little for worship, witness, outreach etc. We need to be good stewards, to run things efficiently and safely, but that is not where the main focus of our attention should be. We are a religious organisation. These concerns are not new, Friends in Wales started thinking about how they might better manage things in 2006, although that attempt faltered.

In London and in Wales and the Marches there are plans afoot to bring a group of existing Area Meetings (AMs) together so that there is only one charity, with one set of trustees being responsible for legal and financial matters across the wider grouping. This idea is at different stages of consideration elsewhere, in Scotland and Yorkshire for example.

For each of these groups of AMs there are different complications. The London Quakers Property Trust owns and is responsible for maintaining Quaker Meeting Houses across the seven AMs in London, so any Pan London Quaker charity would need to take this into account. Friends are being consulted on a plan where the AM charitable bodies and the London Quakers Property Trust become a single charity – and a single AM. In Wales and the Marches, there are five Quaker charities - four AMs and Meeting of Friends in Wales. But Quaker boundaries and national boundaries don't match; historical links between Herefordshire and neighbouring parts of Wales continue today in ties of Friendship and cooperation. Meeting of Friends in Wales needs to be a constituent part of the new planned charity, rather than changing function to become the charity itself, as English Friends in Southern Marches (the AM that lies across the boundary) are not members of Meeting of Friends in Wales.

There are ways round these problems if Friends want to, and are prepared to, work together. It is in Wales and the Marches where this cooperation is probably most advanced. The four AMs' trustee bodies now have a degree of overlapping membership so they each have an understanding of what is happening in the other AMs. The treasurers meet regularly and are working towards using the same accountancy systems. Work is underway so that the charities share a set of the necessary policies. All this is in addition to other cooperative ventures, for example with work for children and young people.

The current situation is that committees in various parts of BYM are investigating the possibilities, that Friends are being consulted, or that Friends have minuted that this is the agreed direction of travel. Probably towards the end of 2022 or the beginning of 2023, some of these proposals may have been approved by the groupings of existing Quaker bodies. The matter will then need to be brought to Meeting for Sufferings as they have to approve such changes (*Qf&p* 7.02 m&n). Alongside this, Friends will be working with the Charity Commission for England & Wales, or OSCR in Scotland, to gain their approval.

With all this concentration on Quaker structures, it is important to keep remembering that the objective of these initiatives is to reduce the time spent on such matters, so that the focus can be more squarely on our living faith.

Lesley Richards, Clerk of Symud Ymlaen (Moving Forwards)

Helen Drewery, Clerk of Pan London Governance Steering Group

**Matters for consideration:**

- Is Meeting for Sufferings content to see significant amalgamations of AMs (and other bodies) take place?
- Are there implications that may need the attention of other YM-level bodies, such as the Book of Discipline Revision Committee, Church Government Advisory Group, Meeting for Sufferings Review Group (regarding how much larger bodies should be represented on Sufferings), or Quaker Life Central Committee (regarding the provision of appropriate support)?

**For more details of processes in London and in Wales and the Marches, see:**

<https://cardiffquakers.com/symud-ymlaen/>

<https://londonquakers.org.uk/pan-london-governance/>

## Yearly Meeting 2022

Meeting for Sufferings is invited to reflect on Yearly Meeting. The theme of Yearly Meeting, held in blended form at Friends House in May, was 'Faith, community and action'.

- Faith: how do we experience worship, community and witness?
- Community: How can we build Quaker communities that respond to challenges and put faith into action?
- Action: How can we transform thinking and action in Quaker communities and wider society?

Minutes from Yearly Meeting (full and substantive versions) are available from BYM's [website](#).

### Minutes relevant to Meeting for Sufferings

Meeting for Sufferings has a specific interest in the following minutes. Meeting for Sufferings should note that minute 33 requires action by Meeting for Sufferings.

The first is an extract from the full minute (which can be read following the link above).

#### **a) Minute 25: The work of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees**

...

Trustees will continue to work closely with Meeting for Sufferings on proposals for simplification, in preparation for discernment at Yearly Meeting in session in 2023. We do not yet know where we will be led.

...

Our Trustees have responsibility as employers for working to counter racism in the workplace; for embedding anti-oppression into all the work of the yearly meeting; and for work with the whole yearly meeting, including support of local and area meetings on anti-racism. Two Trustees have specific responsibility for monitoring this work. Our Trustees are committed to work on acknowledging Quakers' part in the transatlantic slave trade. The responsibility for anti-racist and anti-oppressive work is all of ours, all the time, across the Yearly Meeting.

...

#### **b) Minute 27: Action: learning uncomfortable lessons and taking forward our witness**

We began our discernment by hearing about research into the Quakers of Lancaster meeting in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, who profited from the enslavement of people, who profited from the labour of those people, and who participated in an economy based on exploitation. We have also heard about the variable and slow response to the concern minuted by London Yearly Meeting in 1727 relating to the enslavement and trading of people, and the unwillingness of

Quakers to disown those Friends who continued to profit from enslavement long after this Yearly Meeting had recorded minutes censuring this practice.

Friends, these minutes alone are not enough to change the world! They alone are not even enough to change ourselves. We are a community of Quakers of many backgrounds and racialised experiences. We acknowledge the racialised privilege of many among us, and we value the breadth of experiences and identities among us. Our continued self-examination, discomfort, conviction and commitment is needed.

It is uncomfortable to face the truth, but in our hearts it is a truth we know already. Moving personal testimony in our Yearly Meeting sessions, from Friends who have been subject to racism, confirms this: just as our Quaker forebears were sometimes on the wrong side of history, so we all are complicit in systems of oppression today, including exploitative labour practices in the creation of the technology that enables this blended Yearly Meeting, and in the clothes that we wear. We must acknowledge our complicity in order to begin the work of dismantling those systems.

What then do love and justice require of us?

Love and justice require us to tell the truth, as best we can, about historical and contemporary injustices. We encourage local and area meetings to begin, or continue, work to understand how Quakers and Quaker structures benefited from the transatlantic slave trade.

Love and justice require us to believe those who have the bravery and honesty to share their stories with us.

Love and justice require us to examine our own practices and behaviours, and to work for systemic change.

We have heard that love and justice also require us to consider deeply how the Society of Friends in Britain might make financial and other reparation for our part in the wrongs of the transatlantic slave trade.

### **c) Minute 31: The work of our national representative body: receipt of annual report from Meeting for Sufferings**

We receive the annual report from Meeting for Sufferings on their work in 2021. The report is at appendix E in Agenda & notes and has been introduced by the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings.

We are reminded that we all can access the minutes and papers of Meeting for Sufferings via the Britain Yearly Meeting website.

Meeting for Sufferings is keeping Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee alert to the need for space on the agenda of Yearly Meeting 2023 for discernment on simplification and the various reviews in progress which have been described in the Meeting for Sufferings report.

We heard a call for our relationships with the national ecumenical and interfaith bodies to be made more obvious in our Meeting for Sufferings and Trustees reports to Yearly Meeting: we know this work is alive and there is great value in working together!

We have heard that, on balance, the ability for Meeting for Sufferings to meet as blended or totally online has been positive. Friends have also shared their joy at being able to join as community and in committees in person. We acknowledge that for some discerning and giving service online is not easy, while for others it is enabling their participation. We feel it important to acknowledge and give thanks for all that this way of working involves.

We give thanks for the work of Meeting for Sufferings on our behalf.

#### **d) Minute 33: Faith, Community, Action**

We have considered together the question: What is the next pool of light God is asking you to step into?

It is as we share our journeys; as we share what we think we are being called to do next, that we will find those in our community who are walking alongside us, those who can strengthen us with their support. We too may be called to accompany others. We are moving as a people of God.

We have heard ministry about the importance of true listening which pushes us to action. We have also heard encouragement to move forward with acknowledgment and apology for how our wealth has been linked to the enslavement of people. We do not need to have a perfect understanding of or response to history in order to take action. We have heard that Quakers and others are already taking forward work to understand how reparations might be made for the harms of the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism and economic exploitation, the trauma and impact of which is felt in the lives of Friends and others today. We do not need to begin this work afresh, but can build upon the foundations laid by others and work with partners including other churches and faith groups.

We ask Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees, Meeting for Sufferings and area meetings to examine the resources which they hold on trust, and to consider how they, and we, could move forward with this work.

## Report from BYM Trustees

Trustees met for our first residential gathering since June 2019 (though we had zoom meetings over full weekends in 2020 and 2021); and it was only our second face-to-face meeting since before the pandemic. So the time between sessions was well used as we caught up with each other and got to know those Friends who became trustees during the pandemic. We met at Carlton Hill Meeting House in Leeds so were able to meet some of the staff of the new Quakers in Britain Yorkshire Centre, as well as worshipping with Leeds Friends on the Sunday.

This covering note seeks to steer members of MfS to the most important minutes from our trustee meeting and to give a bit of context. Alongside our Treasurer, Linda Batten, I'll explain some of the minutes more fully when I speak to you at the July meeting.

In **Minute 22/06/08, we reflected on Yearly Meeting** and what we as trustees were being asked to work on. In particular, we have heard that the Yearly Meeting wants to make reparation for the way that the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism and economic exploitation have contributed to the resources held by BYM. We will return to this at future meetings, but we did start considering one suggestion made at Yearly Meeting about use of the Marsh Legacy. MfS members may remember that BYM was left a legacy of £6m and, at the wish of the legator, designated most of it for fostering the gifts of children. We see possibilities of using this in line with the designation and the Yearly Meeting minute so we have asked our Finance and Property Committee to look into this.

The Clerk of Quiet Company joined us as recorded in **Minute 22/06/15. Quiet Company** looks after Friends House, our adjoining investment property, Drayton House, and Swarthmoor Hall. In normal times, it generates a considerable profit which is gifted to BYM and helps fund the work of the society, but the last couple of years have been very hard. The good news is that it's now clear that hiring rooms and providing hospitality at Friends House is a sustainable business model long term, but in the near future uncertainty from hirers and difficulty in recruiting staff make the Quiet Company fragile. Do look at the minute which records the awards that the Quiet Company has won despite all the difficulties.

In **Minutes 22/06/16 and 22/06/18**, you can see some of our thinking about **properties in the future**. At Swarthmoor Hall we are working on ways to increase footfall and tell the Quaker story – both about our history and our present – to more people. Drayton House is the building next to Friends House which generates income to support Quaker work. We are approaching the end of a long lease to University College London and thinking about what needs to happen at that point.

We were pleased to be joined face-to-face by both the clerk and director of Woodbrooke. We heard from them about the financial challenges that Woodbrooke

faces and Woodbrooke trustees' recognition that Woodbrooke learning and the Woodbrooke site need to be thought about separately from each other. Woodbrooke is an independent charity and does not currently get a core grant from BYM - yet it provides many services that are extremely important to Quakers across Britain. We are clear that it's right for BYM to help **Woodbrooke Learning** continue its support to the Yearly Meeting as part of our commitment to thriving Quaker communities and, in **Minute 22/06/17**, we asked for work to be done to determine the best way of doing this.

**Minute 22/06/19** records continued work on the third of BYM's priorities – **simple structures and practices**. MfS helped shape this work back in 2020. At the March Meeting for Sufferings we heard some of the thinking emerging from the 18 online sessions held with Friends across the country, and with your encouragement we have begun testing various ideas about what a new structure might be like. The matter will come back to MfS this autumn and we hope that some proposals will be ready for consideration at Yearly Meeting 2023.

And finally, **Minute 22/06/11 the Recording Clerk's report** highlights some of the work done by staff over the last few months. We were particularly pleased to hear that recruitment has started for the remaining Local Development Workers, and about the response to the war in Ukraine.

The minutes of our meeting held on 8 April to approve the annual report and financial statements are also included. The annual report and financial statements were accepted at Yearly Meeting – a link to the document for your information is included in the calling letter for this meeting.

Caroline Nursey  
Clerk BYM Trustees

## **Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees**

Friday 10 June to Sunday 12 June 2022 at Quakers in Britain Yorkshire Centre, Central Leeds Meeting House

### **Minutes**

**Present:** Georgina Bailey, Linda Batten (Treasurer), Alison Breadon, Kit Fotheringham, Kate Gulliver, Carolyn Hayman, Caroline Nursey (Clerk), Silas Price, Graham Torr (Assistant Clerk), Frances Voelcker, Danielle Walker Palmour.

**Prevented:** Ellie Harding.

**In attendance:** Siobhán Haire, incoming Deputy Recording Clerk; Paul Henderson-Grey, Head of Operations; Paul Parker, Recording Clerk; Oliver Robertson, Head of Witness and Worship, Maureen Sebanakitta, Head of Finance and Resources (minutes BYMT/22/06/01 to BYMT/22/06/18).

**Visitors:** Libby Adams, Head of Library and Archives (minute BYMT/22/06/14 to 16) by video conference; Matt Baker, Clerk of Quiet Company Board (minutes BYMT/22/06/14 to 16) by video conference; Sandra Berry, Director of Woodbrooke (minute BYMT/22/06/17); Ingrid Greenhow, Clerk Swarthmoor Hall Development Steering Group and Trustee of Woodbrooke (minutes BYMT/22/06/14 to 17); Suze Lidbury, Head of Governance (minute BYMT/22/06/08) by video conference; David Loxton, Head of Communications and Fundraising (minute BYMT/22/06/10) by video conference; and Mark Mitchell, Safeguarding Officer (minute BYMT/22/06/08) by video conference.

### **BYMT/22/06/01 Welcome and introductions, agenda check, conflicts of interest check**

There are no unrecorded conflicts of interest.

We confirm our agenda.

During our opening worship, we heard paragraph 25.15 from *Quaker faith and practice*.

### **BYMT/22/06/02 Minutes received**

We receive the following minutes:

- Quaker World Relations Committee 5 February 2022 and 2 April 2022 including separated minute 2022-04-11. We note the committee welcomed its revised Terms of Reference proposed by trustees and are happy for them to be approved. We are pleased to see how the committee has woven its commitment to racial justice into its agenda.
- Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee 11-12 March 2022 including separated minutes 22/15 and 22/16. We note the work being done in relation to the war in Ukraine, and we are grateful to QPSWCC and to our staff for their prompt action and sensitive responses including



the formation of a cluster group of interested Friends. We welcome QPSWCC's decision to move to a new model of governance for the work in its care and share their wish for "greater flexibility in response to new leadings, and for engagement between central work and the wider community of Friends". We note the work planned to transition to the new model.

- Quiet Company Board 18 March 2022 and 12 May 2022
- Management Meeting separated minute MtM-2022-04-02a

### **BYMT/22/06/03 Data protection**

We have been reminded of our obligations to protect the use of personal information during our work as trustees.

### **BYMT/22/06/04 Audit Committee annual report**

We receive a report from our Audit Committee on its work in 2021. We note that trustees are invited to comment, at any time, on the audit plan.

### **BYMT/22/06/05 Finance and Property Committee**

We receive Finance & Property Committee minutes from its meeting 10 May 2022 (paper BYMT 2022 06 4a) and draft revised terms of reference for the committee (paper BYMT 2022 06 4b).

The terms of reference have been revised to take account of our decision in November 2021 (BYMT/21/11/07) that the Committee takes on strategic oversight of IT, along with two other matters included in the review of our scheme of delegation (BYMT/21/11/09):

- our wish to retain the power to agree terms of acceptance of legacies or gifts, except those given for general purposes of the charity, of value in excess of £50,000
- our agreement to delegate the setting of rents and overhead rates to the Committee.

The Committee itself proposed the addition of a section on conflicts of interest.

We agree to adopt these new terms of reference, incorporating a further small amendment to reflect our wish that the YM Treasurer should no longer be a director of Quiet Company to avoid a conflict of interest. We note the need to consult Quiet Company and amend its governing document.

We forward this minute to the Board of Quiet Company.

### **BYMT/22/06/06 Finance report**

We receive a quarterly finance report summarising the position at 31 March. We note that both income and expenditure are below budget. For income, this is largely due to legacies; donations, grants and investment income are, in fact, ahead of budget. For expenditure, staff costs are currently lower than anticipated although these costs are forecast to catch up later in the year.

### **BYMT/22/06/07 Meeting the auditors**

The full trustee body last met the auditors in 2020. We agree not to meet BYM's auditors this year noting that both our Finance & Property and Audit committees meet routinely with them each year.

### **BYMT/22/06/08 Safeguarding annual report**

We have been joined by Suze Lidbury (Head of Governance) and Mark Mitchell (Safeguarding Officer) for this item.

We receive a report on safeguarding and a minute from Management Meeting forwarding it to us and Quaker Life Central Committee (paper BYMT 2022 06 05). Management Meeting recommends that BYM's policies do not presently need revision.

We are pleased to hear that the safeguarding lead trustee arrangement is working well.

The report includes an updated Improvement Plan along with progress for each of the work strands and current priorities.

We note the work completed to support: safeguarding in area meetings, record keeping, case management, policies and procedures, training and development, governance, and communications. We are pleased to see the priorities for the next period.

We note the need to consider further, safeguarding in relation to Quaker recognised bodies.

We are grateful for the diligent work being undertaken in this area. We agree that the Safeguarding Policy does not need revision at this time.

### **BYMT/22/06/09 Reflections on Yearly Meeting**

We have reflected on Yearly Meeting. Those of us who joined online, as well as those in Friends House, felt that Yearly Meeting went very well. We were pleased and surprised by how far the Yearly Meeting reached around racial justice and reparations – although there is still a long way to go. We are grateful to staff, Agenda Committee and the Yearly Meeting clerks for helping the Yearly Meeting reach this point.

We note three Yearly Meeting minutes:

#### **Minute 25: The work of our yearly meeting Trustees: receipt of annual report of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees**

... We have heard about the changes in approach of Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee, and are grateful for the faithful discernment which underpins this.

Trustees will continue to work closely with Meeting for Sufferings on proposals for simplification, in preparation for discernment at Yearly Meeting in session in 2023. We do not yet know where we will be led.

... Our Trustees have responsibility as employers for working to counter racism in the workplace; for embedding anti-oppression into all the work of the yearly meeting; and for work with the whole Yearly Meeting, including support of local and area meetings on anti-racism. Two Trustees have specific responsibility for monitoring this work. Our Trustees are committed to work on acknowledging Quakers' part in the transatlantic slave trade. The responsibility for anti-racist and anti-oppressive work is all of ours, all the time, across the Yearly Meeting.

### **Minute 27: Action: learning uncomfortable lessons and taking forward our witness**

We began our discernment by hearing about research into the Quakers of Lancaster meeting in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries...

... Our continued self-examination, discomfort, conviction and commitment is needed.

... Love and justice require us to tell the truth, as best we can, about historical and contemporary injustices. We encourage local and area meetings to begin, or continue, work to understand how Quakers and Quaker structures benefited from the transatlantic slave trade.

Love and justice require us to believe those who have the bravery and honesty to share their stories with us.

Love and justice require us to examine our own practices and behaviours, and to work for systemic change.

We have heard that love and justice also require us to consider deeply how the Society of Friends in Britain might make financial and other reparation for our part in the wrongs of the transatlantic slave trade.

### **Minute 33: Faith, Community, Action**

We have considered together the question: What is the next pool of light God is asking you to step into?

It is as we share our journeys; as we share what we think we are being called to do next, that we will find those in our community who are walking alongside us, those who can strengthen us with their support. We too may be called to accompany others. We are moving as a people of God.

We have heard ministry about the importance of true listening which pushes us to action. We have also heard encouragement to move forward with acknowledgment and apology for how our wealth has been linked to the enslavement of people. We do not need to have a perfect understanding of or

response to history in order to take action. We have heard that Quakers and others are already taking forward work to understand how reparations might be made for the harms of the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism and economic exploitation, the trauma and impact of which is felt in the lives of Friends and others today. We do not need to begin this work afresh, but can build upon the foundations laid by others and work with partners including other churches and faith groups.

We ask Britain Yearly Meeting's Trustees, Meeting for Sufferings and Area Meetings to examine the resources which they hold on trust, and to consider how they, and we, could move forward with this work.

We will return to simplification and how we continue to work on this with Meeting for Sufferings later in the agenda.

We see the need to increase staffing on racial justice.

We have heard the call to consider specifically how we might make some reparation for the way that the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism and economic exploitation have contributed to the resources held by BYM.

We need to work out a way to consider this further, bringing in voices from beyond the trustee body.

We heard ministry at Yearly Meeting that the part of the Marsh legacy already designated for fostering the gifts of children (approximately £4.5m) might be used in this way.

We unite with this and ask Finance & Property Committee to work with staff and appropriate partners to explore how all or part of the designated fund of the Marsh legacy could be used in the spirit of Yearly Meeting minute 33, within the parameters set out in BYMT-2021-06-05 Marsh Legacy.

We are clear that this would be only part of our response to this call.

## **BYMT/22/06/10 Communications and fundraising policies**

We have been joined by David Loxton, Head of Communications and Fundraising.

We receive two draft policies for: Creating and managing an online community for Quakers in Britain (BYMT 2022 06 07a); and a Vulnerable supporters' policy (BYMT 2022 06 07b).

The first is for an intended online community of Friends and supporters of Quakers in Britain – a forum to discuss events and issues that are of interest to Quakers. The aim is for it to be a supportive, friendly group and a place for finding community in line with our testimonies.

The second guides BYM's fundraising activities in relation to people who may be vulnerable. The policy feeds off the Fundraising Regulator's "Code of Fundraising

Practice”, which includes specific rules and standards relating to fundraising with people in vulnerable circumstances.

We welcome these policies and agree to adopt them.

### **BYMT/22/06/11 Recording Clerk’s report**

We receive a report from the Recording Clerk (paper BYMT 2022 06 08) giving updates and news under the headings of BYM’s strategic priorities:

- Thriving Quaker communities: supporting Quaker Communities including recruitment of Local Development Workers and expansion of Youth Development Work
- Sustainable and peaceful world: peace work, criminal justice, peace education
- Simpler structures and practices: simplifying BYM systems, digital and IT strategy
- Distinctly Quaker: communications
- Integrated: international work; local and national work
- Well-governed: reorganisation of governance teams; Yearly Meeting support, support for simplifying structures and practices, Contact Records Management (CRM) project, library and collections, fundraising
- Operations: Quiet Company, Bake the Difference and Maintain the Difference, Managed services, facilities.

The report also updates the ‘Vision for 2023’ – first received by trustees in 2020 and updated in 2021. We now receive an update on mid-2022 progress towards this vision. The Recording Clerk has also updated us on the Equity, Diversity & Inclusion audit underway in BYM – it is revealing issues of oppressive behaviour that are prevalent across the whole of our Society. Our Employment Committee will be considering the audit report in greater detail.

We are pleased to note that we have recruited more Local Development Workers and that recruitment for the remaining four regions should be completed before the end of 2022.

We also note work in relation to the war in Ukraine, the publication of the Peace at the Heart report and videos, and the reopening of the Reading Room at Friends House for booked appointments.

We are pleased to see the progress that Management Meeting has made on the complex change processes underway, particularly at this time of uncertainty in the wider world.

### **BYMT/22/06/12 Operational plan and risk**

We receive a report of activity in 2021 against the operational plan and our routine report from Management Meeting on BYM’s strategic-level risks (paper BYMT 2022 02 09).

We are acutely aware that the plan for 2021 was developed at a point where we thought that the pandemic was virtually over so it is not surprising that progress in

some areas was slower than anticipated. Nevertheless, much has been achieved and we are grateful for that.

We have reviewed the major risks facing BYM and the Society of Friends. We have discussed the massive risk of insufficient support to children and young people across the Yearly Meeting, what is being done, and the need to explore how we can do more.

### **BYMT/22/06/13 Reviewing our effectiveness**

Following our consideration in September 2021 (BYMT-2021-09-05) we return to consider our effectiveness as a body of trustees, using the Charity Governance Code as a framework. We receive a paper from our assistant clerk (BYMT 2022 06 10) summarising our reflections against each of the Code's seven principles, suggesting areas where we could make improvements, and asking us which themes we wish to address.

We agree that there are four themes requiring attention:

- Diversity of the trustee body – the need for a diversity plan, with targets, shared with Central Nominations Committee, and a review of recruitment practice and barriers to service. Allied to this is the workload associated with trusteeship and the expectations made of trustees.
- Trustee induction – the need, post-pandemic, to review and improve all aspects of our practice and for trustees to undertake regular refresher training on safeguarding, and equity, diversity and inclusion. There is a big learning curve for some trustees on joining the trustee body.
- Accessibility of reference documentation – the urgent need to replace the access provided by QGroups pre-pandemic with a system that is more maintainable.
- Support for trustee meetings – standardised reporting, a “matters arising” record reviewed at each meeting, and a forward governance timetable.

We agree to bring trustee induction back to a future meeting. We ask staff to attend to the accessibility of reference documentation and support for trustee meetings as important governance matters. On the diversity of the trustee body, we will return to this matter and consider what we think the right composition would be and discuss this with Central Nominations Committee, offering to work with them on this. We need ourselves to ensure that we make our work as accessible as possible.

### **BYMT/22/06/14 Collections management**

We are joined by Libby Adams, Head of Library and Archives, who presents her annual report on the development and management of collections (BYMT 2022 06 11). The report outlines progress over the last 12 months, including an audit of objects and fine art, refurbishment of the Library at Friends House, and improving accessibility for core archive collections. It also includes a summary of work priorities for 2022 and 2023.

We are pleased to see the progress that has been made and the priorities for this year and next year.

### **BYMT/22/06/15 Quiet Company**

We welcome Matt Baker, Clerk of Quiet Company Board, who joins us for this item.

We receive an annual report (BYMT 2022 06 12) and a link to the Quiet Company's annual review.

We are pleased to hear that it is now clear that the business model of hiring space still works as we emerge from the pandemic. However, we note the continued challenges facing the Quiet Company in managing costs and margins – particularly recruiting and retaining staff, customers booking only at short notice, and managing the supply chain. We recognise our own responsibilities for employment and terms and conditions for Quiet Company staff and are ready to engage with Quiet Company to develop a model that suits the company's needs in the sector where it operates.

It is impressive that the team has retained the Meeting Industry Association's Silver accreditation and won "Best Client Support During COVID-19" at the London Venue and Catering Awards. We note plans to launch a new online bookshop, and the relaunch of the café at Friends House as the Seed Café – meat- and fish-free as part of the Quiet Company's commitment to tackling the climate emergency and building back better.

We agree to reduce discounts on catering service to BYM and Quaker recognised bodies from 30% to 20% from July 2022 to preserve the principle that these should be charged at cost.

We are grateful to the board and staff of the Quiet Company for their perseverance. Many of us ourselves saw the Quiet Company in operation over the Yearly Meeting which was a great success. We ask that our thanks are communicated to all the team.

We forward this minute to Quiet Company board.

### **BYMT/22/06/16 Swarthmoor Hall**

We receive paper BYMT 2022 02 13 updating us on the development of an interpretation strategy and a more sustainable working model for Swarthmoor Hall. We have been joined for this item by Ingrid Greenhow, the Clerk of the Swarthmoor Hall Development Steering Group, by Matt Baker, Clerk of the Quiet Company Board, and by Libby Adams, Head of Library and Archives

The paper includes a link to the consultant's final report detailing the delivery in two phases of the favoured option (option 2a).

We agree that the proposed plan delivers on our vision for Swarthmoor Hall (BYMT-2019-06-08) and that the proposed option is in line with our charitable objectives. However, we recognise the continuing challenges of managing a historic building

and collection, that many risks remain, and that we are likely to incur ongoing costs. We note also that the investment funding would come from funds restricted for use at Swarthmoor Hall, and ask Finance & Property Committee to oversee this.

We ask the Quiet Company to go ahead with phase one to be implemented from July 2023. We agree in principle to phase two (to be implemented from 2025) subject to approval by the Quiet Company Board that this is the right way forward, and approval by our Finance & Property Committee that this is a right use of restricted funds.

We remind ourselves – and ask all involved – to keep our Vision for Swarthmoor Hall front of mind in all that is done, and in how we communicate to Friends about Swarthmoor Hall.

We send this minute to the board of Quiet Company and to Finance & Property Committee.

### **BYMT/22/06/17 The relationship between BYM and Woodbrooke**

Paper BYMT 2022 06 14 provides an overview from Sandra Berry and Ingrid Greenhow of the current challenges Woodbrooke Learning faces, along with a note from our Recording Clerk on the questions before us as BYM Trustees.

We welcome Sandra Berry, Director of Woodbrooke, and Ingrid Greenhow, Clerk of Woodbrooke trustees, who join us for this item.

Ingrid has explained to us the challenges facing Woodbrooke and possibilities for the future. We welcome the work of Woodbrooke trustees in considering Woodbrooke Learning separately from Woodbrooke the site – financially and conceptually. And we acknowledge our own challenges in delivering what is needed to support thriving Quaker communities.

We have previously minuted our intention to work more closely in partnership with Woodbrooke and appointed Alison Breadon to work with Woodbrooke trustees on a Memorandum of Understanding.

There is an area of intersection where the work of Woodbrooke and BYM overlaps and where some BYM goals can best be reached by funding Woodbrooke. How can Woodbrooke Learning help BYM achieve our strategic priorities?

We have begun to discuss which body discerns the work within that area of intersection – is it co-creation, BYM contracting Woodbrooke for the delivery of particular pieces of work, or Woodbrooke proposing work that would be funded through a grant from BYM? Whichever model is used, we will want to see clear reporting towards BYM's goals.

We would like to see a range of options to support at different levels of funding in different ways.

We ask Alison to continue to work on this alongside the Recording Clerk and Woodbrooke so that we can soon agree what part BYM should play in helping fund a



sustainable Woodbrooke Learning in future. We ask them to communicate with Finance & Property Committee as necessary as proposals are developed and to bring the agreement back to us for final approval.

We forward this minute to Woodbrooke trustees and to Finance & Property Committee.

### **BYMT/22/06/18 Drayton House**

We receive paper BYMT 2022 06 15 about our investment property, Drayton House.

We thank the Property Development Steering Group for their work so far and look forward to hearing about the next phase of work.

### **BYMT/22/06/19 Simple, more inclusive, more sustainable structures**

Kate Gulliver and Carolyn Hayman – two of the three trustees appointed alongside Ellie Harding to facilitate discussions in the yearly meeting on creating simpler, more inclusive and more sustainable central structures – have updated us on this work (paper BYMT 2022 06 16). We are grateful for the extensive work that the group has done over the last 18 months and, in particular, the 18 online workshops held with Friends across the yearly meeting.

We have also received a letter from the Review Group of Meeting for Sufferings and Yearly Meeting seeking responses on various points relating to Meeting for Sufferings.

The Recording Clerk has outlined the timetable for considering these important matters for the Yearly Meeting. We expect to be ready to test possibilities for the governance of BYM's work with MfS at its October and December meetings. It may be appropriate to test models more widely through workshops with interested Friends during the autumn.

We have talked in groups and started testing some of the ideas emerging for the governance of BYM. We will return to this at our September meeting.

We ask Graham Torr to draft a response to the Review Group on our behalf and encourage individual trustees to respond individually too if they wish to do so.

We are grateful to the group for their continued work.

### **BYMT/22/06/20 Appointments**

Our Nominations Group brings forward the following nominations:

1) **Communications Guide task and finish reference group** to serve until the task is complete:

- Rhiannon Grant – representative from Book of Discipline Revision Committee
- Finola O'Sullivan – representative from Book of Discipline Revision Committee
- Martin Wall – representative from Quaker Life Central Committee
- Abigail Darton – representative from QPSW Central Committee

## **2) TARA Review 2022 & 2023**

- Silas Price, to serve for advising on reports covering 2022 and 2023

## **3) Link Trustee for Quaker Church Affairs Department**

- Graham Torr, interim appointment until new trustees become available.

## **4) Board member of Quiet Company**

At the trustees' meeting in April 2022, trustees accepted the nomination of Tony Clodd to join the Board of the Quiet Company. At that point, Tony Clodd was in the process of applying for membership of the Religious Society of Friends. We have received notification from Mid-Essex Area Meeting that Tony was accepted into membership on 15 May 2022 and record this date as the start of his service on the Quiet Company Board.

We agree to these.

### **BYMT/22/06/21 Trustees' news**

We receive a report of recent activities of trustees (BYMT 2022 06 18). This includes an outline of our Clerk's correspondence and meeting with a Friend who wants us to amend BYMT-2021-06-10. During our meeting we have looked at a copy of the Friend's most recent letter, and given prayerful consideration to our Friend's complaint. We still consider the minute to faithfully reflect what we heard in the meeting. We do not consider it necessary to take any further action. We ask our Clerk to forward this minute to the Friend and to offer a further meeting with her or another trustee if the Friend would find that helpful.

### **BYMT/22/06/22 Meeting for Sufferings preparation**

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

### **BYMT/22/06/23 Communicating trustees' work**

We have considered how to communicate our work to others.

### **BYMT/22/06/24 Reviewing the meeting**

We have reviewed the meeting including the accessibility of our meetings. It has been a joy to meet in Carlton Hill Quaker Meeting House adjacent to our "Quakers in Britain Yorkshire Centre", and we look forward to worshipping with Leeds Friends later this morning.

### **BYMT/22/06/25 Time with Recording Clerk**

We have spent time with the Recording Clerk.

### **BYMT/22/06/26 Time without staff**

We have spent time without staff.

## **Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees**

Friday 8 April 2022, video conference, at 5pm

### **Minutes**

**Present:** 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.

**Prevented:** Kit Fotheringham

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

### **BYMT/22/04/01 Opening worship**

In our opening worship we have heard part of a minute from Yearly Meeting 2013 on 'Trust in Quaker trusteeship', quoted in the *Handbook for trustees of Quaker meetings*, Quaker Stewardship Committee, 2014, section 1.4.

### **BYMT/22/04/02 Decision to hold a virtual meeting, welcome and introductions, agenda check, conflicts of interest check**

We record our decision to hold this meeting by video conference. We follow Charity Commission guidance on running charities during the Covid-19 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 and that we meet to enable good governance of our charity.

There are no unrecorded conflicts of interest.

We confirm our agenda.

### **BYMT/22/04/03 Trustees' report and financial statements**

We receive the draft Trustees' annual report and financial statements for 2021 and the Letter of Representation. We also receive Finance and Property minutes from 22 March 2022 and note FP22/10 recommending that we accept the annual report and accounts for 2021 and sign the Letter of Representation.

We approve the annual report and financial statements and authorise the Clerk and Treasurer to sign them on our behalf subject to proof reading amendments. We send them to Meeting for Sufferings for information, and to Yearly Meeting. They will be filed with the Charity Commission.

We authorise the Treasurer to sign the Letter of Representation to the auditors.

We thank staff and others for their work in producing these documents.

## **BYMT/22/04/04 Appointments**

We receive a report from our Nominations Group.

We agree to send the following nominations to Yearly Meeting for appointment:

- **Clerk of Trustees:** Caroline Nursey, London West Area Meeting, for re-appointment for one further year: (1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023)
- **BYM Treasurer:** Paul Whitehouse, Bristol Area Meeting (1 January 2023 to 31 December 2025).

We agree to the following appointments:

- **Employment Committee:**  
Ellie Harding (from 8 April to 31 December 2024)  
Danielle Walker Palmer to serve as Clerk (from 8 April 2022 to 31 December 2022)
- **Quiet Company Board:**  
Tony Clodd, Mid-Essex Area Meeting (commencing from date of membership to 31 December 2024). Tony Clodd is in the process of applying for membership. His appointment is subject to acceptance into membership. Trustees will record at a future meeting the exact date of acceptance and the official start of his service as a company director.

We confirm the following appointments which were agreed by our Clerks as between-meeting decisions on 21 March:

- **Simplification Group:** Kate Gulliver (for lifetime of work subject to re-appointment as a trustee from 1 January 2023)
- **Communications Reference Group:** Alison Breadon and Graham Torr (for lifetime of the group).

## **BYMT/22/04/05 Land at Swarthmoor Hall**

We receive a paper BYMT 2022 04 02 from Paul Henderson Grey and Maureen Sebanakitta. We are reminded of the development plan we agreed in 2019 to provide additional car parking and to convert the barn next to the café into a visitor centre. We are asked to approve the transfer of the freehold of a small parcel of land being part of Swarthmoor Hall Farm to Henry Frank Morphet and Craig Morphet (the 'transferee') in exchange for the surrender, and return to Britain Yearly Meeting, of the barn from an Agricultural Tenancy, and likewise the surrender, and return to Britain Yearly Meeting, of a small paddock immediately adjacent to this barn at Swarthmoor Hall Farm, being part of the Swarthmoor Hall Estate.

We have received a report from a properly qualified surveyor (for the purposes of section 119 of the Charities Act 2011) (appendix 1 of paper BYMT 2022 04 02). It is the surveyor's opinion that the proposed disposition to the Transferee is on the best terms that could reasonably be obtained by the Charity.

Having considered the report and the advice of the surveyor:

- We are satisfied that the proposed disposition of the property is on the best terms that could reasonably be obtained by Britain Yearly Meeting;
- We are satisfied we have complied with our obligations under sections 117-121 of the Charities Act 2011; and
- We ask Paul Henderson-Grey and Maureen Sebanakitta to instruct our solicitors to negotiate with the transferee's solicitors to complete the transfer deed for the property as soon as possible and the related property transactions including the deed of surrender and overage deed and that any two of the Trustees be authorised pursuant to section 333 Charities Act 2011 to execute the transfer and to give the certificate required by section 122 (3) Charities Act 2011.

Caroline Nursey  
Clerk

## Quaker recognised bodies

### Introduction

This paper covers reviews of existing Quaker recognised bodies and an application for registration as a new Quaker recognised body (QRB).

### Background

In 2015, Meeting for Sufferings agreed a different way for BYM to relate to other Quaker bodies (minute MfS 2015/12/17).

The guidelines for groups that would like to be a Quaker recognised body are on the BYM website [www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/quaker-groups](http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/quaker-groups). That page also contains a list of current QRBs with their contact details and brief description. A QRB is an independent group where concerned Friends explore a common interest, seek affirmation, or carry out witness. It wishes to be recognised as a Quaker body because its Quaker roots are an important part of its identity or constitution.

### There are four different options:

**External (regulated externally)** – with a constitution, a board or management committee, and regulated by an external body such as the Charity Commission, the Scottish Charity Regulator, Companies House (where a charity is also a registered company), Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission etc.

**Linked** – by minute or appointments to part(s) of BYM's formal structure, such as: area meetings, central committees, MfS, General Meeting for Scotland, Meeting of Friends in Wales etc.

**Free-standing** – Quakers who have come together to learn about or work on a particular topic. Groups are likely to have members who are geographically dispersed; with membership open, but not necessarily restricted, to all interested Friends and attenders.

**Emergent** – new groups can be listed for up to two years, and usually treated as free-standing groups.

Experience is showing us that all groups are different; they don't all fit neatly into these categories, but the system is 'good enough' to be sure that these groups are recognised and celebrated. It also ensures that centrally-managed work can offer support, in a way that's appropriate, useful and transparent.

The process aims to clarify benefits and responsibilities for QRBs and 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 QRBs**

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

Pressure of work has meant that some Quaker recognised bodies were not reviewed at the correct time.

For each of these an update from the staff link about recent activities and key information from the original application to Meeting for Sufferings is included.

### **Action required**

Meeting for Sufferings is asked to renew the registration of each of these organisations as Quaker recognised bodies to be reviewed during 2027 (that is in five years' time).

1. Friends of Hlekweni
2. Friends Southern Summer Events
3. Northern Friends Peace Board
4. Quaker Concern for Animals
5. Quaker Esperanto Society / Kvakera Esperanto-Societo
6. Quaker South Asia Interest Group
7. Quaker Voluntary Action
8. Quakers and Business
9. The Quaker Tapestry

### **Friends of Hlekweni,**

Originally recognised in October 2017. Review due in 2022.

#### **Externally-regulated.**

**Staff link:** originally Tobias Wellner, now Isabel Cartwright [isabelc@quaker.org.uk](mailto:isabelc@quaker.org.uk)

**Report from staff link:** Friends of Hlekweni have agreed to close their organisation. This is FoH's final year, but two peace building projects will continue to be supported by Peace Works Zimbabwe – at least for the next three years. They are preparing to apply to be a QRB, currently Peace Works Zimbabwe is part of Luton and Leighton Area Meeting. When Friends of Hlekweni is formally wound up, this will be reported to Meeting for Sufferings so that the organisation can be removed from the list of Quaker recognised bodies.

#### **Key information from the original application**

**Foundation:** This organisation was started in 2008, although Quaker work in the Hlekweni Friends Rural Service Centre started in 1967.

**Aims:** To support education, training and peacebuilding: primarily in southern Matabeleland, Zimbabwe.

**Publications and activities:** A newsletter is circulated twice a year; annual leaflet.  
Activities:

- supporting four primary schools in peri-urban Bulawayo particularly with school meals, books and other, resources
- financing the Zimbabwe secondary bursary scheme
- peacebuilding activities: Peace Clubs in schools, Alternatives to Violence Project, combatting domestic violence programmes
- providing practical resources – books, laptops, pre-school resources, teddy plus pencil case scheme for all under 5s in schools

## **Friends Southern Summer Events**

Originally recognised in October 2017. Review due in 2022.

**Externally regulated.**

**Staff link:** Originally Lucy Sam and now Jude Acton [judea@quaker.org.uk](mailto:judea@quaker.org.uk)

**Report from staff link:** The information about Friends Southern Summer Events is correct on the website.

I continue to support FSSE through room bookings for their preparation days at Friends House.

I work with them within the support and network element of the Support for Quaker Communities department, by inviting and encouraging their involvement in the network of those offering Quaker Youth Group. We have built a positive relationship of mutual support, understanding and exploration with individuals from FSSE that then feed information and expertise to the wider body. This has been particularly around safeguarding, communication, publicity, planning for additional needs and meeting needs of both neurodiverse, and gender questioning young people.

I have advertised their events in my newsletters and communications, and encouraged the use the BYM events page and Quake to promote their work.

I hope to visit their events this summer to continue to build this mutually helpful relationship.

### **Key information from the original application**

**Foundation:** Group registered as a charity in 2007, although as a less formal organisation, it has been running events since the 1950s.

**Aims:** FSSE organises two week-long annual residential Quaker events in August: Junior Gathering (formerly Summer School, ages 11-14) and Friends Southern Senior Conference (15-18). The events advocate the Quaker testimonies of peace,



simplicity, equality and truth. They are significant in the lives of those who attend, building confidence, knowledge and supportive friendships which can last a lifetime.

**Publications and activities:** Two residential week-long events for young Quakers held annually, which are staffed and run by volunteers. Participants predominantly from the South of England, applications are accepted from young people who live elsewhere. General meeting attended by office holders, volunteers and representatives from Area Meetings.

## **Northern Friends Peace Board (NFBP)**

Originally recognised in June 2017. Review due in 2022

### **Externally-regulated.**

**Staff link** originally Marigold Bentley, now Daniel Jakopovich [danielj@quaker.org.uk](mailto:danielj@quaker.org.uk)

**Report from staff link:** Northern Friends Peace Board continues to be active, both through an email list and through various meetings and the activity of their Coordinator. The NFBP Coordinator has performed continuous service as a member of the PECAN subcommittee, and has also collaborated with QPSW and the Peace Lead in other ways, including as an active member of peace networks - the Network of Christian Peace Organisations, the Global Campaign on Military Spending UK and Rethinking Security.

### **Key information from the original application**

**Foundation:** 1913 following a peace conference of Northern Quarterly Meetings.

**Aims:** Northern Friends Peace Board was set up with the following remit, which remains our core purpose: "To advise and encourage Friends in the North, and through them their fellow Christians and citizens generally, in the active promotion of peace in all its height and breadth"

The area of operation covered by the Board shall be primarily that covered by the Area Meetings of Britain Yearly Meeting in Scotland, North Wales and Northern England.

**Publications and activities:** The NFBP organises workshops, conferences, acts of witness and promote a wide range of other peace action, networking and learning. Newsletters, email lists and website are used publish information for Friends and others. NFBP produces occasional other printed written and audio-visual material, both on its own and with other Quaker and non-Quaker bodies.

## **Quaker Concern for Animals**

Originally recognised in April 2017. Review due in 2022.

### **Free-standing.**

**Staff link:** originally Jamie Scott, later Nicola Purdy now to be determined

**Report from staff link:** Quaker concern for animals continues to be active. The current clerk has stepped down and an acting Clerk, Angela Atkins of Northampton Meeting has been appointed her email is. [cattyatkins@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:cattyatkins@hotmail.co.uk)

### **Key information from the original application**

**Foundation:** 1891, as the Friends' Anti-Vivisection Association; later becoming the Animal Welfare and Anti -Vivisection Society and finally Quaker Concern for Animals in 1978

**Aims:** Our primary objective is to raise the profile within the Religious Society of Friends of non-human animals and the issues affecting them.

**Our Mission Statement:** Quaker Concern for Animals witnesses to the divine in all creation and works for the protection of animals and the promotion of their rights.

We are committed to the defence of our fellow species, whilst appealing to that of God in everyone.

**Publications and activities:** Our activities include:

- Providing literature, articles and 2 newsletters per annum to our members (including member Quaker Meetings). I enclose pdfs of our latest newsletter and booklet Journeys of Compassion, published in 2016.
- Supporting conferences and religious services. We are sponsors of SARX's Creature Conference on animal theology this year.
- National and international co-operation with other animal protection groups. We carried out a project in 2016 to canvas leading animal protection groups and individuals for their views on the EU referendum as a service to our members and to general public.
- Lobbying of organizations, media and politicians
- Protests against animal exploitation and cruelty.
- Funding animal charities, especially the smaller specialised ones.

We are committed to our ecumenical and interfaith policy. We are a founder member of the Animals Interfaith Alliance.

Other 2016 activities included holding a QCA 'residency' in Friends House Bookshop on World Animal Day (with the Friends House Restaurant being meat free on that day) and a stall at YM.

## **Quaker Esperanto Society / Kvakera Esperanto-Societo**

Originally recognised in June 2017. Review due in 2022.

### **Free-standing group.**

**Staff link:** Originally Marleen Schepers and now Michael Booth.

[michaelsb@quaker.org.uk](mailto:michaelsb@quaker.org.uk)

**Report from staff link:** My links with the group have been minimal, however the group reports as follows.

As regards our activities, well we are a group with members in half-a dozen different countries, mostly in Europe though there is one in Canada also. In recent times personal contact has of course been very difficult with the Covid-related restrictions on gatherings - and of course restrictions on international travel made things particularly difficult for an organisation which by its nature is international with members in different countries. However we keep in touch by means of a website, a mailing list and a Facebook page. In addition we are now contemplating setting up a quarterly newsletter to keep members in touch with each other and to share news, activities and general thoughts and observations.

### **Key information from the original application**

**Foundation:** 1921

**Aims:** i) To inform Esperanto speakers about the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and to forward the aims of Quakers throughout the world through the use of Esperanto, through correspondence, literature, gatherings and meetings. ii) To encourage the use of Esperanto amongst Quakers.

**Publications and activities:** Various publications have been published in Esperanto. Members of the group aim to meet up during meetings of the International Congress of Esperanto.

## **Quaker South Asia Interest Group**

Originally recognised in October 2017. Review due in 2022.

### **Free-standing.**

**Staff link:** Judith Baker [judithb@quaker.org.uk](mailto:judithb@quaker.org.uk)

**Report from staff link:** QSAIG is an active group which hosts two lively meetings a year, in person and online. It has around 100 members both in the UK and in South Asia who attend the meetings, contribute to the QSAIG newsletter, and/or pay a subscription. The group recently began to explore issues around climate change in South Asia and hopes to continue a connection with QPSW on this issue.

## **Key information from the original application**

### **Original report to Meeting for sufferings.**

**Foundation:** Already formed and active in 1996, having grown out of work laid down by Quaker Peace & Service.

**Aims:** to assist in the building of a peaceful, just and sustainable world inspired by our Quaker faith and focussing on the South Asian region by

- a. Sharing information to inform our action
- b. Supporting individuals and groups which act to progress QSAIG's main aim, including QPSW's work
- c. Sustain relationships in South Asia that value support of Quakers in Britain

### **Publications and activities:**

1. Annual newsletter – electronic and print
2. Website
3. AGM with sharing of concern and action.
4. Emergency financial support e.g. Nepal earthquake 2015.
5. Stall at BYM groups fair

## **Quaker Voluntary Action**

Originally recognised in October 2017. Review due in 2022.

### **Externally-regulated.**

**Staff link:** Originally Maya Williams, recently Juliet Prager, now to be determined

### **Report from staff:** Key information from the original application

Quaker Voluntary Action remains active. During lockdown, QVA organised a series of facilitated online retreats - helping activists to step back and consider how they are called to act. They covered various topics, including one on environmental issues and one on Israel/Palestine. Face-to-face retreats began again in March 2022; so far there has been a working retreat in an Italian ecovillage and another in a Refugee Community Kitchen in Calais. QVA is planning a study tour to Israel-Palestine, and other residential and daytime gatherings in Britain. QVA organizes both residential and non-residential retreats; costs to participants are kept to a minimum. Discussion is underway about the possibility of continuing to offer online retreats alongside the in-person ones.

QVA has an active group of trustees. There are currently 5 trustees although more are being sought. Betty Hagglund took over the role of Retreat Co-ordinator in March this year. Income and spending has fallen since QVA was registered as a QRB in 2017; in 2020, income was just under £13,637.

Juliet Prager has been acting as staff link; this has been a watching brief and there hasn't been much contact between BYM staff and QVA in this time. We hope this will improve when the role is taken on by one of the QPSW Faith in Action Co-ordinators.

### **Original report to Meeting for sufferings.**

**Foundation:** The group was established in 2000, after the yearly meeting laid down the Quaker International Social Projects (previously Quaker Workcamps) programme.

**Aims:** QVA offers adventurous opportunities for volunteering that combine meaningful practical engagement with learning, spiritual encounter and reflection. The Working Retreat programme encourages an active witness to our testament to sustainability and peace. In partnership with Quaker Meetings, Centres, and other organisations, we seek to deepen this commitment.

**Publications and activities:** QVA organises working retreats both in the UK and abroad. These are open to all and a fee is chargeable though bursary help is available. Publications include an annual newsletter and programme of activities.

### **Quakers and Business Group**

Initial recognition April 2017, Review Due 2022. Externally-regulated

**Staff link** Originally Paul Grey and now Oliver Waterhouse [oliverw@quaker.org.uk](mailto:oliverw@quaker.org.uk)

**Report from staff link:** This group continues to be active. They are a voice and network for those whose experience is that integrity in business and the workplace matters. Members are active in, or retired from, business of all types including for-profit, non-profit and anywhere in-between.

Aims are now to promote Quaker principles particularly in the context of business and the workplace. We are committed to championing better values in business and the workplace based on Quaker principles. We aim to offer a meeting place and run events for those whose experience is that integrity in business and the workplace matters.

### **Current publications and activities:**

**Publications and activities:** Two main events per year, one for members primarily for networking and one for members and non-members to share and learn about how Quaker principles can be put into practice in the wider world. We fund PhD and other research into Quaker business history, ethical business practices and Quaker business methods.

[What we do | Quakers and Business \(gandb.org\)](http://gandb.org)

## **Key information from the original application**

**Foundation:** CIO registered 12 May 2014. Previous group gathered in late 1990s, which went on to form a registered charity that then moved to CIO.

**Aims:** Our purpose is “to be the custodian, modern interpreter and promoter of Quaker principles in business and the workplace”. We provide a supportive network for those upholding these principles and promote our work through events, programmes, projects, speaking engagements, publications and research.

**Publications and activities:** Two events per year, one inward looking (aimed at Quakers) and one Outreach/outward looking to share Quaker thoughts/findings with the wider world. We fund PhD and other research into Quaker business history ethical business practices and Quaker business methods  
<http://qandb.org/index.php/what-we-do/research>

## **The Quaker Tapestry**

Originally recognised in October 2017. Review due in 2022.

**Externally-regulated.**

**Staff link:** Melissa Atkinson [melissaa@quaker.org.uk](mailto:melissaa@quaker.org.uk)

**Report from staff link:** Both The Quaker Tapestry Museum and the Library of the Society of Friends holds unique Quaker collections. Since there are collections cross over, I am the main contact at BYM. We support one another and promote Quakerism and its lasting influence.

## **Key information from the original application**

**Foundation:** the Quaker Tapestry as a project began in 1981. The museum in Kendal to exhibit the project was set up in 1994.

**Aims:** to display, maintain and protect the collection as a way to advance the public’s understanding of Quakers, their worship and work in the world. Thorough collaborative endeavour to teach the embroidery and allied skills used in making the panels and to create new ones.

Quaker Tapestry cares for a collection of 77 embroidered textile panels made by 4,000 people from 15 countries between 1981 and 1996. The panels illustrate some of the history of Quakerism from the 17th century to the present day.

Quaker Tapestry is an Arts Council accredited museum and has gained the Visit Britain accolade of ‘Hidden Gem’.

**Publications and activities:** Publications about the exhibition include: pictorial guide with information of every panel, stitch guide and video, an annual calendar

with illustrations from the panels and related information, a video about George Fox and the history of the early Quakers on show at the exhibition and sold in the shop.

Activities include: educational visits and formal and informal activity sessions, embroidery Workshops in Kendal and elsewhere.

Roadshows take Tapestry panels around the country and sometimes abroad.

## **B Request for recognition**

### **Request for registration**

The following organisation has applied to become a Quaker recognised body:

### **British Friends of the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA)**

Staff have looked at the documentation provided by the organisations and consider that the criteria for listing it as a QRB have been met.

### **Action required**

Meeting for Sufferings is asked to approve this organisation as a Quaker recognised body for a period of five years.

**Name of Quaker Recognised Body:** British Friends of the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA)

**Constitution:** Registered Charity: 293776

**Governance:** The group has a constitution and conducts its business in Quaker committee process.

**Type of Group:** External

**Foundation:** The group was founded in 1986 and became a registered charity in 2005.

**Aims:** The group works to raise funds and awareness from British Friends in support of the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA).

**Publications and activities:** The group does not produce publications. The group hosts events for QCEA speakers, as well as, organises appeals made by British Friends for QCEA.

**Membership:** 50 registered British Friends of QCEA. You must be a member or attender of Britain Yearly Meeting to join.

**Finance:** 2020 Figures: £95,000 Turnover, Payment of £26,000 of Direct QCEA Expenses, Direct Payment of £6,000 for Quaker House Rent. Grant to QCEA of

£63,000. The accounts are examined in accordance with the group's constitution and are available on the charity commission website.

**Winding up:** The group has a winding up policy, which is included in the group's constitution.

**Archives:** The Annual Accounts and Report are available to view on the charity commission website.

**Current contact details:** John Crosfield

**Email:** [johncrosfield@gmail.com](mailto:johncrosfield@gmail.com)

**Telephone:** 07493 370 030

**Address:** c/o Friends House, 173-177 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BJ

**Website:** [www.qcea.org.bf](http://www.qcea.org.bf)

**Staff link:** Oliver Robertson, Head of Witness and Worship

Michael S Booth  
Church Government Advisor  
June 2022



## War in Ukraine

In March, Meeting for Sufferings received prepared ministry on war in Ukraine and following discernment agreed a minute (minute MfS/22/03/23) which it sent to Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC). QPSWCC has sent the following minute to Meeting for Sufferings in response.

### **At a meeting of Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee**

A meeting held online via Zoom videoconferencing 11-12 March 2022

#### **Separated Minute QPSWCC 22/15 on Ukraine**

We have received a minute from Meeting for Sufferings and have heard the ministry prepared for that meeting. We thank staff for the prompt actions they have taken so far. We have read the report from staff about the work, setting out possible options for further action and have explored these options. We have also received the minute from the PECAN sub-committee. We note that a group of Friends has been convened to help with this work the 'Ukraine/Russia cluster group'. We have heard from Daniel Jakopovich (Peace Lead) and Gill Alcock (Peace Education Campaigning And Networking Clerk) and thank them for their contributions.

Our faith in action work is focussed on the creation of a more peaceful world, but we acknowledge that when peoples' homes are burning it can be difficult to establish the most appropriate peacebuilding action. Every outbreak of war is a challenge to our longstanding testimony to peace, and this is not the only violent conflict currently underway. It is a threat but also an opportunity to make clear our work towards peace and disarmament and how climate justice remains so central. Our peace testimony rests in the many actions and areas of work that individual and groups of Friends are led to undertake through their faith – we hope that it will be possible to offer a platform to these and unheard voices. We believe that the shock of this war may open the ears of some. We hope that we and many may find, reaffirm and 'come home' to our peace testimony.

We support the formation of the cluster group, and would like to help to engage with this work and learn from its work as it develops. We hope that the cluster group will be active and outward looking. We ask Alan Keith to join the cluster group to help to coordinate QPSW work and to link any necessary discernment by CC.

We support also the contribution to coordination of work by the cluster group between existing areas of work, on peace education, peace campaigning and advocacy, conciliation, international peace building, Turning the Tide, Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO), Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA), Northern Friends Peace Board (NFPB) and our Sanctuary Network of meetings, and hope that all will be engaged. We see short term and longer term areas for our response which should inform each other.

We acknowledge that the situation is changing fast, and our approaches may also need to adapt. We acknowledge also that in this situation, there is the possibility that we will make mistakes, from which we can learn. We know that developing a clear strategy and coalitions can helpfully support and amplify our work, and know that staff and Friends will do this where they can, but we support them in acting boldly where they need to.

We support the approach which is being developed for Citizens (or people-to-people) Diplomacy, engaging directly with people across borders, and for involving as many Friends as would like to in this work.

We are aware that some Friends will be very challenged by these events, and may need support. Staff may be able to offer some support or signposting. Other Friends will be motivated to put their faith into action and will be helped by guidance about what is possible. We ask that this work connects with our communication team and ensure that our channels for communication carry information about this for Friends. We hope that this information can be lively and contain many strands, offering hope for the present and a light for future work.

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

Mike Coote, Adam Drury, Elize Sakamoto  
Co-clerks  
Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee