

Calling letter



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

16 September 2022

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

Dear Friends

I am looking forward to welcoming you all to our forthcoming Meeting for Sufferings to be held online and in person on Saturday 1 October.

As on previous occasions 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 the implications in terms of cost and food waste.

In preparation for this meeting Arrangements Group reviewed feedback from the Support Group. We have tried to reflect some of the suggestions we received when planning this agenda. You will see that we have created a section for 'matters to taken on draft minute' which we hope will be an efficient use of the time available in the meeting and free us to spend more on substantive items.

For this to work well it would be helpful for Friends to review draft minutes, which will be sent ahead of the meeting, and make any comments they wish by 09.00 on Friday 30 September so that your clerks can take account of them.

In the morning:

- We will hear a verbal update from the group reviewing Yearly Meeting/Yearly Meeting Gathering and MfS in preparation for the recommendations that will be brought to our December meeting.
- Trustees will also be reporting on their recent meeting
- We will hear of work going on in Scotland.

The afternoon is given over to two substantive items:

- In February 2021 Central Nominations Committee asked for a review of the current policy limiting the appointment to Central Committees of members of

the Religious Society of Friends, and their recommendations come to us for consideration.

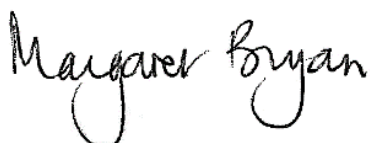
- We will then receive our annual Sustainability Monitoring Report.

The preparation session on 28 September will take the form of a general gathering for reps and alternates to discuss any aspect of the business before this meeting. There will be breakout rooms devoted to different topics as well as for general conversation. Arrangements Group hopes this will be an opportunity for fellowship and help us to build our community.

Although it has only been three months since our last meeting the world of July seems a very long time away. We are living in a time of political and constitutional turbulence which has already had a huge impact on everyday lives. There cannot be a more important time to ask ourselves – what canst thou say?

I look forward to our day together

In peace,



Margaret Bryan
Clerk

Papers enclosed with this mailing

Agenda

MfS Arrangements Group July and August 2022 meeting minutes

MfS 2022 10 06 Quaker recognised bodies (QRBs)

MfS 2022 10 07 Prison and Court Register

MfS 2022 10 08 Dates of Yearly Meeting 2024

MfS 2022 10 10 BYM Trustees report

MfS 2022 10 12 Meeting of Friends in Wales / Cyfarfod y Cyfeillion yng Nghymru name change

MfS 2022 10 13 Appointment of attenders to central committees

MfS 2022 10 14 Sustainability monitoring report

A reminder of how you can prepare for the meeting

- If you haven't already done so, register for the Meeting and register for the optional online session on **28 September** where there will be the opportunity to discuss with other members on all the business coming to Meeting for Sufferings this October as well as general discussion or fellowship.
- Read the agenda and papers in good time
- Contact the other representative/alternate from your area meeting or body
- Send any comments or questions to the clerks (sufferings@quaker.org.uk), before the meeting to be received by morning of **30 September**.



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

Agenda

Meeting for Sufferings – 1 October 2022

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

	Item	Paper
10am	Session 1	
1	Opening worship	
2	Welcome and introductions	
3	Agenda Adoption and acceptance of the agenda	
4	Items to be taken on draft minute:	
5	• Membership (To follow)	
6	• Appointments (To follow)	
	• Quaker recognised bodies (QRBs)	MfS 2022 10 06
7	Prison and Court Register	MfS 2022 10 07 For decision
8	Yearly Meeting 2024 To agree the date for Yearly Meeting in 2024	MfS 2022 10 08 For decision
9	Review of Meeting for Sufferings, Yearly Meeting and Yearly Meeting Gathering To hear an update on progress	Oral update For information
	Shuffle break	
10	Report from BYM Trustees	MfS 2022 10 10 For information
11	Work in Scotland To hear from the Clerk of GMS on various areas of work responding to concerns of the Yearly Meeting and Friends in Scotland	Oral report For information
12.45pm	End of Session 1	

12:45pm Lunch break

1.45pm	Session 2	
12	Minute from Meeting of Friends in Wales	MfS 2022 10 12 To receive
13	Appointment of attenders to central committees To receive a report from the review group	MfS 2022 10 13 For decision
14	Sustainability To receive a report from the Sustainability Monitoring Group	MfS 2022 10 14 For information
	Shuffle break	
	Sustainability [continued]	
15	Closing worship and reflection	
4pm	End of Meeting	



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 12 July 2022

Minutes

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

In attendance: Siobhán Haire, Neil Jarvis

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 2 July 2022

We have reviewed the minutes of the meeting held 2 July 2022.

We have identified Minute 9 regarding taking forward the yearly meeting's anti-racist commitment as a continuing minute. We think this should be included in our forward agenda for consideration next year and we look forward to hearing what other centrally managed work may identify at the forthcoming YMAC meeting. We note that we had agreed to ask central committees to report on how they are forwarding that agenda and we could ask them to report in March. We have not identified any "Gold minutes".

We note that interest has been expressed by members of meeting for Sufferings in response to the trustees' report for consideration of the restructuring of Woodbrooke. We are aware that this is not under the remit of MfS but we look forward to hearing more about these plans in due course.

3. Report from Support Group

We have received the report from the Support Group and noted the points made. We ask the Clerk of Arrangements Group to convene a meeting with members of

the Support Group to identify specific modifications that might be incorporated into the processes of Meeting for Sufferings.

We note the suggestion that meeting protocols should be reprinted at each meeting. We ask the Deputy Recording Clerk to be prepared to deliver such a reminder at our next meeting.

4. Meeting for Sufferings groups and nominations

We note that the Standing Nominations Group was set up when a number of nominations were required at once. Since then we have struggled to find members available to serve and we wonder whether there is a continuing need.

We note that the Sustainability Monitoring Group is seeking new members. We agree to ask Caroline Howden to serve an additional term and in reporting to the next session of Meeting for Sufferings to promote the work of the group. We ask the clerks to search for additional members of the Group.

We note that the Support Group could benefit from an additional two Friends, and would especially welcome Friends with experience as elders. We ask the clerks of Meeting for Sufferings to select Friends from those who had expressed a willingness to serve as elders to join the Support Group.

5. Reference group for MfS representatives

We ask the Assistant Clerk to convene an online meeting for MfS representatives for mutual support.

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 30 August to plan the session of Meeting for Sufferings scheduled for 1 October.

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

- 11 October, 7pm (to review October MfS)
- 1 November, 7pm (to plan December MfS and for 2023) (Possibly a day-time, in-person meeting at Friends House – to be confirmed).
- 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 – 20:15 on 30 August 2022

Minutes

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

In attendance: Siobhan Haire, Neil Jarvis, Paul Parker

1. Meetings attended by the clerks and others

Margaret attended Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee on 30 July and emphasised the need for time to be available for constitutional matters.

Further to minute 3 of our meeting on 12 July 2022, we note that Robert met with members of the Support Group. We have received notes of the meeting and considered the matters raised. Many of the administrative matters can be addressed immediately. The more substantive suggestions we will hold in mind but feel that it will be impractical to implement significant changes before the new year.

2. Forward agenda

We have reviewed our forward agenda (MfSAG/2022/08/02), which informs our planning.

3. Meeting for Sufferings in October 2022

We have considered potential business for this meeting and have begun to draft an agenda for the session. We ask the clerks to finalise the agenda in consultation with staff.

4. Nominations to Meeting for Sufferings working groups

We have received an oral update on progress.

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 11 October to review the session of Meeting for Sufferings scheduled for 1 October.

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

- 1 November, 11am in person (to plan December MfS and for 2023).
- 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.

Minutes received since last Meeting for Sufferings

Body sending minute	Minute	Initial steps and decisions	Subsequent steps (if any)	Status
Central England AM	CEAQM 2022.047 Minute received from Coventry LM [Laying down of PECAN]	30/6/22 Minute received 30/8/22 Tabled at MfSAG MfSAG sent the minute to QPSWCC to give its response and noted the secretary of QPSWCC has offered to visit the AM at its business meeting in October. The MfSAG awaits the outcome of these steps so it can reconsider the need for this to come to MfS.		Minute forwarded to QPSWCC. Discussions with AM.
Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee	YMAC 2022-7-17 Holding of Yearly Meeting 2024	8/8/22 Minute received To Meeting for Sufferings for decision on date for YM 2024		At Meeting for Sufferings in October
Meeting of Friends in Wales	2022.06.05 Name change for Meeting of Friends in Wales	2/9/22 Minute received 5/9/22 Clerks agreed to include this in October's business		At Meeting for Sufferings in October

Updates to previously received minutes

Body sending minute	Minute	Initial steps and decisions	Subsequent steps (if any)	Status
Central Nominations Committee	2019/11/28 Membership question: attenders serving on central committees	01/12/20 Minute received 11/1/21 Tabled at MfSAG MfSAG agreed to include this in the February 2021 meeting.	6/2/21 MfS determined to set up a review group. Terms of reference will return to future meeting 4/21 Terms of reference agreed 12/21 Review group appointed 30/8 Report complete MfSAG agreed to include in October	At Meeting for Sufferings in October
Lancashire Central and North AM	21.9.1 Employment practices in BYM	8/11/21 Minute received 1/2/22 Tabled at MfSAG 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.	31/5/22 MfSAG has noted a report is in preparation and will hopefully be included at MfS in October 30/8/22 MfSAG reconsidered and asked staff to contact the AM to offer a visit and/or meeting to discuss this further	Preparing for possible inclusion at MfS in the future
West Weald AM	21/23 Minute to MfS [Trustees and Membership]	15/11/21 Minute received 1/2/22 Tabled at MfSAG MfSAG asked staff to correspond with Area Meeting on background and rationale for current practice	31/5/22 This matter relates to the minute received from Mid-Somerset. Correspondence is ongoing. 30/8/22 MfSAG reconsidered and asked staff to contact the AM to offer a visit and/or meeting to discuss this further	Pending further contact with Area Meeting

Body sending minute	Minute	Initial steps and decisions	Subsequent steps (if any)	Status
Worcestershire & Shropshire AM	22.04 Tabular statement [and recording gender]	<p>14/1/22 Minute received</p> <p>1/2/22 Tabled at MfSAG MfSAG noted the correspondence between the Recording Clerk and the Area Meeting on this matter which is ongoing and decided not to take this item at present. MfSAG will reconsider at a future meeting if necessary.</p>	<p>30/8/22 MfSAG reconsidered and noted Central Committees will be reporting to MfS in early 2023 on Yearly Meeting minutes from 2021 including gender diversity in our meetings. It is hoped this will be considered as part of that business.</p>	Preparing as part of another item to come to MfS in the future
Mid Somerset AM	02.05.22 Area Meeting Trustees	<p>15/5/22 Minute received</p> <p>31/5/22 Tabled at MfSAG MfSAG noted there is ongoing correspondence with AM</p>	<p>30/8/22 MfSAG reconsidered and asked staff to contact the AM to offer a visit and/or meeting to discuss this further</p>	On holding pending contact with AM

Quaker recognised bodies

Introduction

This paper covers reviews of existing Quaker recognised bodies and applying 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. 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, Meeting for Sufferings, 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.

The first three types of group are generally reviewed after five years.

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.

Applications

Part of the original paper to Meeting for Sufferings read

2.2.4. The application is sent to the designated FH staff member. The staff member checks that the information provided meets the criteria of registration and on that basis forwards the application to MfS for approval.

2.2.5. If an application seems inappropriate, advice may be taken from trustees, MfS Arrangements Committee or other central groups and, once shared with the applying group, consideration given as to whether a revised application may be suitable.

Michael Booth is the current BYM staff member who receives applications. The initial task is to look through the application, check that the group clearly meets the application criteria and seek clarification when required.

A suitable staff link is identified who helps prepare the report that is presented to Meeting for Sufferings.

There are no applications for registration as a Quaker recognised body that are ready to come to Meeting for Sufferings this time.

Reviews

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 have not been reviewed at the correct time.

For each review, 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. The Association of Talking Friends**
- 2. Friends House Moscow**
- 3. Glebe House (Friends Therapeutic Community Trust)**
- 4. The Penn Club**
- 5. QARN (Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network)**
- 6. Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture (Q-CAT)**
- 7. Quaker Fellowship for After-Life Studies**
- 8. Quaker Peace Studies Trust**

1) The Association of Talking Friends

Initial recognition December 2017, Review due December 2022, External.

Staff link: Originally James Johnson, now Stela Brinzeanu stelab@quaker.org.uk

Report from staff link This group continues its work and its website contains the current contact information. The recordings are now sent out by the association itself, rather than from Quaker Life.

Foundation: 1988

Aims: The object of the Association is to provide audio versions of Quaker periodicals.

Publications and activities: Since 1988, The Association of Talking Friends has circulated recordings of Quaker publications to visually impaired Friends and attenders in Britain Yearly Meeting. The cost to subscribers is kept to 50% of the print version. Membership is by annual subscription to any or all of these Quaker periodicals: The Friends, Quaker Voices, Friends Quarterly and Towards Wholeness. All recordings are supplied digitally. They also record a number of Quaker books and can supply portable players for listening to the recordings.

2) Friends House Moscow

Initial recognition October 2017, Review Due September 2022, Externally-regulated.

Staff link: Michael S Booth michaelsb@quaker.org.uk

Report about the work of the organisation

Friends House Moscow is a collaboration between two charities, one in the UK and one in the USA. We do outreach in the Russian language, and support projects for peace and for refugee and orphan children in Russia and Ukraine. Our work in Russia is performed (for operational reasons) by a separate commercial company. We are on Facebook (English/Russian) and vKontakte (Russian), and run two websites: in English, for supporters, and in Russian for outreach including download of books in Russian translation. At the time of writing, the war in Ukraine has impacted our work in two ways. Sanctions have made it harder to send money to Russia; meanwhile we are supporting new projects in Estonia to work with refugees from Ukraine. We pray for a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Key information from the original application

Foundation: Founded following the decision of BYM to cease funding the presence of Quaker representatives in Moscow in 1996.

Aims: The British charity exists to raise money for and support the work carried out from FHM – an initiative of Friends worldwide which seeks to encourage spiritual growth and the development of a civil society in Russia and countries of the former Soviet Union, based on mutual trust and community cooperation. It aims to provide a stable and visible Quaker presence in the face of Russia's rapidly changing conditions by expressing the unique faith and practice of the Religious Society of Friends. FHM puts this faith into action by working for social justice based on our fundamental belief in the presence of God in each individual.

Publications and activities:

- Fundraising and managing donations in the UK

- Contributing to processes and decisions of the FHM International Board, and conducting charitable activity in accordance with these decisions
- Twice yearly supporter newsletters
- Special Interest Group session and stall at the Groups Fair at BYM every year.
- In November 2014 it organised (jointly with Woodbrooke) a weekend conference at Woodbrooke “Russian Adventures: Quakers, Russia and Civil Society”.

3) Glebe House (Friends Therapeutic Community Trust)

Originally recognised in December 2017. Review due in 2022.

Externally-regulated. Staff link: originally Teresa Parker, now Beverley Smith beverleys@quaker.org.uk

Report from staff link

The organisation is continuing its work. It has launched a new website. It knows that it can seek advice and support from its staff link. It has restated its description and aims as follows:

Glebe House is a Quaker-led charitable trust, providing specialist residential service for young males who have a history, and/or significant risk, of harmful sexual behaviour.

Our Aims

- To continue to provide a Therapeutic Community that cares for, develops and supports young males with a history of harmful sexual behaviour.
- To create a stable, therapeutic and educational environment to assist young males in establishing positive behaviours and life skills.
- To provide young males with specialist, behavioural, psychological and academic support they need so that they can move forward towards a more hopeful life.
- To provide structured pathways that enable a safer transition to independent living that reduces the risks for young people and society.
- Collaborating with organisations and academia in the sector, to share best practice, lead thinking and research in the development and provision of services for young people who display harmful sexual behaviour.
- To develop and provide consultancy and training to raise awareness and improve services for young people.

Key information from the original application

Foundation: 1965 (first service user arrived in 1969)

Aims: Glebe House is a charitable trust that provides specialist interventions for young men between the ages of 15 and 18, with a known history of harmful sexual behaviours. This includes a residential treatment service for up to 17 young men at any one time, an independence transition service, training and consultancy, and community-based assessment and intervention work.

Publications and activities: Occasional academic and general media publications.

4) The Penn Club

Initial recognition October 2017. Review September 2022, Externally-regulated.

Staff link: Suze Lidbury suzel@quaker.org.uk

Report from staff link

Following its status as a Listed Informal Group, The Penn Club became recognised as a Quaker Recognised Body (QRB) by Meeting for Sufferings in October 2017.

At that time the Penn Club provided accommodation and membership facilities out of their premises in Bedford Place, London, operating as a company limited by guarantee.

In March 2021, the Penn Club went into liquidation, due wholly to the economic downturn in the pandemic. The insolvency process is still in progress. However, it has found a new home, operating as a non-profit membership organisation under the aegis of at the Royal Foundation of St Katherine's in Limehouse London, where the ethos and community of the Penn Club lives on. It is a comfortable fit with St Katherine's, a retreat centre and religious charity with values in sympathy with Quakers.

The Penn Club has 278 members, who pay an annual fee to St Katherine's in return for reduced accommodation rates and other benefits. Membership is open to all and while statistics are not collected on religious affiliation, anecdotal evidence shows that Quaker members and attenders continue to make up part of the Penn Club membership.

In its new form, The Penn Club Social Committee has been established to offer social events to Penn Club members predominantly in London, and some held in other areas of the Yearly Meeting. The committee membership includes Quakers, long standing Penn Club members and St Katherine's staff.

The Penn Club still meets the QRB criteria of providing practical and spiritual support for Friends and Services founded on Quaker values. It continues to have strong links with Quaker networks, most notably the Quaker Centre Gathering and Quaker Hospitality Centre.

Penn Club Membership (rfsk.org.uk)

Key information from the original application

Foundation: 1920

Aims: The Club's principal objects are to promote fellowship and other amenities for the Members of the Club and for others in sympathy with the broad objectives of the Religious Society of Friends and to encourage social intercourse among the Members of the Club.

Publications and activities: We provide accommodation for members and non-members sympathetic to the Club's ethos, members events and a Quarterly Club newsletter.

5) QARN (Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network)

Initial recognition, December 2017, Review due December 2022, Free-standing.

Staff link originally Tim Gee, now Lyndsay Burtonshaw (Faith in Action Coordinator and Sanctuary Meetings contact) lyndsayb@quaker.org.uk

Report from staff link. QARN and myself as the BYM Sanctuary Meetings contact mutually support and complement each other's work. We have collaborated on events together, and co-promoted each other's work, for example a QARN steering group member recently spoke on a QPSW/Quaker Housing Trust event about Housing refugees and asylum seekers, and this event was used to promote QARN to Quakers. I have a good relationship with the steering group, know them all and have enormous respect for the work they do.

Key information from the original application

Foundation: 2006

Aims: Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network is a national network of Quakers with a concern about people seeking asylum, refugees and others in need of international protection. We are a Listed Informal Group within Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

It aims to support each other as Friends acting under concern; to keep Friends in our meetings up to date with developments and to work to convince British Quakers that a principled critique of current asylum policy and practice grounded in experience and action should be part of our corporate Quaker witness in keeping with our testimony to equality. To guide Britain Yearly Meeting now that Sufferings have accepted that Asylum is a concern, to help them to work for justice and compassion in our asylum and immigration system.

Publications and activities: Regular member meetings in different centres round the UK: the website is also updated with news and other information.

6) Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture (Q-CAT)

Initial recognition, October 2017, Review due September 2022, Linked.

Staff link: Clare Wood clarew@quaker.org.uk

Report from staff link: Q-CAT continues to keep in touch with its supporters through alternating Newsletters and Briefings and a recent on-line get-together. Much effort has gone into joining with other groups to campaign against legislation (for example, the Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Veterans) Bill (now Act) and the Northern Ireland Legacy Bill) which would allow human rights abuses, including torture, to go unpunished. Q-CAT have been supported in this by Grace Da Costa, BYM's public affairs and media manager. As part of their aim to encourage people to think about torture using a variety of approaches, Q-CAT commissioned a choral work, A Knock on the Door, from the Quaker composer Sally Beamish; the premiere will take place in Birmingham in November 2022 and BYM will help to promote this to Friends.

Key information from the original application

Type of Group: The group is a Linked group as it carries out the concern of Meeting for Sufferings. It is also a registered charity.

Foundation: 2004

Aims: On behalf of Meeting for Sufferings and the supporting area meetings to work towards the end of torture and complicity in torture; upholding our testimony to peace and equality and working towards healing through reconciliation. (The supporting Area Meetings are currently Central England, North Wales and Wirral and Chester.)

Publications and activities: Regular newsletter and briefings are available to interested people.

7) Quaker Fellowship for After-Life Studies

Initial recognition: October 2017, Review due September 2022, Free-standing.

Staff link: Nikolas Dadson nikolasd@quaker.org.uk

Report from staff link: The group is still going strong and keeps me in the loop.

Key information from the original application

Foundation: 2000

Aims: Provide a forum for discussion on all issues relating to development beyond physical death. Explore evidence for survival and learn from and support those with psychic gifts and experiences. Focus on the spiritual dimension of such experience, so as to integrate it with our Meetings for Worship.

Publications and activities: An anthology in 2000 and updated in 2004. Bi-annual magazine Reaching Out. Various books by members. Conferences annually or bi-annually since 2000. CDs of conference talks. Much information on website. Links with other like-minded bodies. AGM and committee.

8) Quaker Peace Studies Trust

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

Staff Link Originally Marigold Bentley, now Lisa Cumming lisac@quaker.org.uk

Report from staff link: Quaker Peace Studies Trust continues to be active, meet, and support Quakers and others study peace. The Clerk of QPST has liaised with their new BYM/QPSW link person (Lisa Cumming) and will be inviting them to a future meeting.

Key information from the original application

Foundation: 1972

Aims: The purpose of the trust is the advancement of learning and knowledge by the study of peace and the methods by which peace can be developed. It does this by the financing of research, teaching, and enabling the study of peace studies at the University of Bradford and other institutions of higher education in the UK. It provides funds to assist students in their studies both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. QPST is a grant-making trust.

Publications and activities: Materials are published through the University of Bradford, including an Annual Report of Peace and Conflict Research at the University of Bradford. It assisted in peace conferences and in 2016 supported the Adam Curle Centenary Symposium (held at the University of Bradford) and the joint regional conference on Global Education for Peace in Africa, jointly organised by the University of Bradford and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

Michael S Booth
Church Government Adviser
September 2022

Prison and Court Register

Introduction

Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) was established in 1676, to consider the sufferings experienced by Quakers for their faith. Gradually the practice of recording Friends' names in the 'Great book of Sufferings' lapsed; but in 1997 MfS decided to maintain a register of Friends before the courts or imprisoned for matters of conscience. This enables us to record events, as well as to uphold the Friends concerned and to share information about their witness.

The purposes of recording an entry in the register are:

1. To enter the details of the matter into the permanent records of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), acknowledging Friends' witness and their willingness to face its consequences;
2. To remind ourselves that being a Quaker does not come without cost;
3. To record the Society's prayerful upholding of Friends who are suffering for their faith;
4. To serve as a record of the actions of the State in restricting our freedom to worship and witness.

Normally, area meetings are responsible for establishing the facts, and that Friends are or were acting under concern and wish the matter to be recorded. Including information in the register doesn't imply that MfS itself has tested the Friend's concern and necessarily agrees with or condones their action.

One matter is brought to this meeting.

Sue Hampton and Rajan Naidu

51 people, including at least two Friends, took action at Kingsbury Oil Terminal on 14 September and have been remanded in prison for at least a week by high court judges in Birmingham and London after they refused to comply with court proceedings.

Sue Hampton, a member of Luton and Leighton Area Meeting, and Rajan Naidu, a member of Central England Area Meeting, blocked the road into Kingsbury Oil Depot, breaking an injunction against demonstrating there, acting on conscientious grounds to highlight the failure of government and oil companies to curb emissions.

The 51 are charged with contempt of court for breaking a court injunction and will be held in prison ahead of committal hearings scheduled for 20 and 21 September.

Yearly Meeting 2024

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee (YMAC) is responsible for making a recommendation to Meeting for Sufferings about the calling of Yearly Meeting. It is for Meeting for Sufferings to agree to this and to call Yearly Meeting (Quaker faith and practice, 7.02f). YMAC considered the holding of a residential Yearly Meeting in 2024 and has sent minute YMAC-2022-7-17 to Meeting for Sufferings:

At a meeting of Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee

Held in London at Friends House and online, 29 to 31 July 2022

YMAC 2022-7-17 Holding of Yearly Meeting 2024

We have received paper YMAC 2022-7-15 and heard from Catherine Waithaka. We recommend that the proposed arrangements for an extended all-age Yearly Meeting 26th-30th July are implemented for 2024; we send this minute to Meeting for Suffering for their consideration.

Mary Aiston
Clerk

To: Meeting for Sufferings

YMAC took the following factors into account when reaching discernment on this matter.

- A desire to hold an all-age Yearly Meeting. For this to be possible it needs to be in the summer.
- There are only two weeks of the summer when schools in all three nations are on holiday at the same time.
- The next FWCC World Plenary Meeting is 5-13 August 2024. YMAC did not want to hold Yearly Meeting at the same time as the World Plenary Meeting, nor did it want two week-long events back-to-back, as some Friends will wish to attend both.
- There would be difficulties in finding an appropriate venue for an all-age residential gathering at this late stage, and uncertainty about what a blended Yearly Meeting Gathering would be like.
- In reaching a recommendation, YMAC opted for an extended Yearly Meeting Friday 26 to Tuesday 30 July to be held at Friends House and online. This offers a positive opportunity to hold an inclusive all-age event and the chance to continue to explore different way Friends might gather as a community over a long weekend.

Report from BYM Trustees

Trustees held our September meeting online running from lunchtime on Friday to lunchtime on Saturday. This allowed us to cover some items where we needed input from staff other than Management Meeting within BYM working hours while minimising the amount of time that trustees needed to take as leave from their employment.

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. None of the minutes this time are exceptional – it was a ‘moving things along’ meeting. Alongside our Treasurer, Linda Batten, I’ll explain some of the minutes more fully when I speak to you at the October meeting.

Minute 22/09/04 Recording Clerk’s report and **Minute 22/09/09** giving an update on the **Operational Plan for 2022** give you some flavour of the work that is being delivered on our behalf and the challenges that staff face. Juliet Prager, former Deputy Recording Clerk, left in June and has been much missed, but we were very pleased that Siobhán Haire was due to take up the post just after our meeting. The Operational Plan is designed to deliver the strategic priorities that trustees and MfS agreed in 2018: it is drawn up by staff each year and approved by trustees, so the half year progress report is important and you can see some of the most notable achievements and challenges recorded in the minute.

Trustees are responsible for the Annual Report – which is required by the Charity Commission as well as being a useful way to be accountable to Friends and to publicise BYM’s work – so we met the staff who compile it to agree what should be covered in the Annual Report for 2022 (which will be available in time for Yearly Meeting next year) – **Minute 22/09/10**.

We usually spend the Friday evening with one of the bodies that receives a grant from BYM: this year it was Young Friends General Meeting, with zoom making it possible for five young Friends to join us from various parts of the country – **Minute 22/09/11**.

In **Minute 22/09/08 Finance**, we heard from our Finance and Property sub committee and flagged concern about the unknown effect of energy price increases on BYM directly and on AMs across the country. We thought it important to record our recognition that our commitment to sustainability makes our energy costs higher than they might otherwise be, but know that it is right. We agreed to transfer some general funds to the Meeting Houses fund because support to Meeting Houses is important.

For those who are interested, our treasurer will explain about the investment change at the October meeting.

Minute 22/09/07 QCCIR and QWRC terms of reference records that these are now finalised and notes the number of committee members that QCCIR will have. As you may remember, it has already been agreed that these two committees will report to MfS in future instead of to trustees: there seems to be general agreement that this will work better given the nature of the work that they do.

Minute 22/09/12 Simple, inclusive and sustainable structures records that – this time – we focussed mainly on how to make sure that the threshing includes as many Friends as possible in as many ways as possible and that it ties in with other processes underway.

Caroline Nursey
Clerk BYM Trustees

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Friday 2 September to Saturday 3 September 2022, video conference

Minutes

Present: Georgina Bailey, Linda Batten (Treasurer), Alison Breadon, Kit Fotheringham, Kate Gulliver, Carolyn Hayman, Caroline Nursey (Clerk), Silas Price (except for minutes BYMT/22/09/08 to BYMT/22/09/10), Graham Torr (Assistant Clerk), Frances Voelcker, Danielle Walker Palmour.

Prevented: Ellie Harding.

In attendance: Paul Henderson-Grey, Head of Operations; Paul Parker, Recording Clerk; Oliver Robertson, Head of Witness and Worship, Lorna Service, Interim Head of Finance and Resources.

Visitors: Ben Robinson, Head of Publications, (minute BYMT/22/09/10), Suze Lidbury, Head of Governance and visitors from Young Friends General Meeting: Tim Hall-Farthing (management trustee), Jenny Herbert (convenor of trustees), Tim Rouse (co-clerk), Hannah Stranex (co-clerk) and Gray Wood (elder trustee) (minute BYMT/22/09/11).

BYMT/22/09/01 Welcome and introductions, agenda check, conflicts of interest check

We welcome Lorna Service to this meeting who has joined BYM as Interim Head of Finance and Resources.

We confirm our agenda.

There are no unrecorded conflicts of interest.

During our opening worship, we heard paragraph 10.04 from *Quaker faith and practice*.

BYMT/22/09/02 Continuing business

We receive a list of continuing minutes (BYMT 2022 09 03a) including extracts from the following minutes of our last meeting: 22/06/09 Reflections on Yearly Meeting; 22/06/12 Operational plan and risk; 22/06/13 Reviewing our effectiveness; 22/06/17 The relationship between BYM and Woodbrooke; and 22/06/18 Drayton House.

We also receive the annual list of gold minutes (BYMT 2022 09 03b) to which have been added relevant minutes from trustee meetings held from September 2021 onwards.

BYMT/22/09/03 Minutes received

We receive the following minutes:

- Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations, 10-12 June 2022.
- Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee, 24-26 June 2022.
- Quiet Company Board, 16 July 2022.
- Quaker Life Central Committee, 15-16 July 2022.
- Quaker World Relations Committee, 16 July 2022.
- Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee, separated minutes 14 and 15, 29-31 July 2022.

- Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations, separated minute QCCIR-22-08-07, 30 August 2022.

BYMT/22/09/04 Recording Clerk's report

We receive a report from the Recording Clerk (paper BYMT 2022 09 04) giving updates and news under the headings of BYM's strategic priorities:

- Thriving Quaker communities: recruitment of Local Development Workers, Youth Development Worker, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, 400th anniversary of birth of George Fox.
- Sustainable and peaceful world: Ukraine, campaigning and advocacy, quiet diplomacy, Climate Justice Year of Learning.
- Simpler structures and practices: simple, inclusive and sustainable structures, Yearly Meeting 2023, QPSWCC governance, new finance system, customer relationship management database.
- Reparations.
- External relations: QCEA, Glebe House, Civil Society Voice, Woodbrooke.
- Operations: Quiet Company, Friends House hospitality, operational review, Plant the Difference, managed services, environmental, health and safety, facilities, Swarthmoor Hall.

We note the changes in Management Meeting with the departure of Juliet Prager in June as Deputy Recording Clerk and the arrival of Siobhán Haire next week, and Maureen Sebanakitta's departure at the end of August from the post of Head of Finance and Resources. These changes – alongside high rates of staff sickness from COVID during the period – have inevitably affected delivery.

We are very pleased to hear that the Quiet Company has traded better than expected in this period, and we are encouraged too that the new finance system is up and working though further work is needed to ensure that staff can make the most of it.

We look forward to reading *Race for Justice: the struggle for equality and inclusion in British and Irish churches* that includes a chapter by Paul Parker and Edwina Peart. And we are pleased to hear that there has been good take up for the 'Climate Justice Year of Learning.'

We have discussed workloads and note that the budget for 2023 is being pulled together and that Management Meeting will bring proposals for further allocation of resources now that new structures are largely in place. We recognise the work and efforts of all staff and committees during continuing challenging times.

BYMT/22/09/05 Trustees' news

We receive a report of recent activities of trustees (BYMT 2022 09 05).

BYMT/22/09/06 Quiet Company

At our last meeting we agreed new terms of reference for our Finance & Property Committee incorporating our decision that the YM Treasurer should no longer be a director of the Quiet Company to avoid a conflict of interest. We now receive from the Quiet Company Board a revised service level agreement to reflect this change and we authorise our Clerk to countersign it.

We note the Quiet Company Board asks us to appoint a Treasurer Director to its board and we ask our nominations group to bring us a nomination for this role.

BYMT/22/09/07 QCCIR and QWRC terms of reference

Further to minutes BYMT-2021-06-06 and BYMT-22-02-13, we receive final drafts of revised terms of reference for Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) and Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC) (paper BYMT 2022 09 07). We note from separated minute QCCIR-22-08-07 “QCCIR Terms of Reference and working arrangements” that QCCIR will have 11 core members. We offer to support the clerk of QCCIR through the process of implementing the changes, and we suggest a review point in 2025.

We agree to these terms of reference and thank the two committees for their engagement.

BYMT/22/09/08 Finance

a) Finance and Property Committee minutes and quarterly finance report

We receive Finance and Property Committee minutes from its meeting 12 July 2022 (BYMT 2022 09 08a) and a quarterly finance report to 30 June (BYMT 2022 09 08b).

We note the current income and expenditure position – both below budget at this point. The report includes a balance sheet and an assessment of the current financial risks.

We are aware that energy costs are unpredictable and will have an unknown effect on our finances. In line with our commitment to sustainability, we continue to use energy from sustainable sources and recognise that this makes our energy costs even higher than they would otherwise be.

We agree to the Finance and Property Committee recommendation that we transfer £200k from the General Fund to the Meeting House Fund because this work is an important part of BYM support to Quaker worshipping communities.

We agree to delegate authority to Finance and Property Committee to make such transfers between funds in future, and to update our schedule of delegation accordingly.

b) Investment portfolio

We appoint John David with Rathbone Greenbank in the capacity of Investment Manager for the new BYM Endowment portfolio and wish for Rathbones to invest the funds within the new portfolio in line with our agreed portfolio mandate.

We would like to transfer 19.73% of the existing holdings to the new BYM Endowment portfolio.

We appoint Danielle Walker Palmour, Linda Batten, Paul Parker, Lorna Service and Paul Whitehouse as authorised signatories on the BYM Endowment portfolio and wish for them to be added in this capacity going forward.

BYMT/22/09/09 Operational plan for 2022

We receive an interim update (BYMT 2022 09 08c) from operational managers on the delivery of the operational plan for this year. Approximately half the planned work is behind schedule – although only a small proportion is severely delayed. We are told this is due to reconfiguring some of our staff teams as well as staff changes and sickness in key areas. Despite these difficulties, the report includes many areas of work against our three strategic priorities where we have seen impressive progress.

We are grateful both for the work reflected in the report, and for the work in producing the helpful report. We are grateful that the Operational Plan reflects the priorities we have agreed for Quaker work.

We note that:

- 11 of the intended 15 Local Development Workers are now in place as well as 3 of 4 planned Youth Development Workers.
- Support is in place for area meeting trustees and treasurers following the laying down of Quaker Stewardship Committee.
- The Library has been refurbished and has reopened.
- Yearly Meeting was delivered blended for the first time.
- A scoping report on future peacebuilding work has been completed.
- A series of six videos and a report making the case for peace education have been disseminated and many partners are interested in working with us.
- An evaluation report on work undertaken around COP26 has been completed.
- A digital transformation programme in BYM is well underway.

BYMT/22/09/10 Reflection on 2022

We have been joined by Ben Robinson, Head of Publications in the Communications Team who is responsible for producing our annual report, working with our appointed trustees.

Quaker faith and practice asks trustees to ‘recognise and listen carefully to the discernment of Yearly Meeting, Meeting for Sufferings, and their committees and ensure that it is followed’ (Qf&p 8.17). We have discussed how BYM’s work this year is meeting the wishes of the yearly meeting and delivering the strategic priorities that we agreed with Meeting for Sufferings.

BYMT/22/09/11 Young Friends General Meeting

We have been joined by Friends from Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM): Tim Hall-Farthing (management trustee), Jenny Herbert (convenor of trustees), Tim Rouse (co-clerk), Hannah Stranex (co-clerk) and Gray Wood (elder trustee), and by BYM staff member Suze Lidbury, Head of Governance. We note that BYM has increased its grant to YFGM this year to £10,000 and that BYM additionally provides some administrative support which is being reorganised at the moment.

We viewed some slides and had a very interesting conversation about topics ranging from the challenges arising from the pandemic to simplification and inclusion.

We uphold YFGM in its vital work in nurturing and sustaining young Friends in our yearly meeting.

We forward this minute to YFGM.

BYMT/22/09/12 Simple, inclusive and sustainable structures

We receive a progress report (BYMT 2022 09 10) from Kate Gulliver, Ellie Harding and Carolyn Hayman, the trustees appointed to consider how we might work towards simple, more inclusive and more sustainable structures.

The report covers: what has been done so far and plans for next steps; feedback from meetings with Quaker Life Central Committee Co-clerks and QPSW Central Committee Co-Clerks (part of the wide-ranging engagement work that has been taking place); and clarification about process.

We are conscious that this work needs to dovetail with the review of Yearly Meeting, Yearly Meeting Gatherings and Meeting for Sufferings which is likely to be brought to Yearly Meeting in 2023.

We are very grateful to the group for their continued work and have offered some advice about how to continue threshing across the yearly meeting.

BYMT/22/09/13 Meeting for Sufferings

We have reflected on business at Meeting for Sufferings in July and prepared for the next meeting to be held on 1 October.

BYMT/22/09/14 Communicating trustees' work

We have considered how to communicate our work to others.

BYMT/22/09/15 Reviewing the meeting

We have reviewed the meeting.

BYMT/22/09/16 Time with Recording Clerk

We have spent time with the Recording Clerk.

The Recording Clerk has updated us on his thoughts for the composition of Management Meeting in the future. We receive his proposals for Management Meeting (BYMT 2022 09 14).

Following the resignation of the previous post holder, we agree to the recruitment of a new head of finance and resources, to be called Finance Director. We agree to appoint a recruitment panel consisting (unless prevented) of the Recording Clerk, the incoming YM Treasurer and the Clerk of Finance and Property Committee. We ask the panel to finalise the job description, carry out the selection process, and make an offer to a suitable candidate.

BYMT/22/09/17 Time without staff

We have spent time without staff.

Caroline Nursey
Clerk

Minute from Meeting of Friends in Wales

Meeting of Friends in Wales has sent the following minute to Meeting for Sufferings for information regarding its intention to change name.

Once received, Meeting for Sufferings will need to ask Church Government Advisory Group to consider the necessary changes in *Quaker faith and practice*.

Meeting of Friends in Wales in session held on 25.06.22:

2022.06.05 Name change for Meeting of Friends in Wales

Further to minute 2022.02.05(i) our clerk has reminded us of the background to this issue. A summary paper has been circulated, as well as minute 17/22 from MWAM.

We agree to discontinue using the name 'Cyfarfod y Cyfeillion Yng Nghymru / Meeting of Friends in Wales' and to adopt instead the terms 'Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales' (CCQW). We have been reminded that this could represent a shift from how we meet as a community of Friends to a focus on the individual. However, we feel the new title will be clearer and easier to use. We will review this change in due course.

We ask our clerks to inform Meeting for Sufferings of this change, suggesting that 5.04 and 5.05 of Qf&p might be re-drafted, along with other sections of Qf&p where Meeting of Friends in Wales is mentioned.

Appointment of attenders to central committees

Report to Meeting for Sufferings by the group to review the appointment of attenders to central committees

Purpose and terms of the review

In April 2021, the group was tasked by Meeting for Sufferings, with carrying out a review *“to consider whether to permit the nomination of attenders to serve on the central committees of Britain Yearly Meeting. An attender is ‘one who, not being a member, frequently attends a specific meeting for worship’ (Quaker faith & practice, 11.38). Nominating bodies are currently observing the arrangement agreed by Meeting for Sufferings in 1992.”*

The review group comprises five Friends nominated by Central Nominations Committee (CNC), and appointed by Meeting for Sufferings (MfS): three members and two attenders. The group met every two to six weeks by Zoom between January and June, and held a full-day meeting in person at Lancaster Meeting House in July, following which this report was compiled.

We were asked to consider the current context, how this has changed since 1992, and how it may continue to change in the future. We have used an online survey, publicised in ‘Quake!’ to gather the views of members and attenders across Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM). A self-selecting sample of 174 Individual Friends responded. We also used targeted surveys to gather particular insights from local and area meeting clerks, and the clerks to central committees.

Although we have gathered insights into current practice at local and area meeting level, the scope of this review only covers nominations discerned by Central Nominations Committee.

The present situation

The current guidance was set out by a review group in 1992, whose recommendations – that *“the general rule should be that only members of the Society of Friends should be nominated in these capacities;”* with very limited exceptions – were accepted at the time by Meeting for Sufferings (see appendix). We understand that Central Nominations Committee continues to broadly follow this guidance. Excluding this review group, four attenders are currently serving on committees nominated by CNC (two on Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee, and two on the Book of Discipline Revision Committee).

Anecdotally there is a perception that there is a shortage of members willing/able to carry out central roles, and that this was the primary motivation for holding the review at this time. However, this is not the perception of Central Nominations Committee. We have heard from CNC of situations in which names have come forward of people who seemed to have the particular attributes to fit a role especially well, but then had to be laid aside because it was found that they were not in membership. We

understand that this was the primary motivation for CNC to bring the question of appointing members forward to Meeting for Sufferings. A secondary motivation was the imperative to make central committees more diverse.

The wider yearly meeting

In 2021 there were 12,125 members and 8,066 attenders on the tabular statement (approximately a 60:40% ratio).

227 clerks of local and area meetings responded to a survey asking whether they currently appoint attenders to particular roles. 63% of these meetings had an attender in at least one of the following roles: Clerk, Treasurer, Elder, Pastoral Care or Meeting for Sufferings Representative (12 AMs have an attender as one of their Meeting for Sufferings Representatives). A more detailed breakdown is given below:

Does your meeting currently have attenders in the following posts? (Percentages)				
	Yes	No	Don't know	Total
Clerks	11.0%	89.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Treasurers	23.3%	76.2%	0.4%	100.0%
Elders	19.4%	78.9%	1.8%	100.0%
Pastoral Care	48.5%	49.8%	1.8%	100.0%
Sufferings rep/s	7.9%	83.3%	8.8%	100.0%

Hopes and fears of the community

Our survey of individual Friends drew a wide spectrum of opinions from 'no changes needed' through to 'disregard membership status of nominees'. Our survey of Clerks to central committees also provided some very carefully considered responses from both points of view which helped us greatly.

Many Friends who responded to our survey felt strongly that membership should be a requirement for central service. There was a strong belief that membership defines who we are as Quakers (ie puts boundaries around what it is to be a British Quaker); it indicates spiritual commitment; it indicates that the member is (to use an analogy put forward by one respondent) not just along for the boat trip but ready to crew the boat. There were also fears about the dilution of Quakerism if attenders were allowed to serve, or that attenders may not have the necessary knowledge and understanding of Quaker practices to carry out central roles.

However, there were many other Friends who felt that membership is not necessary for service at a central level, and that other attributes such as knowledge, skills, familiarity with Quaker processes and being discerned as the right person for the job

were more important than membership status. This sits within a broadening understanding of belonging in Quaker meetings, with membership as one but not the only valid way of demonstrating commitment. As one respondent put it, “it is the loyal Friends who turn up regularly to Meeting for Worship and take on roles within their meeting who are the real Quakers, whether they are members or attenders.” An analogy was shared of people in wider society who choose Marriage and those who choose to continue to live together.

The clerk of one central committee seemed unaware that they had been serving alongside attenders, while another did not know if members of a sub-committee were members or attenders and felt it was irrelevant. We similarly heard that in local meetings it is often hard to distinguish between members and long term, committed attenders, who are offering highly valuable service. This concurred with our survey of local and area meeting clerks, in which a majority of meetings had appointed at least one attender. Furthermore 94% of meetings that responded said that they would consider appointing attenders to at least one of these roles in future, with only four respondents indicating that they would definitely not appoint attenders to any role. Almost all meetings who have attenders in some key roles would continue or increase their use of attenders.

We heard that at the local level, nominations committees are struggling to find Friends to fill roles, perhaps driving the perception that this is also the case for central roles. There was a widespread, implicit view that some roles are more spiritual than others, so that there might be a case for using the skills of attenders as treasurers and Pastoral Care Friends (perceived as practical roles) whereas Eldership and Clerkship were seen as more spiritual roles. This concurred with the proportion of meetings already appointing attenders to these roles. There are fears that we are creating a false dichotomy between the spiritual and practical aspects of our Meetings, and becoming task focused rather than spiritually led.

There were suggestions that if attenders are allowed to serve, criteria could be placed on this, such as a minimum time period of attendance (3 to 5 years were common suggestions), prior experience in roles at the local or area level before stepping up to central roles, or a maximum percentage of attenders on any one committee (for example 40% would reflect the overall proportion of attenders in the yearly meeting).

There was a recognition that the Society needs the voices, views and spiritual insight of younger adults who may find the current membership process difficult for a variety of reasons, and suggestions that an exception could be made for younger Friends. However, from Young Friends themselves, we heard that membership of Young Friends General Meeting is based on active participation rather than formal membership status of BYM, and that names are discerned without making a distinction between members and attenders.

We found consensus that anyone nominated for a Quaker committee role, whether member or attender, needs to demonstrate a level of commitment to Quakers; familiarity with the Quaker Business Method; an appreciation of the depth of discernment required; and be well fitted for the role in question. There was some sense that these requirements should be more stringent for central roles than local ones and this blended with fears that attenders might be appointed without meeting them. However, it was also noted that membership does not automatically confer these qualities, and coming into membership may be thought of as one point on a journey. We heard calls to place our trust in the nominations system, with its checks and balances, and above all in the quality of the discernment required of nominations committee members.

Our discernment and recommendations

It is clear that significant change has happened at the local and area level since 1992, and this appears set to continue. Different pathways presented themselves in response to these changes, including to draw a distinction between central and local work; to make greater exceptions to the existing rules; or to follow a new approach.

The group spent time analysing the responses, drawing out the key points, and weighing up the risks and gains of different approaches. Members of the committee began from different individual points of view, but found ourselves moving towards unity as we shifted from analysing these points from the head, to listening with our hearts. After a long period of deep worship at Lancaster we recorded the following minute:

We have considered the practice of only allowing members to serve on central committees, except in exceptional circumstances, as set out in 1992.

We have heard about the deep commitment of many attenders, who are embedded in our meetings, and considered the different ways on which people may be 'part of the crew' of our meetings.

We have heard about circumstances in which Central Nominations Committee have found people who could bring significant spiritual and practical gifts to roles, but having discerned their names, discover that that person is prevented from serving because of being an attender. We find this troubling and we recommend that in these situations, attenders should be allowed to serve. We wish to trust the discernment process, and be open to new light, drawing inspiration from *Qf&p* 26.20:

"The advice to be open to new light from wherever it may come is one of the reasons why the Quakers have continued to answer that of God in everyone. The trust they showed in the living Christ was their strength 300 years ago, as it is today, though we do not all use the same words. A living truth, if it is to stay alive, must speak to the conditions of the times. Once it is tied up in concise terms, bound by the words used and thought to be the last word, it is

already on the decline. Life means growth – and death. We should not cling to words that have lost their life. We cannot force ourselves to believe something which does not ring true for us. Christianity used to survive because of the empty tomb; now Christianity survives in spite of the empty tomb. Great truths survive throughout history, clad in the clothes that are right for the times. A change of garb is inevitable if the truth is to be acceptable. But it is only in the trappings – the bare naked truth remains for all to feel, to acknowledge and express.” Jean West, 1988

However, we also recognise that discernment is not infallible, and the need to uphold our nominations committees to ensure that people have the right commitment, knowledge and experience of Quaker practices to properly serve in roles.

We also recognise that this review has raised much broader issues of membership and belonging in Quaker communities and view this change as a temporary measure, whilst these larger issues of membership are considered.

It is our recommendation that Meeting for Sufferings should now permit the appointment of attenders to central committees and other bodies for which CNC makes nominations.

The exception to this should be Trustees, who are required to be in membership by Britain Yearly Meeting’s Governing Document (which is legally binding, and can only be amended by Yearly Meeting in session.)

We have considered if this should otherwise be qualified in any way, but we feel that the careful processes and discernment of CNC make this unnecessary and that their discernment should be trusted. In placing this trust in CNC it is also necessary that they in turn are supported not only by Meeting for Sufferings but also by local and area meetings, especially those whose members are serving on CNC.

Our structures and processes should enable us to best hear and be led by the spirit and should not constrain the spirit and make us unable to hear some leadings. We hope that fears about change can be assuaged, most likely by means of genuine and deep engagement between members and attenders.

We hope that this approach will allow more Young Friends to be appointed, both for the skills and spiritual insights they can bring and for the learning that they can experience through central work, without treating them any differently. They are both the present and the future of our Society. We also hope that this approach may make service and participation more accessible for other groups who are currently less represented.

We hope that this approach is not used to fill in gaps where there are too many roles and too few Friends. Creative thinking about roles, such as that explored by the Simpler Meetings Project, may be more useful in this instance.

Broader questions of membership

The remit of this review was limited to the question of appointing attenders to central roles. However, broader questions about membership have been consistently raised in the process, which as a group we feel should be highlighted to Meeting for Sufferings.

Many of the fears we heard about allowing attenders to serve reflected discomfort with wider changes in patterns and conceptions of membership in the Society of Friends. Many Friends have queried why attenders do not go on to become members. We have also heard a sense of hurt from attenders at the idea that their commitment is being questioned, or that they are somehow a 'lesser' part of our meetings.

Above all, we have repeatedly heard calls to revisit the question of membership. As a review group, we fear that without this broader context our recommendations can only provide a stop-gap.

*Peter Doubtfire,
on behalf of the group to review the appointment of attenders to central committees,
August 2022*

Appendix:

Meeting for Sufferings, April 1992, minute 8: appointment to Committees

Further to Minute 8 of 7 December 1991, a report dated 6 March 1992 has been received from the group set up to consider the matter. The report has been introduced by Rachel Brett.

We agree to the recommendations in the report.

Separated Minute from 1992 review group

To: Meeting for Sufferings

Further to Minute 8 of Meeting for Sufferings held in London on 7 December 1991, the Group of Friends appointed to consider the question of Appointment to Committees met on 6 March 1992. The Group consists of Gill Bocock, Rachel Brett (clerk), Clare Scott Booth and Joan Southern.

The mandate of this Group is limited to the question of whether Meeting for Sufferings Nominations Committee should nominate attenders as well as members.

The Group is clear that

- i. The general rule should be that only members of the Society of Friends should be nominated in these capacities:
- ii. There should be no exception to that general rule
 - a. Where the person is representing London Yearly Meeting to other Quaker bodies or to the outside world, such as the representatives to CCBI and to other yearly meetings
 - b. For the key decision-making bodies of London Yearly Meeting such as the central committees and Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee;
- iii. There may be occasions on which it is right to make an exception in the case of other committees where an attender has special expertise or experience which is sought by the committee concerned. In these cases, the nomination to Meeting for Sufferings should indicate clearly that the person is not in membership and give the reasons for the nomination.

We have considered the position of Young Friends for whom there may be technical difficulties in applying for membership, such as the short duration of residence within any one monthly meeting area. It seems to us that this is a problem which needs sensitive consideration by monthly meetings, but is not a reason for making a special exception for Young Friends, though they may fall within the special expertise and experience category.

We are aware that there may be legal requirements about membership for some of the bodies to whom nominations are made.

Rachel Brett
Clerk
6 March 1992

Sustainability – living up to our commitment

Sustainability Monitoring Group report to Meeting for Sufferings October 2022

1. About this report

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

This report gives an overview of the current learning and actions being taken, with links to further information so that Friends can find out more if they wish. It covers five broad areas:

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

2. Our commitment

Meeting for Sufferings adopted [A Quaker Response to the crisis of climate change](#) in 2009. Two years later, in 2011, Yearly Meeting made a [commitment to sustainability](#) and asked Meeting for Sufferings to *work with area meetings and our staff to make better known our current witness and to give thought to appropriate aims for our corporate commitment and the framework which will allow our successes to be shared*. In 2021, Yearly Meeting minuted its commitment to faith-based action for climate justice, recognising that *seeking to reduce carbon emissions is an urgent priority, but without interrogating and disrupting our existing economic systems, this will only [lead] us back to an unjust system, and may encourage corporations, governments and individuals to delay necessary action and avoid systemic change*. Below we describe the ways we are seeking to give these commitments life.

2.1 Eldership

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

- Yearly Meeting Gathering in 2021 wrote powerful minutes (33 and 35) affirming our commitment to climate justice. In them, the Yearly Meeting recognised the links between personal and collective action, and the need to change systems as well as ourselves in order to bring about a right relationship with creation.
- The ongoing legacy-funded [Climate Crisis: Spiritual Nurture and Learning Project](#) project was delivered by Woodbrooke to enable Quakers in Britain to deepen and articulate the spiritual basis of our commitment.

- Connected to the climate crisis project, in July 2022 BYM and Woodbrooke staff launched a [year of learning and spiritual reflection](#) on climate justice. Through freely available resources and a pay-as-led online course, participants have developed understanding about climate justice and tended to their relationships with others working towards this goal.
- Quakers locally have held vigils and meetings for worship in connection with significant events (e.g. G7 meetings) or political activities (e.g. delivering letters to politicians). At least one area meeting (Leicestershire) has had sustainability as a standing agenda item at every meeting.
- Lindsey Fielder Cook, the Human Impacts of Climate Change Representative at the Quaker United Nations Office Geneva, has written a prayer for COP27 as part of the [interfaith preparations](#) for United Nations summit.
- We anticipate the Book of Discipline Revision Committee will include more about the spiritual basis of our commitment to sustainability and climate justice in the new book.

2.2 Oversight

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

- The [year of learning and spiritual reflection](#) on climate justice has informed participating Quakers about what climate justice is, how it links to other issues and why it is important for resolving the climate crisis.
- BYM continues to work with the [Friends World Committee for Consultation](#) (FWCC) to connect Quakers in Britain with Friends around the world, including through a legacy-funded programme that continued until May 2022. FWCC facilitates a Global Quaker Sustainability Network. This includes a regular Zoom call for staff at Quaker agencies, activists and advocates around the world, helping link and inform people working on issues of environmental justice and peace, and identifying opportunities for greater collaboration.
- Locally and regionally, Friends have considered and taken action on sustainability together. In some parts of Britain this has been supported by the Local Development Workers employed by BYM. A small selection include hosting 'climate cafes' for Quakers to share their leadings and actions; 'twinning' with other Quaker meetings to share their climate justice journeys; hosting public debates on relevant topics e.g. 'Should we all become vegan?'; and doing collective climate-focused craft activities.
- Exhibitions of the [Loving Earth Project](#), part of the Quaker Arts Network, took place around Britain (and a small one in France), while an associated book, *Ways to Kiss the Earth: Quaker artists explore sustainability*, sold nearly 400 copies.
- The Living Witness Project held a national gathering in August 2022, producing a strong [minute](#) committing to further action.

2.3 Living Faithfully

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

- Through the *Climate Crisis* project (see above) Woodbroke is developing opportunities for Friends to learn and support each other.
- Many Quaker communities have found ways for Friends to encourage and support each other. Again, there are too many to list here, but examples include: car-sharing to attend Meeting for Worship; use of zoom to avoid travel; sharing a glut of produce; producing reusable facemasks for donation, to reduce disposable ones; and developing and living in cohousing communities.

2.4 Right Ordering

This section is about how Quaker communities organise ourselves.

- Following the most disruptive phase of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020-21, all national Quaker committees have continued to meet primarily online, with most only meeting once in person during 2022. Yearly Meeting was also blended (online and in-person) for the first time. Online and hybrid meetings have enabled a wider diversity of Friends to participate and feel included in discernment.
- The latest audit of BYM's carbon footprint found that we had a footprint of 180 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent in 2021-22. There were noticeable drops in electricity use and flights (to zero) in 2021. These are expected to rise in 2022, due to removal of Covid-19 restrictions and greater use of BYM properties.
- BYM publishes sustainability information on the [Friends House website](#). The Quiet Company has adopted a [Strategic Environmental and Sustainability Plan 2021-2030](#).
- The Seed Café in Friends House is now a vegetarian and plant-based provider, while conference catering is now 1/3 plant-based, 1/3 vegetarian and 1/3 non-veg.
- BYM has planted more than two hectares of woodland on property it owned near Jordans, Buckinghamshire, which is expected to sequester 12-20 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent annually.
- Some meetings have worked to re-wild or set aside outdoor spaces for nature, including gardens and burial grounds.
- The new Hammersmith Meeting House is certified to the Association for Environment Conscious Building (AECB) Building Standard of energy efficiency and is, the report says, 'possibly the most energy efficient British building designed for religious worship'.
- Several meetings have been awarded A Rocha eco-churches bronze and silver certification.

- New train ticket purchasing and reporting systems mean we can get much more detailed and accurate accounts of the carbon footprint of our travel. That said, we don't have detailed information about MfS' carbon footprint, partly because of changes between people attending online and in-person, and partly because not all reps fill in the expense forms which include details of travel mileage. It's worth noting that before the pandemic Meeting for Sufferings required 1,000 journeys a year, many of them long-distance.

2.5 Witness

This section is about Quaker faith in action.

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

“In the face of overwhelming evidence of rapidly increasing destruction of the Earth, we are called to work for a world that prioritises ecological repair and well-being. To this end we will call for and work towards a just solution to the climate crisis; with national and worldwide economies operating within ecological limits and upholding the wellbeing, dignity and equality of all.”
- Yearly Meeting 2021 (minute 35) supported and affirmed the priority placed by QPSWCC on work on sustainability and climate justice. It asked QPSWCC to take this work forward, with Meeting for Sufferings receiving interim reports and to share examples of successful practice.
- QPSWCC discerned in August 2022 that we should talk about and call for reparations for unavoidable climate harms, as part of our campaigning on 'loss and damage'.
- BYM staff have played a leading role in establishing the 'Loss and Damage Action Day' on 22 September and have brought in other faith and civil society groups to participate.
- Many Friends have been actively involved in acts of witness, including with Extinction Rebellion, Insulate Britain and Just Stop Oil, or engagement with elected representatives. Some have faced criminal proceedings as a result.

3. Committees for centrally managed work

3.1 What are the committees doing?

We have reviewed committee papers and minutes. Please note that committee meetings and their agendas have had to adapt to the pandemic as well as in other respects. Since December 2021 (when we last reported):

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

- Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC) has climate justice as one of its two priority themes, alongside peace & peacebuilding. It minuted its support of talking about reparations for unavoidable climate impacts in the context of loss and damage, and received an evaluation of the work done around COP26.
- Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC) has not considered sustainability specifically at its meetings. QLCC oversees Local Development Workers, who are actively involved in working with local Quaker communities, including on sustainability and climate issues.
- Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC) has asked its clerk to remind committee members of the Yearly Meeting's commitment to climate justice and racial justice at the start of every meeting.
- Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) has considered Quaker actions at COP26, in particular ecumenical and interfaith activities. It also considered what can be done to support local interfaith links around sustainability and climate justice.

3.2 Co-ordination

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

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

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

There have now been five of these meetings. A member of the Sustainability Monitoring Group joined the meeting held in 2022. It was a helpful meeting, and good to hear how much is being done.

4. Local and Regional Quaker Communities

All Area Meetings have been asked to include information in their annual reports about their actions on sustainability (minute MfS 18/07/17, Sustainability: Reporting on Actions' refers). Before it was laid down, Quaker Stewardship Committee collected and reviewed the annual reports. In its report, it noted that there may be quicker ways to share sustainability information than relying on annual reports and accounts, which can mean information is many months out of date by the time it reaches Meeting for Sufferings. We are continuing to consider the best way forward on this.

Some [stories of how local meetings are living out the commitment](#) are shared on BYM's website – for inspiration and mutual encouragement.

5. About the Sustainability Monitoring Group

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

5.1 Membership

The Group should have three members but currently has just one, Caroline Howden (East Kent AM).

We ask MfS, with assistance from the Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group, to strengthen the group's membership.

Paper prepared by:
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