

Follow up letter



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

15 December 2020

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

Meeting for Sufferings 5 December 2020

Dear Friends

As 2020 draws to a close I am looking back with great thankfulness on the willingness you have shown in engaging in the ongoing work of Meeting for Sufferings since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Online participation has challenges all of its own, and Arrangements Group has offered different things at each meeting to see 'what works'. Your feedback on our programming is always welcome, (sufferings@quaker.org.uk) and has informed our choices at each meeting. We want to remain responsive to your suggestions.

As in October, one of the standing committees – Quaker World Relations Committee – held an evening session in preparation for giving their report, and this was well received.

In addition to our regular business, two other themes ran through the day – Yearly Meeting, and our response to racism.

- Yearly Meeting 2020, held in November, tasked us with taking some routine matters such as receiving reports and nominations. We also heard of plans for Yearly Meeting 2021, from 31 July to 8 August, which will necessarily be held online. The main business is scheduled for the weekends and Agenda Committee hopes to offer a range of online sessions throughout the period.
- The issue of racism was reflected in the trustees report to Meeting for Sufferings, and formed the basis of our afternoon session led by Edwina Peart (BYM's Inclusion and Diversity Co-ordinator). This was a powerful presentation which explored the ways in which the facts of our history are relayed to succeeding generations and the deep feelings that are created by past injustice.

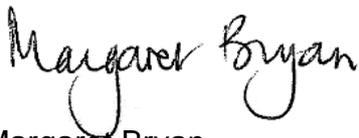
Our concluding minute says, in part:

“Our testimonies to equality and truth demand that we engage in a drive towards real change, turning our declared intentions into reality. We are called to commit to becoming an actively anti-racist church. Individually we are all on different stages of this journey, which is based on learning, moves through acknowledgment and on to commitment to action based on discernment ... The time to act is now, personally and in our area meetings.”

When the young people attending the Participation Day running in parallel to our meeting for business joined us again at the end of the afternoon they brought contributions in words, pictures and song. The innovation of music at Meeting for Sufferings deeply moved and enriched us all.

May the season of Christmas bring you joy and refreshment.

In Friendship

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Bryan". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Margaret Bryan
Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings

The following papers are included in this mailing:

- Functions checklist
- A selection of contributions from Friends from the Young People's Participation Day
- MfS minutes December 2020

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

	Requirement	Dec 20	Comments
A	To set the priorities for the centrally managed work	12	
B	To issue public statements in the name of BYM		
C	To receive regular interim reports from BYM trustees	6	
D	To receive the BYM trustees' annual report & accounts for information		
E	To make a report on its own activities to YM		
F	To determine the dates of YM	11	
G	To deliberate on how best to support the spiritual life of the yearly meeting and to further the development of its visionary and prophetic role	12, 13	
H	To keep under review and to test as appropriate the existing and new concerns referred to it by AMs and others	8, 9	
I	To foster communication throughout the yearly meeting	1, 9, 14	
J	To receive minutes from area meetings	8, 9	
K	To make appropriate entries in the prison and court register	4	
I	To appoint representatives to attend other Yearly Meetings		
M	To receive information about changes in the composition or status of general meetings and gatherings	7	
N	To make changes in the composition of area meetings		
O	To give assistance to area meetings in the amicable settlement of disputes		
P	To hear appeals against area meeting decisions		
Q	To give guidance on policy matters referred to it by the BYM trustees from time to time	6	
R	To authorise action and minute as required under other sections of Quaker Faith and Practice		
S	To set up an arrangements group and support and working groups to assist its own work as it sees fit		

Contributions from Friends joining from the Young People's Participation Day
"The Quaker Response to Racism"

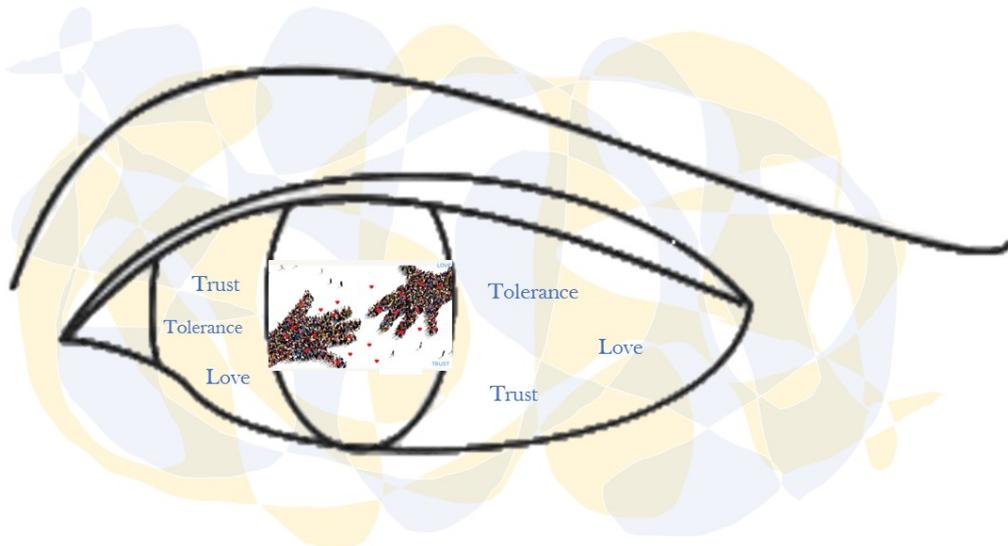
Words

"Thou hast ignored me, forgotten me, neglected me. Of course thou hast, it is in thine own interest to. Thou know of me, hath recognised me, and yet thou still choose to reject me. I will prevail. I always win and will leave thee behind. Now we wait. In Friendship, Truth"

"We all, as Quakers, have things we can learn from the experiences people of colour from our society and elsewhere have to offer. We must treat new information with sensitivity and patience, to keep a sensible discussion environment. I think speaking accurately for most of us young Quakers gathered here today, we have all learned new things about racism and social construct, so that we can begin to unlearn and dismantle prejudice that we are taught as a part of our upbringing. Being silent in the face of injustice and cruelty is a problem we must overcome as a society."

"I want structural change.
I want opinion change.
I believe we are structurally engrained with prejudice.
Sometimes I feel hopeless. But I will keep fighting forever."

Image



Music

Dave, "Black" (Live at The BRITs 2020)

<https://youtu.be/mXLS2IzZSdg>



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

At a meeting of

Meeting for Sufferings

Held online from 05 December 2020 by video conference

Minutes

MfS/20/12/01 Opening Worship and Young People's Participation Day

During opening worship Advices and Queries 16 was read.

We are meeting today with 29 young people, plus volunteers and staff attending the Young People's Participation Day.

Young Friends joined us in our opening worship and a 'getting to know you' session in small groups. They will spend some of the day in their own programme on the theme 'A Quaker response to racism', and be with us again later for the closing session and worship.

MfS/20/12/02 Membership of Meeting for Sufferings

Bob Rogers

We were saddened to hear that Bob Rogers, Meeting for Sufferings Representative for South London AM, died on Wednesday 20 October 2020. Bob had served from the beginning of this Triennium.

Since our last meeting we have received the following nominations and requests for release for Meeting for Sufferings until the rise of Yearly Meeting 2021:

Release requests received:

David Beale – Central Nominations Committee alternate

Brenda Crothers – East Cheshire AM alternate

Nominated:

Sandra Horsfall – Central Nominations Committee alternate

Sally Mendham – East Cheshire AM alternate

Lucy Parker – Central Nominations Committee Representative

We appoint the Friends named and thank the Friends released for their service.

Other visitors:

Michael S Booth – BYM staff, Recording Clerk's Office

Neil Jarvis – BYM staff, Recording Clerk's Office

Edwina Peart – BYM staff, Recording Clerk's Office

Anne van Staveren – BYM staff, Media Relations Officer

MfS/20/12/03 Agenda

The Clerk has introduced the draft agenda, and we have agreed to this.

MfS/20/12/04 Prison and Court Register

Sue Hampton, a member of Luton & Leighton Area Meeting, was arrested on 1 September and 4 September 2020, following nonviolent direct action with Extinction Rebellion (XR). She appeared in court in St. Albans in early October, and pleaded not guilty. A trial has been scheduled for mid-June 2021.

Maria Huff, a member of Banbury and Evesham AM, was arrested in London on 8 October 2019 during Extinction Rebellion protests. She was convicted on 23 October 2020 of wilful obstruction of the highway and given a conditional discharge for six months and a fine of £106.

We agree to include these names in the Prison and Court Register, and hold Sue Hampton and Maria Huff in the Light.

MfS/20/12/05 Appointments

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

Book of Discipline Revision Committee

To serve from appointment until the work of the committee is complete:

Nominate:

Alastair Reid, West Scotland AM

Finola O'Sullivan, Cambridgeshire AM

Church Government Advisory Group

To serve from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2023:

Renominate:

Finn Pollard, Lincolnshire AM (currently serving 1st term)

Nominate:

Pennie Quinton, London West AM

Friends World Committee for Consultation – Quaker World Relations Committee

To serve from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2023:

Renominate:

Ian Marshall, Lancashire Central & North AM (currently serving 1st term)

Nominate:

Nim Njuguna, London West AM

Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations

To serve from 1 May 2021 to 30 April 2024:

Nominate:

Joyce Robertson, North Wales AM (nominated by Meeting of Friends in Wales)

Quaker Housing Trust

To serve from Annual Retirement Meeting 2021 to Annual Retirement Meeting 2024:

Renominate:

Martin Appleton, Mid Thames AM (currently serving 1st term)

Robin Fishwick, Leeds AM (currently serving 1st term)

Quaker Life Central Committee

To serve from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2023:

Nominate:

Zélie Gross, South Wales AM

Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee

To serve from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2023:

Nominate:

Abigail Darton, York AM

Ann Davison, Southern Marches AM

Jonathan Lingham, London West AM

Quaker United Nations Committee

To serve from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2023:

Renominate:

Colin Hall, Luton & Leighton AM (currently serving 1st term)

Pendle Hill Friends in Residence

Release from service in 2020:

Peter Ullathorne, Central England AM

Anne Ullathorne, Central England AM

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

MfS/20/12/06 BYM Trustees

We receive minutes of the trustees' meeting held on 13 November 2020 (paper MfS 2020 12 08).

Caroline Nursey, their clerk, drew particular attention to trustees' commitment to tackling racism in BYM and their recognition that we all have a part to play.

Linda Batten, BYM treasurer, gave a brief update on the current financial position. Despite a reduction of around £2m in expenditure in 2020 as compared to 2019, loss of income from the Quiet Company means we expect to end this year with a deficit of around £3m.

Trustees are beginning to make the changes that are needed to reach their aim of a balanced budget in 2023. For example, 31 staff members have taken voluntary redundancy this year.

There will be a greatly reduced income both from the Quiet Company and Friends in their meetings, and the biggest risk is the uncertainty surrounding any recovery after the pandemic. Even with reduced costs, for example meeting on line instead of in person, we will be reducing our reserves by £2m over the course of the year.

Trustees are also focussed on striving to simplify and clarify our ways of working, both in our central structures and in the relationships with the bodies that make up BYM. Their minute BYMT-2020-11-11 asked our advice on the matter of a

memorandum of understanding between BYM Trustees and AM trustees. We welcomed this and ask trustees to keep us informed of progress.

We are united in wishing to uphold trustees at this time.

MfS/20/12/07 Westmorland General Meeting

We receive and note the news that Westmorland General Meeting has been laid down, and the associated registered charity is to be closed.

MfS/20/12/08 Governance and discernment

- a) We have received a minute from Surrey & Hampshire Border Area Meeting asking for a review of the relationships and terms of reference of the different central bodies of the yearly meeting, including Meeting for Sufferings and BYM Trustees. We note that Meeting for Sufferings has already appointed a group to review the holding of Yearly Meeting, which we anticipate will impact on the work of Meeting for Sufferings, and that the trustees' strategic priority to achieve a simple church supported by a simple charity, will have implications for Meeting for Sufferings and the interrelationships between committees. We note, further, the work of the Book of Discipline Revision Committee in developing an improved account of Quaker discernment and governance.
- b) We have received a minute from South London Area Meeting about transparency of process between central committees, BYM Trustees and area meetings. We note that we have heard earlier in this meeting about the possibility of developing a memorandum of understanding between BYM Trustees and AM trustees. We refer this minute to BYM Trustees for their consideration.

We thank these area meetings for articulating these concerns.

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

MfS/20/12/09 Divestment from fossil fuels

Devon Area Meeting has shared its minute calling on Devon Quakers to lobby their pension providers to disinvest from companies engaged in the production and distribution of fossil fuels. It encourages Friends in other area meetings to take similar action.

MfS/20/12/10 Delegated business from Yearly Meeting

- **Nominations and appointments (paper MfS 2020 12 10a)**

Report of Central Nominations Committee

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

To serve from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2023:

Renominate:

Kit Fotheringham, Bristol AM (1st term from August 2020 to YM 2020)

Frances Voelcker, North Wales AM (1st term from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2020)

Graham Torr, York AM (1st term from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2020)

Alison Breadon, Wirral & Chester AM (1st term from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2020)

Quaker Stewardship Committee

To serve in the roles given below:

Nominate as clerk, to serve from Yearly Meeting 2020 to Yearly Meeting 2021:

Yvonne Dickson, Wirral & Chester AM

Nominate as assistant clerk, to serve from Yearly Meeting 2020 to Yearly Meeting 2021: Paul Gibson, Sussex West AM

To serve from Yearly Meeting 2020 to Yearly Meeting 2023:

Nominate:

Beverley Goddard, West Wiltshire & East Somerset AM

Renominate:

Malcolm Sterratt, Wirral & Chester AM

Alan Robinson, Sheffield & Balby AM

To serve from Yearly Meeting 2020 to Yearly Meeting 2022:

Nominate:

James Eddington, Lancashire Central & North AM

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee

To serve from Yearly Meeting 2020 to Yearly Meeting 2023:

Renominate:

Josephine (Jo) Rado, Mid Thames AM (1st term from YMG 2017)

Fred Langridge, Sheffield & Balby AM (1st term from YMG 2017)

Elizabeth (Liz) Brooks, Sussex East AM (1st term from YMG 2017)

Nominate:

Andrew Rendle, London West AM

Martin Ward, South East Scotland AM

For information:

We record the following appointments made in the interim period before Yearly Meeting by Meeting for Sufferings and thank the Friends for their work during this unprecedented time:

Appointed by Meeting for Sufferings held in July 2019 on behalf of Yearly Meeting to serve until Yearly Meeting 2020:

Robert Wilson, North Scotland AM

Appointed by Meeting for Sufferings held in January 2020 on behalf of Yearly Meeting to serve until Yearly Meeting 2020:

Judi Brill, Bristol AM

Heather Rowlands, Central England AM

Appointed by Meeting for Sufferings held in October 2020 on behalf of Yearly Meeting to serve for an interim period until Yearly Meeting 2020:

Andrew Rendle, London West AM

Martin Ward, South East Scotland AM

Yearly Meeting Pastoral Care Group

To serve from Yearly Meeting 2020 to Yearly Meeting 2023:

Renominate:

Jean Scott-Barr, Mid Thames AM

Yearly Meeting Publications Group for *Quaker faith & practice*

To serve from Yearly Meeting 2020 to Yearly Meeting 2023:

Renominate:

Helen Rowlands, Central England AM

Central Nominations Committee co-clerks

For information

We record the following appointment of:

Appointed by Central Nominations Committee to serve as co-clerks from the end of Yearly Meeting 2020 until the end of Yearly Meeting 2021:

Hannah Brock Womack, Sheffield & Balby AM (2nd term)

Lucy Parker, Norfolk & Waveney AM (1st term)

Report of the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group

For information:

We record the following appointments made in the interim period before Yearly Meeting by Meeting for Sufferings and thank the Friends for their work during this unprecedented time:

Appointed by Meeting for Sufferings held in February 2020 on behalf of Yearly Meeting to serve until Yearly Meeting 2020:

Ethel Livermore, South London AM

Appointed by a between meetings decision of the clerks of Meeting for Sufferings on behalf of Yearly Meeting to serve until Yearly Meeting 2020:

Martin Ford, Leeds AM

Yearly Meeting Nominating Group brings forward the following nominations to Yearly Meeting 2020:

Central Nominations Committee

To serve from 6 December 2020 until the end of Yearly Meeting 2023:

Re-nominate to serve for a second term:

Angela Arnold, North Wales AM / CCR Gogledd Cymru

Meg Forrest, York AM

Martin Hughes, North Wales AM / CCR Gogledd Cymru

Ethel Livermore, South London AM

Martin Ford, Leeds AM

Nominate to serve for a first term:

Ade Couper, Worcestershire & Shropshire AM

To serve from 6 December 2020 until the end of Yearly Meeting 2022:

Lucy Parker, Norfolk & Waveney AM

To serve from 6 December 2020 until the end of Yearly Meeting 2021:

Meri Goad, East Scotland AM

Margaret Calvert, Manchester & Warrington AM

David Lewis, Hampshire & Islands AM

For information:

Released in the interim by Meeting for Sufferings held in October 2019 on behalf of Yearly Meeting:

Beryl Milner, Leeds AM

Helen Percy, Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire AM

We ask Meeting for Sufferings to release:

Bronwen Harwood, Sussex East AM

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

- **Meeting for Sufferings: interim membership changes since Yearly Meeting 2019**

We receive Paper MfS 2020 12 10b with the membership of Meeting for Sufferings as at its meeting on 3 October 2020.

- **Tabular Statement**

We receive and accept the Tabular statement as at 31 December 2019, as published in *Patterns of Membership* with the following correction. Tables 5a and 5b should show the number of local meetings in 2019 for North East Thames Area Meeting as 7 local meetings, rather than 5.

- **Central Nominations Committee: receipt of annual report**

We receive and accept the annual report for 2019 from Central Nominations Committee (paper MfS 2020 12 10d). We wish to record our warm appreciation of this report

- **Quaker Housing Trust: receipt of annual report**

We receive and accept the annual report for 2019 from Quaker Housing Trust (paper MfS 2020 12 10e).

- **Quaker Stewardship Committee: receipt of annual report**

We receive and accept the annual report for 2019, including the compliance report, from Quaker Stewardship Committee (paper MfS 2020 12 10f).

MfS/20/12/11 Yearly Meeting 2021

Yearly Meeting Clerk, Clare Scott Booth, has told us the reasoning behind Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee's recommendations for holding Yearly Meeting in 2021.

We have received minutes 2020/10/07 and 2020/11/07 from Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee.

We agree Yearly Meeting 2021 should be an online event and for Yearly Meeting in Session to take place largely between 31 July and 8 August 2021.

We recognise that much is lost in holding an online-only event but that there are also opportunities.

MfS/20/12/12 Quaker World Relations Committee

We receive paper MfS 20 12 12 and we have heard from Ann Floyd, clerk of the Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC). Many members of Meeting for Sufferings took part in an optional session ahead of our meeting to meet informally with members of QWRC. We thank the committee for its work on our behalf.

MfS/20/12/13 Action on racism

Edwina Peart, BYM's Diversity and Inclusion Officer, introduced this item. She reflected on the three stages of an approach to action on racism – learning, acknowledging and acting and we reflected on the following questions:

1. Can we make an active commitment to dismantling institutional racism within Quakers and Society?
2. Based on our testimonies what is our vision for this work?

Our Yearly Meeting has been struggling to engage with issues of racism for generations. Momentum has been building particularly over this year.

Our testimonies to equality and truth demand that we engage in a drive towards real change, turning our declared intentions into reality. We are called to commit to becoming an actively anti-racist church. Individually we are all on different stages of this journey, which is based on learning, moves through acknowledgment and on to commitment to action based on discernment.

Friends General Conference in their [Epistle of the 2020 Virtual Pre-Gathering of Friends of Color and their Families](#) ask:

“What is the Spirit leading me to do about the historic and ongoing racial pandemic across my meeting, my community, my work environment and my country?”

The time to act is now, personally and in our area meetings. We welcome the BYM Trustees' minute on racism (BYMT-2020-11-12) and look forward to hearing of future developments about the work to which they have committed centrally.

MfS/20/12/14 Feedback from the Young People's Participation Day

YPP participants and staff joined us at the end of the day to worship with us.

We shared our minute¹² and heard moving contributions in words, images and music.

MfS/20/12/15 Closing worship

We closed our time together with worship and look forward to meeting again in 2021.

Margaret Bryan
Clerk